AGENDA PAPERS FOR

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Date: Tuesday, 14 January 2025

Time: 6.30 pm

Place: Committee Rooms 2 and 3, Trafford Town Hall, Talbot Road, Stretford, M32 0TH

A G E N D A	PART I	Pages

1. ATTENDANCES

To note attendances, including officers, and any apologies for absences.

2. MINUTES 1 - 6

To receive and, if so determined, to agree as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2024.

3. STANDARDS COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME Verbal Report

To receive a verbal update on the future of the Standards Committee Work Programme from the Governance Manager.

4. CONSULTATION ON STANDARDS AND CONDUCT REGIME IN THE UK Verbal Report

To receive a verbal update from the Monitoring Officer.

5. CONTRACT PROCEDURE RULES UPDATE - PROCUREMENT LEGISLATION Verbal Report

To receive a verbal update from the Monitoring Officer.

6. DATA STRATEGY - FOCUS ON THE DATA AND INFORMATION GOVERNANCE BOARD 7 - 44

To consider the Data and Information Governance Board within the Data Strategy from the Monitoring Officer.

7. **MONITORING OFFICERS UPDATE**   Verbal
                                                                      Report

    To receive a verbal update from the Monitoring Officer.

    SARA TODD
    Chief Executive

    Membership of the Committee

    Councillors   K. Procter   (Chair),   S. Zhi   (Vice-Chair),   D. Acton,   M. Cordingley,
    P. Eckersley,   W. Frass,   S.J. Gilbert,   E.R. Parker,   H. K. Spencer,   D. Western,
    B.G. Winstanley.

    Co-opted Members: Mr. C.E.J. Griffiths, Mr R. Brown, Cllr A. Rudden, Ms. N. Jackson
    and Mr M. Whiting.

    Further Information
    For help, advice and information about this meeting please contact:

    Harry Callaghan, Senior Democratic Support Officer
    Tel: 07977 717252
    Email: harry.callaghan@trafford.gov.uk

    This agenda was issued on **Monday, 6 January 2025** by the Legal and Democratic
    Services Section, Trafford Council, Trafford Town Hall; Talbot Road, Stretford,
    Manchester, M32 0TH

    WEBCASTING

    This meeting will be filmed for live and / or subsequent broadcast on the Council's
    YouTube channel https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjwbIOW5x0NSe38sgFU8bKg
    The whole of the meeting will be filmed, except where there are confidential or exempt
    items.

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

27 JUNE 2024

PRESENT

Councillor D. Western (in the Chair).
Councillors D. Acton, P. Eckersley, W. Frass, E.R. Parker, H. K. Spencer, B.G. Winstanley.

Co-opted Members: Mr. C.E.J. Griffiths, Mr R. Brown, Mr. A. Rudden and Mr M. Whiting.

<u>In attendance</u>

Dominique Sykes   Director of Legal & Governance and Monitoring Officer
Harry Callaghan   Democratic Officer

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors K. Procter, S. Zhi, M. Cordingley and S.J. Gilbert.

14. ATTENDANCES

The Chair and Vice-Chair were not present at the meeting. The Democratic Officer asked if any Councillors would nominate themselves to take the Chair. Councillor Western nominated herself and this was moved and seconded.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Western chair the meeting.

15. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE 2024/25

RESOLVED: That the membership be noted.

16. TERMS OF REFERENCE 2024/25

RESOLVED: That the terms of reference be noted.

17. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 7th March 2024, be approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

18. CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW 2024

Councillor Western (in the Chair) introduced the report which had been completed by the Monitoring Officer and the Constitutional Working Group (CWG). The Chair highlighted a set of amendments shared by the Liberal Democrat group in writing which were to be considered in the meeting.

The Monitoring Officer informed the Committee that the CWG was a cross-party group, convening on an ad-hoc basis to look at the Council's Constitution. The

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group convened following the amended Motion 7a – Focus on Trafford – being carried at the Council meeting on the 18th March 2024. The objective of the CWG meetings was to look specifically at improving the quality of meetings of the full Council. The CWG had had two meetings and reached out to group leaders to explore the Constitutional changes that groups would like to see. Discussions in the meetings and feedback from Leaders had brought together the report laid out in the agenda.

The Committee had been provided with some written comments submitted by Councillor Frass prior to the meeting. The Monitoring Officer had provided comments and responses to points made by Councillor Frass. The Monitoring Officer proposed that the Committee start by discussing and commenting on the report, then move onto discussing the amendments suggested by Councillor Frass, with any suggested amendments then taken back to the CWG. The CWG did not have to take on the suggestions of the Committee, however, areas suggested by either Standards or Scrutiny, which the CWG did not agree with, would be referenced in the report that went to Council.

Councillor Acton criticised the current process in the Council Chamber and applauded the work done by the CWG to produce the report.

Mr. Griffiths, around moving petitions from full Council to the Executive, asked whether the Executive was as open a forum as full Council with the same exposure. The Monitoring Officer responded that the discussion had around petitions was looking at the experience for the petitioner and how the conversation might be more interactive at an Executive meeting. Mr. Griffiths followed up, asking how many petitions had met the threshold in the past 12 months. The Monitoring Officer did not have the exact figure, but that it was less than six. The Chair added that the general feeling of the CWG was that the Executive provided a less daunting and more informal experience.

Mr. Brown asked if the overriding intention of the report was to improve discussion at Council meetings. The Monitoring Officer responded that it was.

Councillor Spencer enquired what the CWG's feelings and discussions were around questions from Members at Council which were casework related, and whether this was the correct forum for these to be asked. The Monitoring Officer responded that there was a long discussion around how to tackle these questions. The focus of the discussion was to look at improving how casework enquiries were handled to ensure Members were aware of which were the right channels and right people to contact before bringing it to Council. Councillor Spencer agreed with this, recognising the impact casework questions were having.

Councillor Frass asked whether there was an option to offer petitioners the choice to present to either the Executive or full Council. The Monitoring Officer responded that the CWG considered this, however, it was agreed that this was an unfair decision to give someone.

Councillor Frass felt that casework questions were brought by Members to full Council, sometimes as a last resort, knowing that the appropriate channels did not

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provide sufficient or timely response, and as such bringing it to Council provided the opportunity to place the issue on the public record. Councillor Eckersley supported these comments. The Monitoring Officer recognised that the casework process needed to be reviewed and to be worked on outside of Standards.

Councillor Eckersley asked if the report was suggesting that questions which had been answered prior would be brought to the meeting, as had been the case in recent meetings. The Monitoring Officer referred to two points behind this. Members questions were to be taken as read, moving straight through to any supplementary questions, with the agenda item limited to a ten-minute timeframe.

Councillor Acton felt taking petitions to the Executive moving forward was sensible, with the opportunity for relevant Executive Members able to answer and speak to the petitions directly. Councillor Acton also agreed with the new approach to questions.

Councillor Eckersley asked if petitions could be acknowledged at full Council, to ensure that all Members were aware of any ongoing or discussed petitions. The Monitoring Officer responded that in the past work had been done to improve the tracking of petitions on the Council's website. The officer added further it could be considered to bring an annual report of petitions to full Council. Councillor Eckersley felt it important that Councillors were aware of the progress of petitions. The Monitoring Officer stressed that the CWG wanted the current petition process to be copied over to the Executive, which as such would be mean that all parties would be made aware when a petition was going to the Executive to allow Members to attend.

Councillor Spencer pointed to section 5.3 of the report, where reference was made to order of parties and queried what the mechanism was for deciding the order for which parties appear in the political balance. The Monitoring Officer informed the Member that order of party was based on number of seats on the Council. When two or more parties had the same number of seats, it goes to the length of time a party had been on the Council. Councillor Spencer felt that this was not the fairest way to decide this, however, the Monitoring Officer added that a change such as this would need to be raised in a different forum.

The Committee then proceeded to discuss amendments provided to Members prior to the meeting from Councillor Frass. The Monitoring Officer had also provided responses to the amendments made by Councillor Frass which had also been circulated with Members in the meeting.

The Monitoring Officer, in response to the second point made by Councillor Frass on the discretion of the Executive Chair to possibly abandon the principles of the current petition scheme in the future, apologised for any confusion. The intention would be to seek endorsement from the current Chair of the Executive Committee to propose the move of petitions to the Executive forum. Once the decision to move petitions was ratified by Council, it would become permanent protocol and fall outside of the Chair's discretion.

The CWG had agreed that the basis of petitions would be lifted from Council to the Executive.

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Councillor Frass had made a further recommendation to limit the number of questions per member in any given full Council meeting to one. The Monitoring Officer informed the Committee that the CWG had discussed limiting the number of questions from Members, however, this was moved away from. The Monitoring Officer did however provide a possible recommendation on questions, to limit it to two questions per group, rather than by Member. This could have been taken back to the CWG if agreed by the Committee.

Councillor Frass was concerned around the order of questions asked being determined by political balance, putting Liberal Democrat or Green Councillors at risk of not being heard, and as such had suggested alternating. Councillor Frass agreed that limiting the question by party to two would solve this issue.

In response to a question from Councillor Eckersley on the number of questions and political balance, the Monitoring Officer confirmed that it would be a maximum of two questions per group, which would then be put into political balance.

Councillor Spencer asked if any thought had been given about an extra party on the Council. The Chair confirmed that the proposals would be reviewed, but this would be further down the line with the next Local Elections in 2026.

Councillor Frass asked what the scope would be for an independent Member. The Monitoring Officer confirmed that they would be considered a group within their own right.

Councillor Eckersley asked if there had been discussion on the ideal timeframe for questions to be prepped for full Council. The Monitoring Officer confirmed that a secondary piece of work would be required to establish the deadlines of motions and questions, with a requirement for Members to be aware of any changes to the timeline. However, the Monitoring Officer confirmed that the report did suggest that this would be looked at.

Mr. Brown asked whether any of the proposed changes affected the recording or minuting of meetings. The Monitoring Officer confirmed that the Executive was recorded same as Council, with minutes taken in the same way. Questions at Council would also still be published on the website prior to the meeting.

The Monitoring Officer clarified that the Committee had agreed to the overall 10-minute time limit on questions and the limit to two per group.

On motions, Councillor Frass and the Liberal Democrat group raised concern around the limit of five motions in a Council meeting, disincentivising cross-party working, and had suggested provision for a further option to allow one cross-party motion. The Monitoring Officer confirmed that this had been discussed at the CWG, however, it was agreed not to proceed.

Councillor Frass felt not having this option disincentivised groups from working together as it means sacrificing their one slot to be the lead group on the Motion. Councillor Eckersley, in contrary, felt that if a significant cross-party motion was

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being tabled, groups would want to be seen as the lead party. Councillor Winstanley agreed with this point.

Councillor Frass raised the issue of deadlines for amendments and motions for full Council, and asked if all deadlines would move commensurately. The Monitoring Officer understood Councillor Frass and noted that it needed looking at in one piece of work to ensure the process is fair for all Members and Officers.

Councillor Spencer added that when considering this in the future, thought be given to how long Members have to consider motions / amendments, to ensure that Council is an as accessible and inclusive environment as possible. The Monitoring Officer stressed that they were doing their utmost to ensure that in terms of decisions and agendas, the programmes behind those were proactive rather than reactive. This work had started with the Executive Forward Plan, with the Executive agenda moving to be set three months in advance, with a hope to move this to six months.

Following discussions, the Committee endorsed the recommendations of the CWG as set out in the report and recommend the CWG add a 10-minute limit and the number of Member questions to two per political group at any given meeting of the full Council.

Mr. Whiting enquired if when the constitution was reviewed, would it be written in plain English. The Monitoring Officer confirmed that this was not currently the case, however, a conscious effort was being made to ensure that Council documents were more easily digested in the future. Mr. Whiting asked whether there was a timescale on this. The Monitoring Officer responded that the current focus was on the website and ensuring that that was customer focused.

Councillor Spencer agreed with this and referred to her point on accessibility earlier. The Monitoring Officer highlighted the difference with what was conveyed to Members being that much of what they are dealt with was statutory; to the public it is important to ensure they are aware that the Council has rules, rather than having to read the rules completely.

RESOLVED:

1) That the Standards Committee agree the recommended constitutional changes proposed by the Constitutional Working Group as detailed in the report.
2) That the Standards Committee recommend to the Constitutional Working Group that in addition to the ten-minute maximum amount of time on the agenda proposed, the number of member questions shall be limited to two per political group in any given meeting of the Full Council.

The meeting commenced at 6.36 pm and finished at 7.31 pm

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TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: **Standards Committee**
Date: **14 January 2025**
Report for: **Information**
Report of: **Executive Member for Finance, Change & Governance**

Report Title

Trafford Data Strategy 2024-27

Summary

This report provides a summary of Trafford's Data Strategy

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that Executive:

1. Note the Data Strategy.

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

Name: Sarah Haugeberg/Thomas Stephenson/Dianne Geary

Background Papers: None

Implications:

CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS	
The Best Start for our Children and Young People	*The Data Strategy will help inform data driven decision making to deliver on a better start for children and young people.*
Healthy and Independent Lives for Everyone	*The Data Strategy will help inform data driven decision making to deliver on a better health for people.*
A Thriving Economy and Homes for All	*The Data Strategy will help inform data driven decision making to promote a more equal economy.*
Address the Climate Crisis	*The Data Strategy will help provide key data on activity around the climate crisis.*
Culture, Sport and Heritage for Everyone	*The Data Strategy will help provide the data to promote the culture, sport and heritage in the borough.*
Relationship to Policy Framework/Corporate Priorities	*The Data Strategy will help to deliver on the Council's corporate priorities by improving the ways the Council manages, stores, shares, and uses its data.*
Relationship to GM Policy or Strategy Framework	*The Data Strategy is aligned to the Greater Manchester (GM) policy and strategy where required.*
Financial	*There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.*
Legal Implications:	*The Data Strategy forms part of the Council's overarching Policy Framework and supports the Council's statutory duties and legal obligations in respect of the data that we process and hold, in compliance with the terms of both UK GDPR and other associated Data Protection Legislation.*
Equality/Diversity Implications	*The Data Strategy's aim is to enhance informed data driven decision making which can improve citizen experiences and promote equality.*
Sustainability Implications	*The Data Strategy can support sustainability by enabling Trafford to identify and address key environmental, social, and economic challenges, such as reducing carbon emissions.*
Carbon Reduction	*The Data Strategy can support better data driven decisions to support carbon reduction.*
Resource Implications e.g., Staffing/ICT /Assets	*Some actions within the Data Strategy are resource dependent.*
Risk Management Implications	*No direct impact.*
Health & Wellbeing Implications	*Health and wellbeing will be improved through the implementation of this Data Strategy through improved data.*
Health and Safety Implications	*No direct impact.*
Socioeconomic duty Implications	*The Data Strategy supports the Socioeconomic duty.*

1. Background and Overview

1.1. The Council's statutory data obligations are of paramount importance for compliance with legal requirements regarding data collection, processing, storage and sharing. Data is also a key enabler to delivering our Corporate Plan and providing the basis for good decision making to improve our services and the lives of our residents.

1.2. Currently the Council does not have a data strategy and therefore given the importance of data it is essential the Council adopt a strategy. This Data Strategy aims to provide a single operating framework for the organisation placing data at the core of decision-making and sets out a pathway to further develop data capabilities which support our strategic and operational priorities.

1.3. This strategy describes our ambitions for how we will use data in the Council, and the accompanying action plan details the practical activity that we, as an organisation, will undertake to achieve these ambitions over the next few years. Data is the currency of digital innovation and improvement, through proper utilisation of what is created, stored, merged, analysed, controlled, protected, and shared through the digital processes and systems across the Council.

1.4. Engagement with teams and key data owners has helped to develop this data strategy and we thank all of those involved in this work.

1.5. Therefore, this strategy is based upon four pillars which will ensure our ambitions are achieved:

Data Governance: Defines the overarching vision for data management; establishing a governance framework that outlines roles, responsibilities, and accountability for data management.

Data Quality: Seeks to improve data quality across the Council by establishing a data quality framework.

Data Culture: Develop a data literate Council, encouraging the learning of skills and capabilities across the workforce enabling all to make the best use of the data we hold.

Data Integration: Build a data asset (or single corporate data environment) of increasing value to the Council and our key partners that reduces silos and allows for crosscutting intelligence to improve services for residents.

1.6. To achieve our bold ambitions the implementation of the strategy will demand a focus on governance, quality, people/culture and integration, as well as data and technology.

1.7. The Data Strategy supports our statutory obligations and complements and enables other strategies, including the Corporate Plan and the Council's Digital Strategy, to be delivered as is describes an improved approach to analysis and reporting enabling accurate forecasting and robust decision making, supporting a more effective and efficient service for our residents, members, communities, businesses, and partners to deliver sustainable change.

1.8.   The Data Strategy provides the overarching vision for how Trafford will make data everyone's business and empower all to turn data into insights and intelligence which drive improvement and innovation.

1.9.   The Data & Information Governance Board (DIGB) will be established with the responsibility for overseeing the Data and Information Governance initiatives and programmes of work. The Board will include representatives from all the Directorates to ensure a holistic approach and accountability for data and information governance across the Council. The board will be advised by technical and statutory officers and will report into the Corporate Leadership Team. The Board will produce periodic reports to the Executive and other relevant committees.

2. Challenges to Delivery

2.1   With delivering any new strategies, challenges exist that, if not addressed, will impact on overall delivery. A summary of the challenges and how we are addressing are outlined below.

   a. **Prioritising the governance and management of our data** in the same way we do so for other vital assets and resources such as our finances. We do not have a clear policy that establishes governance arrangements and business processes around ownership and usage of data. Inconsistent creation, maintenance and control of the same key data in multiple places leads to problems and inefficiencies.

   b. Ensuring the organisation **understands and values data and actively seeks to use it.** Having high quality and fit for purpose data that is recorded in a timely manner to enable Trafford to become truly data enabled.

   c. **Data immaturity** can mean that the intelligence and insights that could be produced from our data aren't as impactful as they could be, affecting our ability to make evidence-based decisions and deliver effective services.

   d. Developing **sufficient capacity** in the Data and Insight Team to be able to manage the increase requirements is a key challenge to delivery with other statutory pressures.

   e. **Addressing missing capabilities, skills and behaviours** to ensure so that the foundations are in place to improve our data. Developing and improving these skills and behaviours to support the effective use of the data will improve confidence in using data to make decisions.

   f. **Potential gap in skill level** in the organisation due to the current distributed nature of analysts, especially in capabilities that we are ambitious to improve on such as predictive analytics. Although there is a small centralised Data Team that mainly report on Children's and Adults Services, there are other analysts that are working outside of the core team. There is leverage by considering to have a more centralised data team. Data resourcing will be explored and reviewed in the coming year.

   g. **Lack of knowledge** amongst officers around information governance and data sharing processes and what our residents think about how we use their

data. As the volume of data continues to grow without proper governance there are risks of data being retained without need or a clear purpose.

h. Putting in place the **processes and systems to manage** and fully exploit our data, for example by establishing clear accountability and responsibility for managing it or taking the time to understand our data architecture and the potential for our systems to be more joined up.

i. **Silos of data** exist across the organisation and, whilst they support their primary functions, opportunities have been missed to fully exploit it because data within the Council (and between other organisations) are often incompatible for connection, sharing and wider re-use for other purposes which sum to a greater benefit. Further consideration is also required about the management of data and its storage.

j. Digital and IT is a key enabler to the Data Strategy. **Pressures** within IT Service can sometimes cause delays in addressing data priorities. To support better integration and sharing of priorities a new Data and Digital Working Group has been set up. Access to data, tools to support better analysis and ongoing support with the Data Platform will be critical. The tools currently available, whilst powerful and capable of making excellent use of data, are not always the most appropriate for maximising the impact of data. Access to a wider range of packages and libraries for analytical software and add-ons to Power BI would enable a broader range of activity, driving innovation and increasing efficiency.

2.1. The Data Strategy aims to go some way to resolving some of these challenges and helps us to achieve our ambitions to improve our data and provide a mechanism to better control and use data: Data that is high quality, consistent and well defined, with clear ownership and accountability for its management, and providing us with greater confidence and trust in our data, making us more effective at using it for the benefit of our residents.

3. Benefits to Data Strategy

3.1. Through the Council's adoption of the Data Strategy there will be several tangible benefits including:

- **Better Decision-Making and improved insights**: Having access to all relevant information leads to a better understanding of the issues at hand and allows for a more informed decision which considers the breadth of data available. It will also support better risk management and make us more proactive.

- **Tell it once:** Information relating to residents is provided once and shared across the Council reducing the need for residents to repeat themselves to different departments. Especially around sensitive subjects such as notification of death. This will also improve resident's access to accurate and up to date information and reduce data silos.

- **Increased efficiency**: Data expertise can result in identification of process and operational efficiencies, freeing up time and resources to be used in other areas to support the Council.

- **Innovation**: The data and digital landscape are evolving at a rapid pace, this data strategy supports Trafford adapting to the changing market conditions and technologies to improve data-driven insights to guide strategic direction. Leading to staff continually upskilling to meet these technical requirements and being at the forefront of data innovation.

- **Regulatory Compliance**: Better data governance and compliance, results in better management, storage and sharing of data. Improved understanding of data ownership and how everyone's role has an impact on retention and ensuring we meet our legal requirements.

4. Recommendations:

4.1.   It is recommended that Executive note the Data Strategy.

Key Decision: No

If Key Decision, has 28-day notice been given? N/A

Finance Officer Clearance:

Legal Officer Clearance:

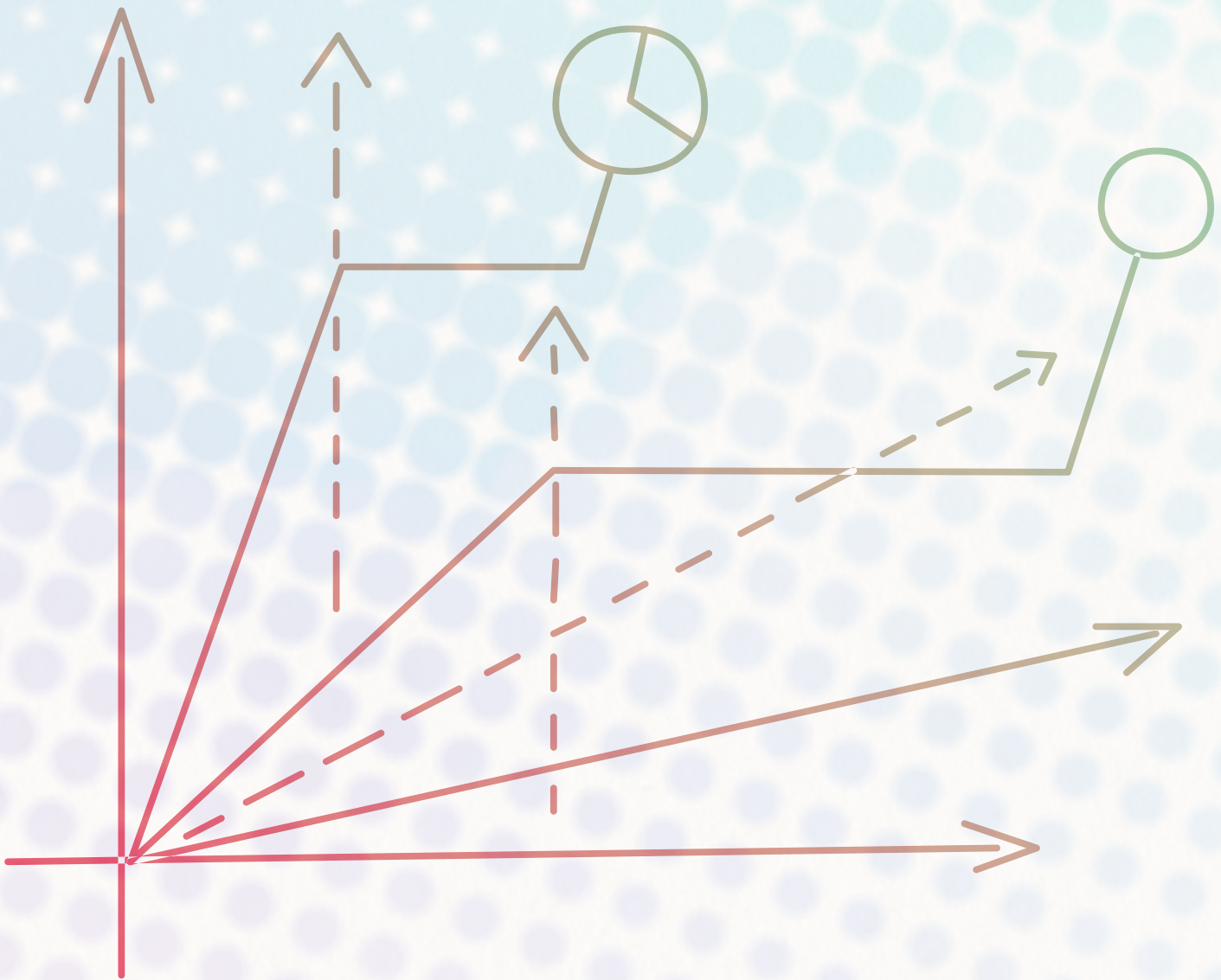**DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE & CORPORATE DIRECTOR'S SIGNATURE***:*
To confirm that the Financial and Legal Implications have been considered and the Executive Member has cleared the report.

TRAFFORD COUNCIL
DATA STRATEGY

FOREWORD

Cllr Joanne Harding,
Executive Member for Finance, Change & Governance

The award-winning film Moneyball stars Brad Pitt as the manager of the Oakland Athletics, a Major League baseball team. With a much smaller budget than everyone else, they realise they have to be smarter than everyone else in order to compete. And so they develop Moneyball – a strategy based on smart data to find the most undervalued players to help their team to success. The method not only works – they reach the playoffs and record the best ever winning streak in the American League – the system they use has now been adopted by the rest of baseball.

Our data strategy is no less important. Like the Oakland Athletics, our budget is smaller than the rest of Greater Manchester. We therefore need to be more agile and work smarter so that we can continue to provide support to vulnerable residents and address our corporate priorities. That means taking using data to our advantage, placing it at the core of what we do. We cannot just fall back on methods that worked well in the past – with so much data around, we can identify what is needed, we can use data to drive our programmes of work and we can use data to measure their success.

Our new Corporate Plan has priorities that are ambitious but achievable. This new data strategy will play a key role in helping us to deliver on our ambitions. By using data, we will be able to measure our successes and identify where we need to improve. Those measurements will also help us to tailor our future programmes of work to achieve more with less. In short, this data strategy will help us achieve our vision of a borough where all are residents, businesses and communities thrive.

Sara Saleh,
Deputy Chief Executive & Corporate Director of Strategy and Resources

Welcome to our Data Strategy for 2024-27. This is our plan for how we will collect, process, and analyse data to realise the full potential of our Corporate goals. The strategy outlines the types of data we will focus on, the tools and technologies we will use to manage the data, and the processes and policies that will be put in place to ensure the data is used effectively.

It's important that people can trust us with their data. Whether it is paying Council Tax bills, applying for benefits or applying for school admissions, so much is now done online. But people must be able to trust us to handle their data, securely and competently. This Data Strategy highlights our commitment to residents to be transparent about our data principles and foster a culture of responsible data use to demonstrate our commitment to ethical data practices.

By using data, we can become more efficient as a Council. This is so important when our finances are so stretched. This strategy therefore will help us to identify the right data to use as well as optimising our use of data and analytics. By doing this we can be more flexible as a Council, enabling us to identify and meet the changing needs of our residents and businesses so we can continue to deliver on behalf of our borough.

Over the next four years we will therefore make even better use of data and insight as we continue to deliver our Corporate Plan. We will proactively seek data and business intelligence that can help with decision making and ensure we continue to be transparent in how we use, keep and store data

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Data Strategy outlines the Council's ambition to use data intelligently, placing data at the core of strategic planning and decision-making, setting out a pathway to further develop data capabilities that can support the delivery of our strategic and operational priorities. It sits alongside and in support of the Council's Digital Strategy and describes an improved approach to analysis and reporting which enables accurate forecasting and robust decision making, supporting a more effective and efficient service to members, residents and employees.

Data is the currency of digital innovation and improvement. It is what is created, stored, merged, analysed, controlled, protected, and shared through the digital processes and systems the Council implements.

This strategy will aim to improve the four pillars:

Data Governance: Define the overarching vision for data management; establish a governance framework that outlines roles, responsibilities, and accountability for data management.

Data Quality: Seek to improve data quality across the Council by establishing a data quality framework.

Data Culture: Develop a data literate Council, developing the skills and capabilities to make the best use of the data we hold.

Data Integration: Build a data asset (or single corporate data environment) of increasing value to the Council and our key partners that reduces silos and improves services for residents.

DATA GOVERNANCE

DATA QUALITY

DATA CULTURE

DATA INTEGRATION

DATA IS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

It is widely acknowledged that expectations of public services are changing. With an ever-increasing demand for good quality services to be delivered in a timely and efficient way, it has never been more important that we put value for money at the forefront of our thinking, ensuring that we understand our data and evidence base to design services in the best and most innovative way. Key to this is the development of our use of data, the volume of which has grown exponentially since the Covid pandemic. Expectations in terms of how the data is applied, analysed, and presented to inform decision-making is essential to ensure we obtain maximum value from the data that we hold.

Data is a key strategic asset that requires the development and implementation of a Data Strategy. We need to better utilise the power of data to transform current data silos, data usage and data understanding which leads to fragmented services and difficulty understanding residents' needs.

The adoption of the strategy will require a commitment to developing the necessary infrastructure, governance, culture and develop skills and capabilities. Trafford's Data Strategy aim is to improve the ways the Council manages, stores, shares, and uses its data.

By harnessing the power of data, the Council can gain insights that enable evidence-based decision-making, identify emerging trends, and optimize service delivery to meet the evolving needs of citizens. This will be supported by a data enabled culture with strong sponsorship of leadership.

The benefits of a Data Strategy are many, including enhanced efficiency, informed decision making, improved citizen experience, and increased innovation. A Data Strategy can also support sustainability by enabling Trafford to identify and address key environmental, social, and economic challenges, such as reducing carbon emissions, promoting social equity, and supporting economic growth.

The strategy and delivery plan are enabled by modern technological solutions supported through IT/Digital and the revised Digital Strategy. This includes a cloud computing platform and usage of machine learning and Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies, such as natural language processing. This platform can also help to automate repetitive tasks, improve customer experience, and support more personalized service delivery.

The Corporate Plan outlines Trafford Council's strategic vision, emphasizing key outcomes and priorities essential for effective delivery. It provides a framework for the Council's actions, detailing collaborative efforts with residents, communities, businesses, and partners to drive sustainable change. By prioritizing resources and monitoring progress, the plan aligns with strategic financial planning and enhances accountability.

Given current changes, including the cost-of-living crisis and increased devolution, the plan highlights the need to broaden priorities and strengthen services for our communities. This data-centric approach will ensure targeted interventions and measurable outcomes, ultimately fostering resilience and growth across the borough.

Data is a key enabler of the corporate plan, giving us the ability to track how well we are performing in relation to our 5 corporate priorities and giving insights to drive data driven decisions to improve the lives of our residents and the services we provide for them.

The best start for our children and young people

Culture, sport and heritage for everyone

TRAFFORD
where all our residents, businesses and communities thrive

Healthy and independent lives for everyone

Address the climate crisis

A thriving economy and homes for all

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The Government introduced a Data Strategy in 2020 National Data Strategy - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) and data quality framework in December 2020. The Data Strategy has four pillars covering data foundations, data skills, data availability and responsible data.

Within Greater Manchester (GM) the 'GM Information Strategy', adopted in 2023, lays out a vision to create a better data and information ecosystem across the region and ensure that GM is utilising data and information in the best ways for residents and organisations.

The Council has a number of statutory duties and legal obligations in respect of the data that we process and hold, in compliance with the terms of both UK GDPR and other associated Data Protection Legislation. Trafford is committed to ensuring that we operate in a compliant and secure manner. The Information Commissioners Officer (ICO) and UK Government are seeking to make changes to the legislative framework to ensure it keeps pace with the increasing sophistication of data use in our digital age. Trafford aims to align with best practice as recommended by the ICO.

There has never been a greater need to develop a Trafford Data Strategy that can support the alignment to the National Data Strategy and the GM Strategy. While the Council faces increased budget pressures, data must be seen as a key asset and invested in to develop our capabilities to harness benefits and opportunities from new technologies. We need leadership buy-in to build a data-led culture where everyone has a role to play – data is a strategic asset for all services areas.

Without a clear data strategy and a commitment to effective data management, the Council risk wasting resources and making decisions based on incomplete or inaccurate information. This can lead to subpar services for our residents.

A reactive approach to data management not only hinders our ability to deliver quality services but also means the Council will miss valuable opportunities to leverage data analytics for innovation and improvement.
Trafford can use data to improve infrastructure, and planners can use it to design smarter town centres to improve quality of life and to attract more investment. Smart cities data initiatives use technology and data analytics to enhance urban living by using sensors and IoT (Internet of Things) devices to collect data which can integrate into centralised platforms and be used to predict trends, such as traffic, air quality or public safety.

The government has a wide-ranging ambitious agenda for data around health and social care which is outlined in the Care Data Matters roadmap and the Think Local Act Personal report. Realising the benefits of this will be a key enabler of changing and improving people's lives and putting them at the heart of our data usage, clearing showing a person-centred approach to their needs. The government plans also seek to address data gaps including those around outcomes for people who use local authority services and receive care and support.

The volume of data has grown significantly in the past two years and expectations around what we can do with data has also grown. Advances in big data technologies and cloud computing have made it easier to capture, store, and analyse large datasets, further driving data growth and requirements. The volume of data will continue to increase as technology evolves and more applications become connected. It is therefore essential that we manage this data and ensure it is safely stored and used. A lack of information governance can increase the risk of data breaches and cyberattacks, as sensitive information may not be properly protected. Effectively managing our data will support our regulatory compliance and improve our ability to identify and mitigate risks.

DATA STRATEGY VISION

This strategy is for 2024-2027 which aligns to our Corporate Plan.

Our vision for Trafford is:

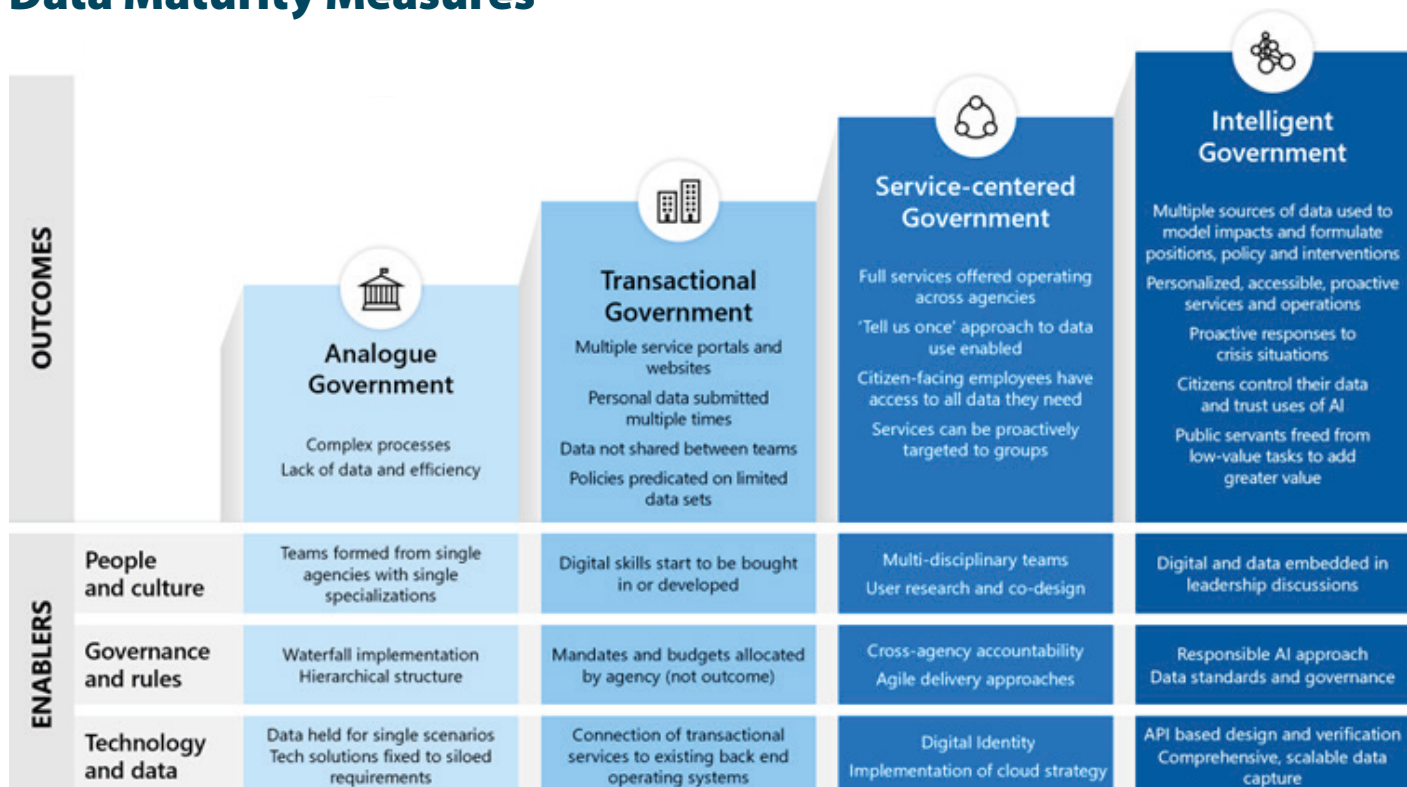# TRANSFORMING DATA TO ENHANCE DECISION MAKING FOR OUR COMMUNITIES

DATA MATURITY

A data mature organisation utilises its data to its full potential by understanding data use, promoting data culture and effectively managing data to reduce inefficiencies and improve insights. To understand our strengths and capabilities that already exist, a data maturity assessment was undertaken to understand the current strengths and gaps.

Considering the guidance from the Government's data maturity framework found at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/data-maturity-assessment-for-government-framework, and LGA Data Maturity Assessment (https://datamaturity.esd.org.uk/),

Our current assessment is that Trafford operates as a Transaction Government – as represented in the figure 1 below. This means that data is often held in silos and services across Council departments don't routinely share data (e.g. if someone moves address, they will need to notify multiple Council teams). Our ambition is to operate as an Intelligent Government.

Data Maturity Measures

		Analogue Government	Transactional Government	Service-centered Government	Intelligent Government
OUTCOMES		Complex processes. Lack of data and efficiency	Multiple service portals and websites. Personal data submitted multiple times. Data not shared between teams. Policies predicated on limited data sets	Full services offered operating across agencies. 'Tell us once' approach to data use enabled. Citizen-facing employees have access to all data they need. Services can be proactively targeted to groups	Multiple sources of data used to model impacts and formulate positions, policy and interventions. Personalized, accessible, proactive services and operations. Proactive responses to crisis situations. Citizens control their data and trust uses of AI. Public servants freed from low-value tasks to add greater value
ENABLERS	People and culture	Teams formed from single agencies with single specializations	Digital skills start to be bought in or developed	Multi-disciplinary teams. User research and co-design	Digital and data embedded in leadership discussions
	Governance and rules	Waterfall implementation. Hierarchical structure	Mandates and budgets allocated by agency (not outcome)	Cross-agency accountability. Agile delivery approaches	Responsible AI approach. Data standards and governance
	Technology and data	Data held for single scenarios. Tech solutions fixed to siloed requirements	Connection of transactional services to existing back end operating systems	Digital Identity. Implementation of cloud strategy	API based design and verification. Comprehensive, scalable data capture

This was informed by the LGA Data Maturity Assessment conducted in Trafford from 24 January to 24 February 2024 across a number of different Council departments. Overall, the assessment highlighted that Trafford had the following characteristics:

- A developing capacity and capabilities in terms of data.
- A developing culture that supports the use of data, but services are mostly delivered according to existing practice rather than evidence of the needs of local people.
- Some senior leadership commitment to the use of data.
- Some investment in systems and tools for data.
- Reasonable levels of skills and capabilities in relation to data.
- Compliant with statutory data governance responsibilities, holding data securely and aware of risks and cyber security issues.
- Basic data engagement arrangements in place.

Some of the key challenges identified were:

- Key data is still held off systems in silos, with data duplication and waste, making it difficult to generate insight, understand customer journeys, and monitor inequalities.
- Inconsistent governance and control over our data, with identified data quality improvements to be made.
- Lack of universal data standards, making it difficult to integrate data.
- Some datasets are inaccessible or difficult to interrogate, while others are held by partners with limited data sharing in place.
- Not making the most of cloud technologies to build the rapid and scalable data management and exploitation capabilities that we will need in future.
- Need to address skills gaps, for both colleagues who provide data services and the wider workforce.

- Need to improve the recognition of importance of data in many areas, with a related lack of accountability and awareness of ownership responsibilities.
- Quality of data is not always seen as a priority and results in additional effort and costs.

Another maturity measure is the Councils utilisation and integration of Unique Property Reference Numbers (UPRNs) into Council address systems. Full integration can provide a standardised way to reference properties improving data accuracy and creating a common identifier to help ensure that all data related to that property is accurate and up to date. This can also facilitate better data sharing between services and allows for better property tracking which can inform regeneration and development strategies.

In a 2023-2024 GeoPlace assessment, Trafford's level of UPRN integration was rated as 6.2/10, the national average is 6.7. Based on Trafford's integration score, they categorise our level of maturity as Level 2 of 5 along with ~43% of councils. GeoPlace estimate that better integration of address data will represent a return on investment of approximately 6:1. GeoPlace and the Local Government Association have developed a series of resources to support Local Authorities with data integration which will support Trafford's Data Strategy action plan.

Conduction this data maturity assessment has helped us to evaluate and identify how we utilise, and manage data and the steps Trafford needs to undertake to increase our maturity and develop our data landscape. Our data maturity assessments have helped us to develop our strategy and create a roadmap of improvement and focus over the next three years and provides the basis of the four pillars we will build upon to improve our data maturity and tackle the challenges faced.

PILLARS SUPPORTING THE DATA STRATEGY

To support the ongoing development incorporating the key challenges identified in the maturity assessment four pillars have been identified to deliver the Data Strategy.

| DATA GOVERNANCE | DATA QUALITY | DATA CULTURE | DATA INTEGRATION |

DATA IS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS
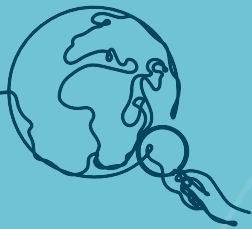
Data Governance

We will

- Set up Data and Information Governance Board
- Define and develop a data governance framework
- Co-produce a data charter with key stakeholders
- Create data policies and ethical use standards

Aim: Implement consistent governance and control mechanisms ensuring compliance with data protection regulations. Develop clear policies and frameworks for ethical data handling to build public trust and enhance the delivery of services.

Data governance ensures that data is gathered, organised, and used appropriately.

There is currently a mixed model with data being stored in a variety of locations and no clear governance applied. This has resulted in key data being stored and manipulated using local solutions and spreadsheets, outside of core systems.

It is important to know what data we hold across the Council. A data catalogue is a well organised inventory of information about a specific data set, where data is held, who owns it, and how often it is updated. In pursuit of better data and information governance there should be a board created in the organisation to ensure that there is an agreed approach to data management and strategic use. The Data and Information Governance Board will strengthen accountability and establish clear lines for reporting and decision making for data and information governance matters.

Data Quality

We will
- Assess current data quality
- Develop data quality standards
- Up-skill staff across the council to improve data quality

Aim: Define data quality standards, conducting regular audits, and addressing data issues to reduce the additional effort and costs associated with poor data quality.

High quality data is indispensable to Trafford's operations and decision-making processes, serving as the foundation upon which informed choices are made.

Accurate and reliable data enables the Council to allocate resources effectively, prioritise interventions based on need, and measure the impact of its policies and programs.
Good data quality focuses on the several key areas: accuracy, completeness, consistency, timeliness, relevance, and accessibility as outlined in the Government Data Quality Framework (The Government Data Quality Framework - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk).

Our data will need to include accurate unique identifiers if we want to be able to join data sets/match information. Matching data between two data sets can be challenging if there aren't consistent data standards applied.
Council staff taking a 'right first time' approach when inputting data into systems and ensuring they understand their roles and responsibilities for the inputting of data will help improve data quality.

Data Culture

We will
- Promote data literacy
- Encourage data driven decision making
- Recognise and share success
- Drive innovation through better use of data

Aim: Create a culture where individuals recognise the importance of data, understand their ownership responsibilities, and are held accountable for data-related outcomes.

By build our data capabilities and improve our data literacy we will embed a culture of learning and curiosity for data. A data culture is where data is seen as everyone's job and data is seen to support outcomes at all levels.

Staff will be skilled and empowered to use data and understand their role in maintaining data. The skills and learning needed to promote a behavioural change in our use of data will include looking at our mandatory training to understand the basic level of data literacy needed. Learning and development span the related areas outlined in this strategy, including areas such as records management, governance, data ethics, data security and GDPR.

Development is also required for tailored training aimed at specialist data careers. The types of skills include PowerBI, data visualisation, dashboard development, SQL, Python, R, Dax etc. We will also explore data analytics and data science apprenticeship programmes and other options to up-skill our current workforce.

CASE STUDY: TRAFFORD DATA LAB

Trafford Data Lab's focus is on open data and the data science principles of transparency, reproducibility, and visualisation in our outputs, as set out in our mission statement: "The Trafford Data Lab supports decision-making in Trafford by revealing patterns in data through visualisation.

We are committed to publishing open data and using open-source tools to encourage a transparent and reproducible analytical workflow."

The website includes web apps, interactive reports, charticles, and open data datasets with metadata created all with accessibility features, allowing the broadest possible audience to access information about Trafford, Greater Manchester and beyond as easily as possible.

Our outputs are used across the Council for many purposes, both by teams and elected members, including helping to identify areas of focus for projects, providing statistical and demographical information about our residents, and providing high quality visualisations to include in reports and presentations.

Equally our resources are also used externally too, with many organisations successfully obtaining grant funding thanks to the information we provide, and organisations such as the NHS using our code in their own projects.

Data Integration

We will

- Improve data sharing
- Realise the benefits of data interoperability
- Implement data sharing tools using a modern data platform

Aim: Prioritise data integration by breaking down silos and eliminating data duplication. Establish a centralised data repository and implementing data governance practices, key data will be streamlined, reducing waste, and making it easier to generate insights and understand customer journeys.

Integrating data across the Council ensures that decisions are made with a comprehensive understanding and that all relevant parties have timely access to the right information.

By breaking down silos and connecting information, users no longer need to repeat their stories to multiple services, leading to more efficient and cohesive decision-making.

This integration fosters the exchange of ideas and insights, enhancing overall problem-solving and innovation within the Council.

Implementing a modern data platform is key to achieving these goals. It not only facilitates the seamless flow of information but also ensures data security and appropriate use. By removing barriers and aligning data practices, the Council can achieve a unified view, improving the quality and effectiveness of decisions while protecting sensitive information.

Data interoperability refers to the ability of different systems, applications, or organisations to exchange and make use of data seamlessly. This means that data can be shared, understood, and used across various platforms without the need for complex conversion processes. Interoperability enables systems to communicate effectively, ensuring that data remains consistent and actionable regardless of where it originates.
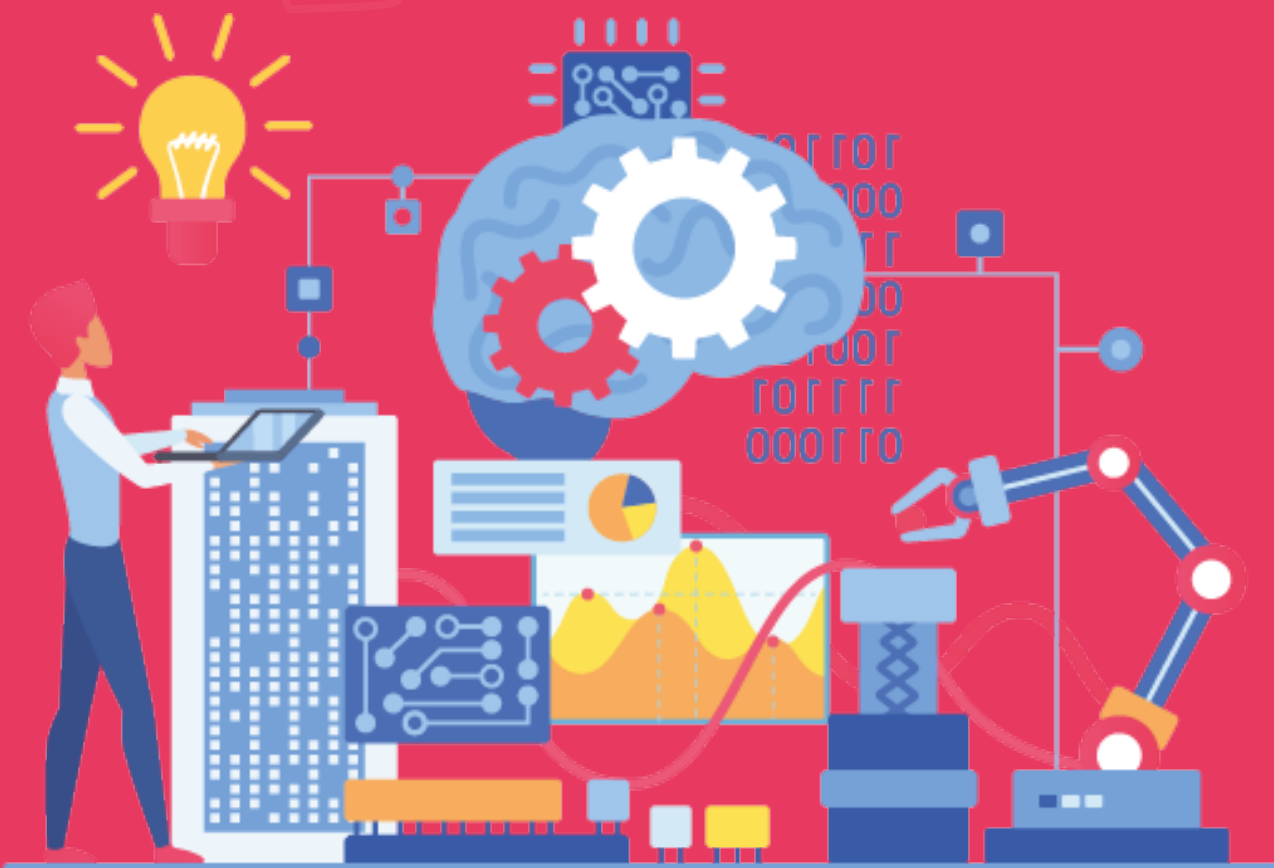
DIGITAL CAPABILITIES

Improved digital infrastructure and systems integration will: provide a much richer source of data and intelligence; deliver efficiencies; and link different organisational approaches to support whole system care and support across the Borough. As Trafford utilises Microsoft tools, described below are the key applications which will be leveraged to fully realise the data available.

Data Platform

A modern data platform provides a suite of tools to effectively manage data through ingestion, transformation, analysis. It would consolidate siloed data into a single source of truth, enabling accurate reporting, better services to residents and a clearer, more joined up understanding our Trafford as a whole.

Through engaging in the Microsoft Data navigator process with supplier ANS we identified that we would like to adopt a modern centralised data platform in Azure to consolidate siloed data sets. A Microsoft solution has built up Trafford's architecture through use of Microsoft E5 licences. The Data Platform includes these key components: orchestration of the identified data source and ingesting data; data storage; data processing and serving; and visualisation.

The diagram for the Data Platform is outlined below:
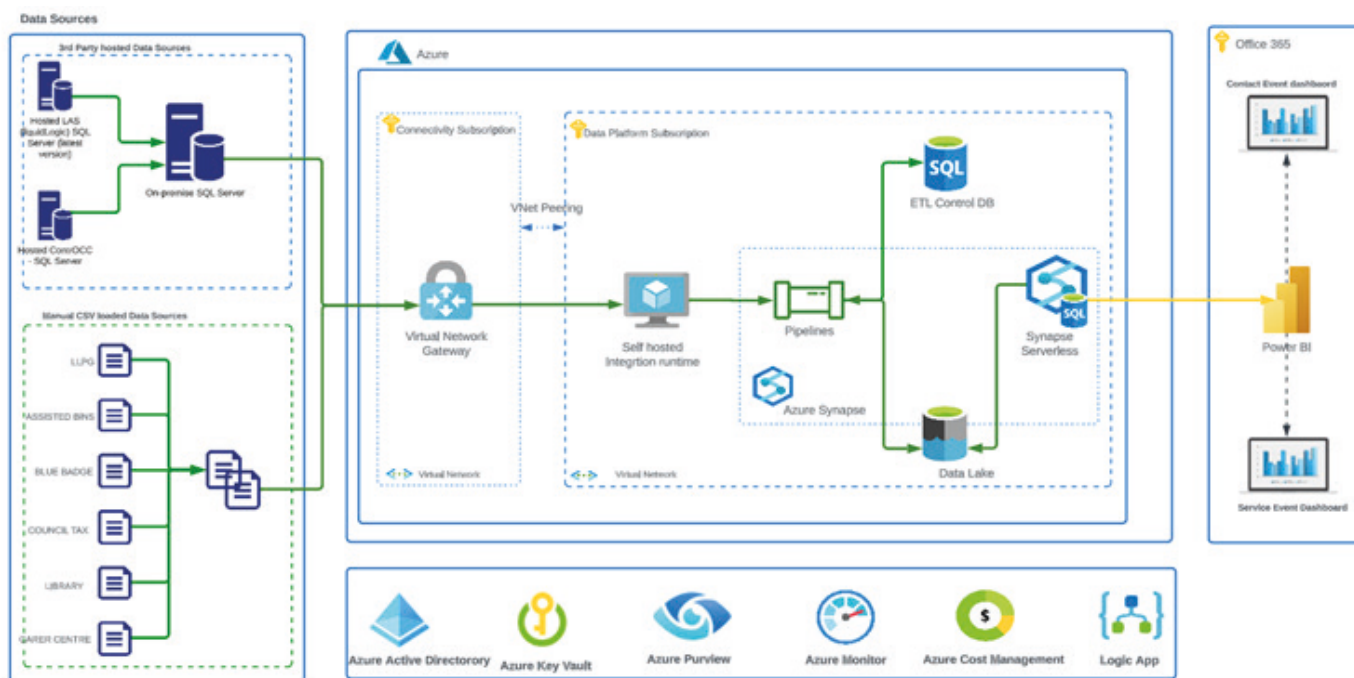
The first use case for the Data Warehouse project objective was to identity those residents at high risk of presenting for social care and attempt to reduce or even prevent that need. Understanding how Trafford can keep older/vulnerable people fitter, healthier, and happier for longer. We did this by combining different data sets in the data warehouse and assigning risk scores to certain factors.

The benefits of the use case are:

- Providing a proactive service rather than reactive one.
- Focusing on prevention - preventing unnecessary care costs, reducing hospitalisation, preventing falls, and preventing higher costs and stress on services.
- Providing clear data, trends and forecasting for the commissioning of new services, direction setting for external providers and internal use of Community Hubs .
- Identifying those individuals who are not known to us to try and connect with community assists to delay their requirements for social care and reduce demand.
- Potentially avoiding around £150K to £300K cost per year.

The data warehouse is also being used for the GMCA Data Accelerator Project. In August 2020, the GMCA commissioned Social Finance to undertake a discovery project to understand whether digital technologies could be used to improve the way data was collected and used as part of the Supporting Families Programme. The outputs from the discovery project supported a successful regional bid to the Data Accelerator Fund, initiated by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in May 2021.

In April 2022, the GMCA appointed ANS to support GM to take a more data driven approach to solving complex problems within the region. In particular, ANS were asked to support GM in designing and implementing a distributed data mesh, that would allow greater cross-region data sharing and analytics of the resulting datasets. Trafford was one of four GM local authorities to participate in the Data Accelerator Project.

Supporting Families is about working with the whole family, not just the children, or a single family member. Families are often trying to deal with more than one problem at a time. This can make it difficult for families to get the right help and support. Although each family is different, many have issues relating to: crime and anti-social behaviour; education, children not in school; worklessness, adults on out-of-work benefits; problems with drugs and/or alcohol; physical or mental health problems; domestic violence and abuse; families at risk of homelessness or unmanaged debts.

Each family will have a family plan and a lead professional who will help co-ordinate support services, and who they can contact when they want to talk about things or need further help. The data for these families sits across different systems so it is difficult to understand what service interventions and outcomes are for the families.

The Data Accelerator project supports the GM Strategic ambition for "building responsible, data driven public services". Consideration is now being given to the future use cases of the Data Mesh – areas such as homelessness, missing persons, and Early Years. Below is a diagram of the GM Data Mesh:
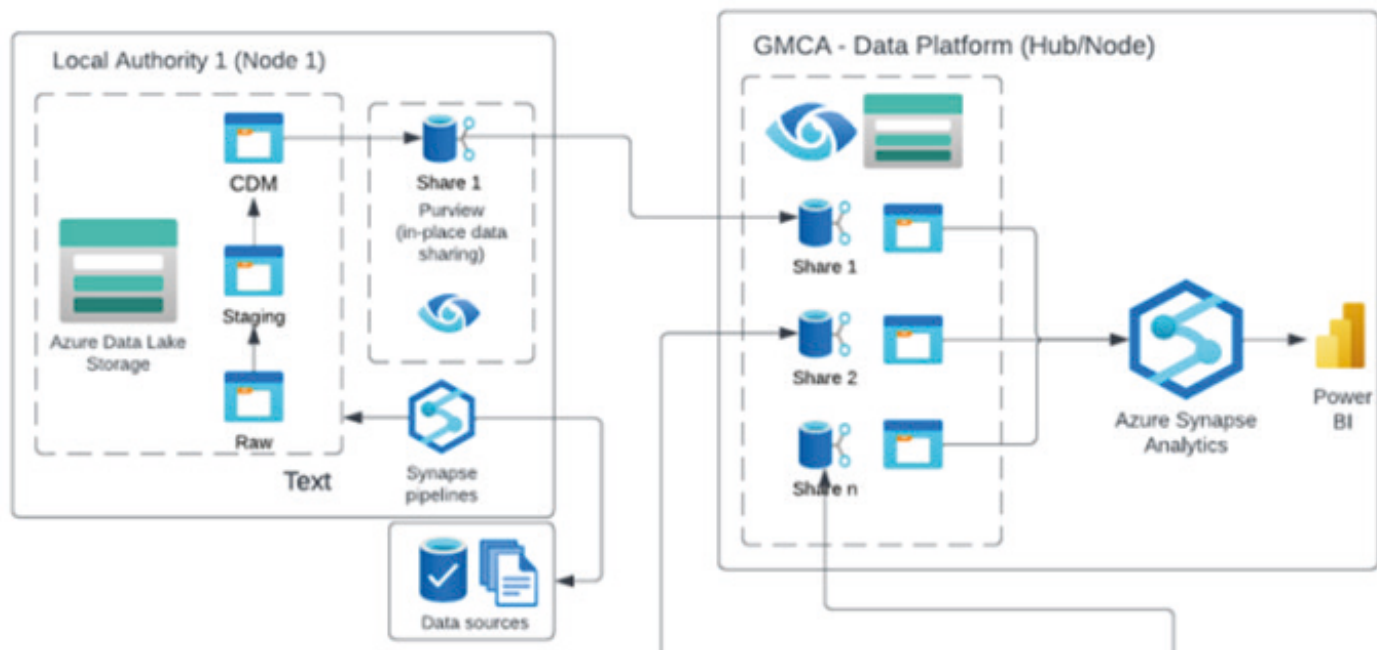
Power BI

Power BI provides reports and dashboards for business insights that enhance data driven decision making. Power BI is being developed to create interactive data visualisation and dashboards for services to enhance current reporting and promote ownership of data through self-service access to timely data.

Work is currently under way within the Insights and Intelligence Service to create a Power BI Centre of Excellence. Power BI Centre of Excellence (CoE): aims to ensure the optimal use of Power BI, thereby enhancing its data-driven decision-making capabilities.

Procurement needs to focus on ensuring any new systems have appropriate operational and statutory reporting capabilities, where data warehousing should be utilised for joining datasets togethers to enhance insights.
Procurement processes also need to consider how data can be extracted from source systems.

Third party companies can charge for an API (application programme interface) or offer only manual downloads of data. This can make the cost of accessing our own data prohibitive, and consequently it becomes difficult to join data sources to derive deeper insights. New systems should, where appropriate, also to link to the local land and property gazetteer (LLPG) for addresses. When the address gazetteer is used, a unique property reference number is attached to the record which makes it much easier when joining together data sets in the data warehouse.

Digital transformation will support better use of data through the provision of better processes, software, and capabilities previously unknown or underutilised. Leading to improvements in data interoperability and enabling systems to communicate effectively, ensuring that data remains.

CASE STUDY: URGENT CARE CONTROL ROOM

The Urgent Care Control Room is a critical service to the Council ensuring that people are discharged from hospital in a timely way with a care package that supports them when they leave the hospital. Without an adequate care package people can be delayed from leaving hospital.

The Urgent Care team were using a spreadsheet to track and manage admissions and discharges to and from hospital. Around 10 team members would be reading from and updating the spreadsheet at any one time.

The data in the tracker was then used to produce a variety of manual reports daily.

Over time the data had grown significantly to over 3500 rows in over 20 columns. Poor data quality due to human error was evident, caused by the lack of validation in excel. Lack of mandatory fields caused important data to not be captured. Reporting from the data is a repetitive manual process that must be completed daily.

The data processes were transformed using the below methods:
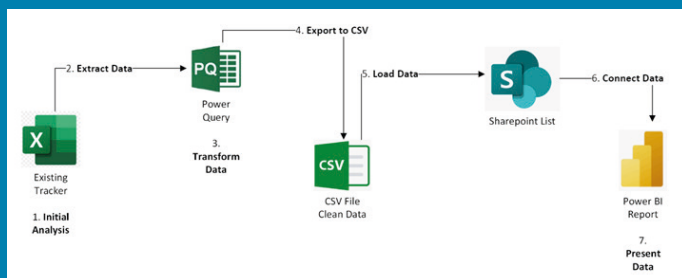
SharePoint lists were created to create consistent data types and validation rules were added. Views of the existing list have been configured which give the team members quick access to specific data. The team now have automated reporting that provides accurate up to date reporting across a variety of measures including: All Discharges, Active Referrals, All Referrals as well as data quality reporting.

The work has supported better data quality too - the Urgent Care team were able to work through the list and retrospectively populate all 269 instances of the referrals missing a discharge date. This now gives a clear picture of the volume of discharges over time. The teams are very pleased with the data driven approach which saves them time to focus on the more important task of managing the discharge out of hospital.

ENTERPRISE ARCHITECTURE

Data and reporting requirements need careful consideration as part of system procurement processes. Many applications used by Council services do not always offer sufficient reporting capabilities. This then leads to spreadsheets and other databases sitting outside of the applications to compensate which can create additional data loss risk or data securely implications.

Procurement needs to focus on ensuring any new systems have appropriate operational and statutory reporting capabilities, where data warehousing should be utilised for joining datasets togethers to enhance insights. Procurement processes also need to consider how data can be extracted from source systems.

Third party companies can charge for an API (application programme interface) or offer only manual downloads of data. This can make the cost of accessing our own data prohibitive, and consequently it becomes difficult to join data sources to derive deeper insights. New systems should, where appropriate, also to link to the local land and property gazetteer (LLPG) for addresses. When the address gazetteer is used, a unique property reference number is attached to the record which makes it much easier when joining together data sets in the data warehouse.

Digital transformation will support better use of data through the provision of better processes, software, and capabilities previously unknown or underutilised. Leading to improvements in data interoperability and enabling systems to communicate effectively, ensuring that data remains.

DEVELOP AND INVEST IN DATA ROLES

To support a successful Data Strategy means bringing many people across an organisation together and acquiring new skills and redefining roles.

The Council will make use of appropriate Business Intelligence and data science capabilities to maximise data driven decision-making and provide clear tools to enable enhanced decisions.

The Council has access to significant amounts of data (often referred to as 'big data'). These data can be used to inform service provision and assist with directing Council activity towards best serving the needs of residents both now and into the future. To tap into the value within our data assets, the Council must invest in new skills and activities in the areas of business intelligence and Data Science.
To manage data services effectively, Trafford will need to have a clear and well-defined structure that includes key roles and responsibilities.

Many data mature organisations have dedicated data roles which for example:

- Chief Data Officer: is responsible for the overall data strategy and management of data assets within the organisation. They ensure that data is collected, processed, and used in a way that is compliant with legal and ethical standards. The chief data officer also provides strategic guidance on the use of data to drive innovation and inform decision-making.
- Data Scientist: is responsible for developing and implementing advanced analytics techniques, such as machine learning and artificial intelligence, to uncover insights from data. They work closely with the data analysts to develop models that can be used to predict future trends and identify opportunities for innovation.

- Data Engineer: is responsible for designing, building, and maintaining the infrastructure and systems that enable organisation to collect, store, process, and analyse data. Creating data flows which integrate datasets from a range of sources in a robust way to ensure analysis has a clear lineage back to data input.
- Data Solutions Architect: is responsible for data cataloguing and applying the best practices for the data platform application, data publishers/ data product owner guidance, and data patterns.

As we mature, Trafford must consider these types of roles when structuring our future operating model and changing landscape. There could be a phased approach to implementing the roles as Trafford become more data maturity the invest into data roles will also need to grow and scale up. Implementing defined data roles can lead to significant cost savings and benefits, and enhance Trafford's ability to leverage data effectively and drive service improvements.

A well-structured data services team with clear roles and responsibilities is critical to effectively manage data services. These key roles and responsibilities should be designed to meet the unique needs of the organisation and ensure that data is being used effectively and ethically. Without these dedicated specialist data roles the Council will not fully realise the potential of the strategy and it will become a barrier to scaling data initiatives effectively.

This aligns to the Governments Digital, Data and Technology Profession Capability Framework (DDaT) - Digital, Data and Technology Profession Capability Framework. To support Trafford's Data and Digital professionals' skills levels, training should become aligned to this. This will improve recruitment and retention to data and digital roles.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

We are entering a new era of AI, one that is fundamentally changing how we relate to and benefit from technology. Artificial intelligence can help transform public services in the UK by increasing efficiency, improving decision-making, and providing better citizen services. AI has been around for many years and recently a new category of Generative AI has emerged.

With the Azure data platform Trafford is utilising there is potential to integrate Co-pilot and Microsoft's wider AI platform capabilities. This will allow Trafford to leverage the AI solution to do more within our existing architecture.

Trafford's AI readiness needs to include consideration of governance arrangements, having policies in place, development of ethical use standards and oversight to ensure responsible deployment. Clear use cases highlighting the benefits, opportunities, risks, and support requirements will need to be fully scoped and understood before implementing and integrating into Council services.

While AI will be a powerful tool, it must not be forgotten that it is only a tool. Proper oversight and ethical approval must be adhered to when utilising AI for decision making purposes with an understanding that a human will ultimately make any decision which impacts a resident.

Data and AI can play a crucial role in enabling early intervention in public services, which can help to prevent problems from escalating and reduce the demand for more costly and intensive interventions. Some Local Authorities are already using AI to collate and summarise documents, for example one LA is using AI to ingest information gathered as part of the Education, Health, and Care (EHC) Plan assessment process to assist in the decision-making process and the writing of EHC plans. This is just one example of a multitude of areas for application which will need evaluating on a case-by-case basis to understand their benefits. As technology and capability evolves, we must continually ask ourselves what is possible and explore the use of artificial intelligence and machine learning to improve our services.

For AI to be useful and assist to it's full potential the data it uses as inputs must be clear, accurate and timely. If not, the outputs may be inaccurate and could lead to poor and incorrect decision making. The pillars of this Data Strategy will be essential to moving Trafford along the maturity matrix and bring us closer to realising the benefits that AI can provide.
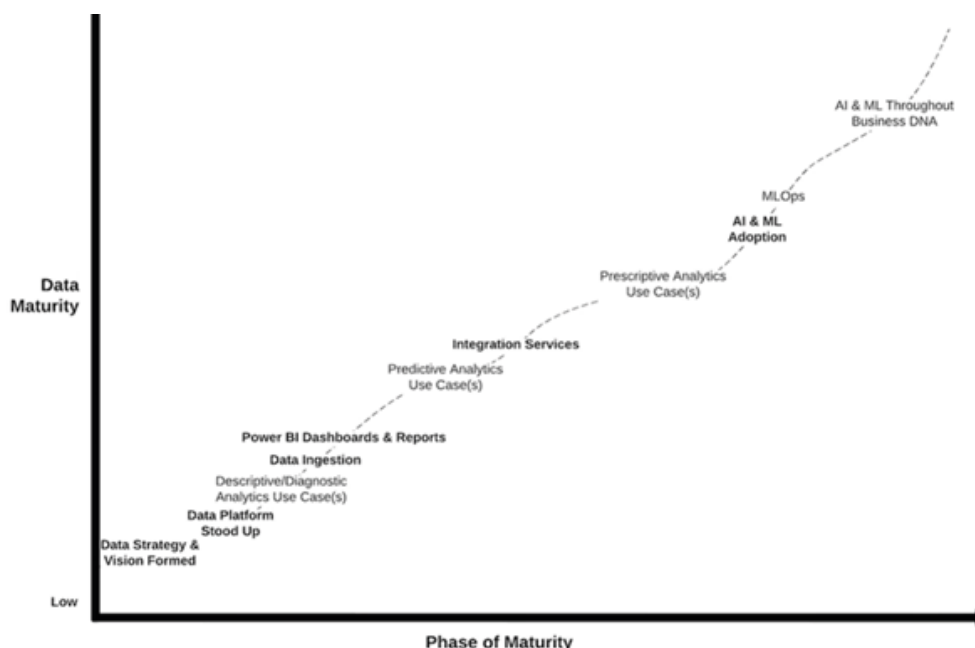
CASE STUDY: PREDICTING ENTRY INTO CARE AND WHAT FACTORS CAN DELAY MOST EFFECTIVELY

This project is one of the first forays into an in-house data science project for Trafford. Using data associated with residents who enter residential and nursing care, an investigation was undertaken to highlight areas and influences leading to that care commencing.

Once in care, people often remain there for a long time, if not the rest of their lives. Identifying possible ways to delay this entry while encouraging those people to continue living full lives should not only keep the resident independent but also make saving for the Council.

Aims are to:

- Investigate the effectiveness of different types of equipment and adaptations to delay an adult's entry into residential or nursing care settings.
- Look into whether demographics and/or household composition also influence or affect this process.

The image below gives an overview of the data project processes: extracting, transforming, modelling and presenting conclusions.
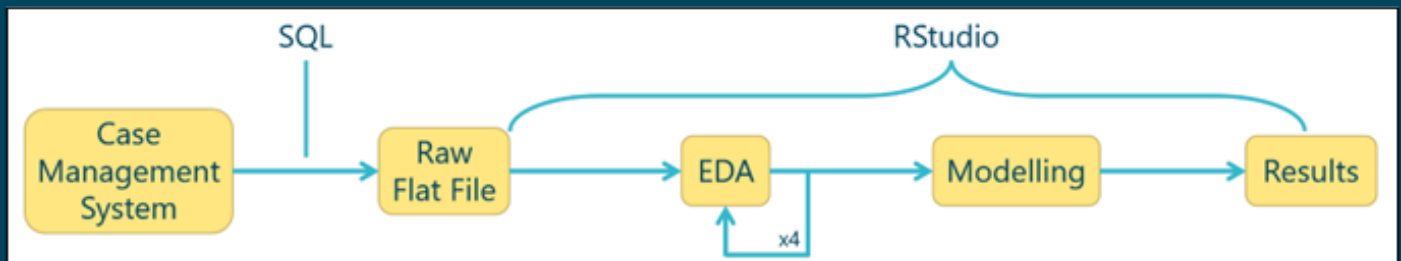
The Multinomial regression model used to make predictions from the combined 33 variables had an accuracy of 69%, when predicting the number of years between an adult becoming known to social care and then entering residential or nursing care.

Further analysis of the model indicated that those who had equipment or major adaptations in place at the time they entered care had the highest influence on this duration.

Further investments in data science projects like this one can lead to better prevention of risk and decision making in relation to our residents and commissioning of services to assist residents.
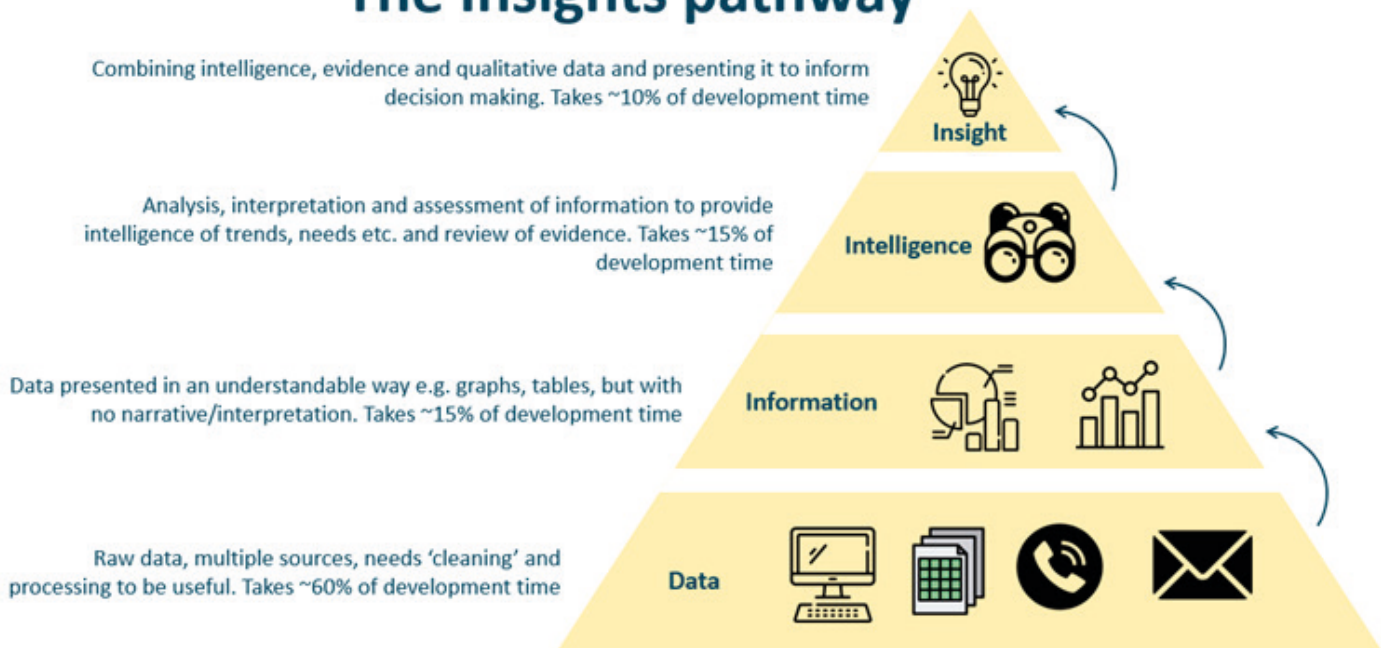
ACTION PLAN

There is a detailed action plan aligned to the pillars (appendix 1) which covers the short, medium and long-term goals. This plan will continue to be developed and iterated on over the period of this strategy. Particularly with the pace of change with technology and the growth of data.

Data is everyone's in the Council responsibility, and the Data Strategy is an important step on our way to becoming a truly data-driven organisation. The following diagram highlights the different stages in the process of gaining useful insights from data.

Raw data alone is not useful – it requires cleaning and processing before we can begin to obtain value from it. Improving the quality of our inputting and storage of data will enable more time to be spent deriving insights and intelligence from it, improving efficiencies throughout the Council.

By following the structured action plan and improving our data maturity, Trafford can effectively realise the benefits of data interoperability, leading to improved collaboration, enhanced decision-making, and ultimately better outcomes for our communities.

The Insights pathway

Combining intelligence, evidence and qualitative data and presenting it to inform decision making. Takes ~10% of development time — **Insight**

Analysis, interpretation and assessment of information to provide intelligence of trends, needs etc. and review of evidence. Takes ~15% of development time — **Intelligence**

Data presented in an understandable way e.g. graphs, tables, but with no narrative/interpretation. Takes ~15% of development time — **Information**

Raw data, multiple sources, needs 'cleaning' and processing to be useful. Takes ~60% of development time — **Data**

APPENDIX 1: ACTION PLAN
Data Governance

ACTION PLAN ID	WE WILL	DELIVERY PLAN ACTION	MILESTONES/ACTIVITIES SO FAR	DELIVERY/ START DATE	CHALLENGES/RISKS
DG001	Define and Develop a Data Governance Framework	Create a Data and Information Governance Board	Define the Terms of Reference, Set up Boards	Nov-24	Staff or departments may resist the new data stewardship roles and responsibilities.
DG002	Define and Develop a Data Governance Framework	Data Custodians: Designated staff responsible for the technical aspects of data management.	Outline the responsibilities, authority, and scope of Data Custodians' role. Selection and appointment of data stewards. Develop training for data custodians. Set up a Teams Channel for Data Custodians.	Nov-24	Define the roles in 2024 roll out in 2025
DG003	Define and Develop a Data Governance Framework	Data Stewards: Appoint individuals responsible for managing and overseeing data quality within specific domains.	Outline the responsibilities, authority, and scope of Data Steward's role. Selection and appointment of data stewards. Develop training for data stewards. Set up a Teams Channel for Data Stewards.	Nov-24	Define the roles in 2024 roll out in 2026
DG004	Define and Develop a Data Governance Framework	Data Owners: Assign accountability to business leaders for the data within their areas of responsibility.	Outline the responsibilities, authority, and scope of Data Owners role. Develop training for data owners. Set up a Teams Channel for Data Owners.	Nov-24	Define the roles in 2024 roll out in 2027
DG005	Create Data Policies and Standards	Implement automation for routine governance tasks to improve efficiency and reduce manual errors. Including the data team having access to the full power platform capabilities as citizen developers.	Complete a comprehensive assessment of current routine governance tasks that could benefit from automation. Build automation scripts or use case-specific automation solutions. Conduct a pilot test of the automation solutions. Implement automation solutions across all relevant tasks and processes. Provide training and support to users who will interact with the automated systems. Compare pre- and post-automation metrics, gather feedback from users, and report on the outcomes.	Mar-25	Automation tools may not integrate well with existing systems or technologies. Employees may resist changes or struggle to adapt to new automated processes. Automation tools could introduce new security or privacy vulnerabilities if not properly managed.
DG006	Create Data Policies and Standards	Create documentation for data management practices, data quality standards, and compliance requirements	Data quality framework in development, links to the Quality pillar	Jan-25	General enough to cover all Council processes.

DG007	Create Data Policies and Standards	Create a data catalogue, encompassing all data stored and recorded by Council staff for and about our residents.	Due to the scope this would need completing on a directorate/service basis. Initially look at 5 teams/areas to create a prototype.	Mar-25	Maintenance where the sources, systems and processes change over time
DG008	Create Data Policies and Standards	Data Classification: Define how data should be classified based on sensitivity, importance, and regulatory requirements.	Run in parallel with the cataloguing	Mar-25	Maintenance where the sources, systems and processes change over time
DG009	Create Data Policies and Standards	Data Access Control: Set policies for who can access, modify, and share data.	Working with Data owners to understand who should have access to their data and how they should access it.	Nov-24	Maintaining the documentation and users in the groups who can access and know who should access datasets
DG010	Create Data Policies and Standards	Data Lifecycle Management: Define procedures for data creation, storage, usage, archiving, and deletion.	Ensure this is covered in the creation of the framework and catalogue	Mar-25	Clear retention policies ensuring the deletion of data occurs promptly and correctly.
DG011	Create Data Policies and Standards	Set up a Data Wiki on a SharePoint site to record data documentation, work guidance and data dictionaries to assist analysts and data custodians	Trafford Analyst Group Teams channel has been set up.	Dec-24	Maintaining the wiki so that it is useable and current
DG012	Create Data Policies and Standards	Public facing Data charter describing how the Council uses residents' data to improve	Resident engagement to co-produce a data charter	Oct-25	Engagement needs to cover a broad range of views and residents
DG013	Create Data Policies and Standards	Data Ethics standards governing the ethical use of data	Creating clear standards and procedures for data usage, ensuring consistency and compliance with the governance ToR and charter	Aug-25	Pace of technology, and potential bottle neck of approval process
DG014	Create Data Policies and Standards	Keep abreast of developments in Artificial Intelligence and how it can be used to enhance the use and understanding of data	Work with IT Digital on pilot projects using Microsoft copilot.	Feb-25	Continued development and learning takes time and resource to keep up to date.

APPENDIX 1: ACTION PLAN
Data Quality

ACTION PLAN ID	WE WILL	DELIVERY PLAN ACTION	MILESTONES/ACTIVITIES SO FAR	DELIVERY/ START DATE	CHALLENGES/RISKS
DQ001	Assess Current Data Quality	Conduct audits to evaluate the current state of data quality. Identify key issues such as inaccuracies, inconsistencies, or missing data.	Conduct an audit per directorate in year 1 with plans for review. Where applicable develop Data Quality Improvement Plans to document common data quality issues and their root causes and develop an action plan for improvement	Apr-25	Ensuring we know about/have access to all datasets. Some people/ teams may not want to share.
DQ002	Develop Data Quality Standards	Data Quality Management Framework: Establish guidelines for maintaining data accuracy, consistency, and completeness.	Framework signed off by governance board	Feb-25	Uptake and adherence by teams.
DQ003	Monitor Data Quality	Implement Data Quality Processes including data profiling, data cleansing and implement validation rules to check data accuracy and integrity during data entry and processing.	Transitioning data recording from excel to SharePoint lists to standardise data input and validation. - Urgent Care - FOI management	Sep-24	Time taken to cleanse into the correct format for new ways of recording
DQ004	Monitor Data Quality	Set up data quality monitoring processes for continuous monitoring and improvement of data quality.	Existing dashboards to include a data quality tab, to monitor key missing data	Sep-24	Engaging with the reports and implementing corrections
DQ005	Train Staff	Train data entry personnel on best practices and the importance of accurate data entry.	Training videos, best practice examples, lunch and learn/ staff engagement sessions	Sep-24	Engagement and utilisation of resources

APPENDIX 1: ACTION PLAN
Data Culture

ACTION PLAN ID	WE WILL	DELIVERY PLAN ACTION	MILESTONES/ACTIVITIES SO FAR	DELIVERY/ START DATE	CHALLENGES/RISKS
DC001	Promote Data Literacy	Offer training and development programs to improve employees' data skills, including data analysis, visualisation, and interpretation.	Standardise the onboarding process, with sessions and data sources relevant to a person's role	Jul-25	Maintaining and updating the training offering in line with new developments and limited budget available.
DC002	Promote Data Literacy	Adoption of the Data Strategy and alignment to other key priorities for the Council	Strategy approved at executive and presented at let's talk sessions	Nov-25	Data owners and managers see this as a priority area that will drive improvement
DC003	Promote Data Literacy	Quarterly Lunch and Learn Data Strategy sessions for staff	Create a program of topics related to the data pillars	Apr-25	Attendance and clear purpose
DC004	Promote Data Literacy	Consider recruitment and onboarding processes for staff to ensure new hires understand the importance of data	Work with recruitment to define data elements of job roles being advertised and how that can assist with new ways of working.	Oct-25	Potentially miss out on candidates without strong Data Literacy but excellent domain knowledge, there needs to be a balance.
DC005	Promote Data Literacy	Promote and invest in the training of data specialist and data specific apprenticeships	Training for existing staff	Jun-25	Limited by budget constraints and time capacity
DC006	Encourage Data-Driven Decision Making	Creating a comprehensive data team operating model	Identifying gaps in data roles	Nov-25	Budget limitations for these roles
DC007	Encourage Data-Driven Decision Making	Implement more self-service analytics tools that allow users to access, analyse, and visualise data without requiring extensive technical expertise.	Creation of endorsed datasets which 'citizen developers' can use to have the ability to create more service specific reports	Nov-24	Phased rollout

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DC008	Encourage Data-Driven Decision Making	Embed data into everyday business processes and decision-making workflows.	Take up and engagement with the data quality assurance processes Having a rotation of a couple of teams every two or so months where we have in depth discussions about their data processes, etc. Data Surgery - Internal	Nov-24	Reliant on prior data audits and assessments, directorate/service approach
DC009	Encourage Data-Driven Decision Making	Define metrics and key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure the effectiveness of data initiatives and the impact on business outcomes.	Ownership of data quality audit outcomes and working to the designed action plan. Regular Data Culture Survey	Nov-24	Reliant on prior data audits and assessments, directorate/service approach
DC010	Recognise and Share Success	Share examples of successful data-driven decisions and their impact on the business to illustrate the value of using data in staff newsletters.	Have a bi-annual data segment in the corporate sway/newsletter, tying into lunch and learns/data sessions	Dec-24	Data stories need to found which people will find engaging and informative
DC011	Recognise and Share Success	Develop new innovative data projects which encourage employees to explore and experiment with data to uncover new insights and drive innovation.	Working with subject matter experts in each of the directorates to co-create a data project.	Sep-26	Resources for data projects around time and budget are limited
DC012	Drive innovation through better use of data	Sharing and promoting open data resources so that people know how data is used externally and how it influences policy	Showcasing the Trafford Data Lab to Councillors, leaders and the wider workforce	Dec-24	Attendance - ensuring these sessions are prioritised
DC013	Drive innovation through better use of data	Adoption of a performance framework, showing how data and information feeds into the wider corporate and directorate plans	Corporate plan detailing in-house metrics is underway and will be signed off by the end of 2024	Nov-24	Data owners and managers see this as a priority area that will drive improvement
DC014	Drive innovation through better use of data	Creating an offering to residents on how to use and access data	Working with the community hubs/community services to provide these sessions	Sep-25	Finding residents with interest in engaging and resources to put on the sessions.

APPENDIX 1: ACTION PLAN
Data Integration

ACTION PLAN ID	WE WILL	DELIVERY PLAN ACTION	MILESTONES/ACTIVITIES SO FAR	DELIVERY/ START DATE	CHALLENGES/RISKS
DI001	Assess Integration Needs	Create a data inventory catalogue of all data sources that need to be integrated, including databases, applications, and external data sources.	Scope out the extent of the data held and maintained by the Council, working through the directorates	Mar-25	Partner agencies willingness/ capability to undertake data sharing agreements
DI002	Assess Integration Needs	Clarify the purpose of data integration and priorities for data integration (e.g., reporting, analytics, operational efficiency).	Data catalogue to understand how the enterprise architecture will facilitate and allow for integration	Mar-25	Engagement with the data owners, so that they understand the technical complexities of data integration but also the benefits once in place.
DI003	Realise the benefits of data interoperability	Develop Data Mapping and Transformation Rules to define how data from different sources will be mapped to a common schema or data model and establish rules for data transformation to ensure consistency, quality and compatibility across sources.	Using suite of Microsoft products including Dynamics. The pilot will be contact centre and complaints.	Jan-25	Finding the right tools to do this but also the collaboration with data owners for compliance
DI004	Improve Data and Information Sharing	Data and Information sharing agreements	Review of current agreements with a process of continued review and updating with the Information Governance team	Dec-24	Agreements in place without documentation or knowledge around creation and use
DI005	Develop Integration Strategy	Create and integrate APIs to improve open data usage	Trafford Data Lab utilises APIs currently to curate links to open data. Use similar principals to integrate internal datasets into the common data model	Mar-25	Costs of implementation associated with internal systems
DI006	Implementing data sharing tools	Modern Data Platform	Building on the current Data Accelerator and Data Warehouse case studies two new further use cases to be developed	TBC	Depends on further capital funding

DI007	Implementing data sharing tools	Better documentation around the creation and usage of endorsed datasets	We need to be storing scripts/resources using git repositories to improve our resilience, collaboration, and follow best development practice (will be useful for SQL scripts and R/python development)	Dec-24	Version control procedures need to be maintained consistency and documentation needs to be kept current
DI008	Implementing data sharing tools	Work with the IT Digital Team to identify the most appropriate technical solutions based on tools available to the Council.	Python has been rolled out along with Power BI report Builder	Sep-24	Timeframes and capacity to test and roll out new tools
DI009	Implementing data sharing tools	Enterprise architecture formatted so that the different data sources and systems have a high level of interoperability allowing for data integration	Working with IT digital to understand the enterprise roadmap and how data need and usage factor in.	Jan-25	Alignment of resources
DI010	Realise the benefits of data interoperability	Improve UPRN integration and automation of address updating in core systems across the Council	Work together with the Address Custodian to improve interoperability in areas where Trafford scored lower in GeoPlaces assessment	Mar-26	All newly procured systems need to be able to correctly handle address data and UPRN. Data cleansing will be required in some systems.

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