

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Executive
Date: 18 December 2024
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	<i>The Data Strategy will help inform data driven decision making to deliver on a better start for children and young people.</i>
Healthy and Independent Lives for Everyone	<i>The Data Strategy will help inform data driven decision making to deliver on a better health for people.</i>
A Thriving Economy and Homes for All	<i>The Data Strategy will help inform data driven decision making to promote a more equal economy.</i>
Address the Climate Crisis	<i>The Data Strategy will help provide key data on activity around the climate crisis.</i>
Culture, Sport and Heritage for Everyone	<i>The Data Strategy will help provide the data to promote the culture, sport and heritage in the borough.</i>
Relationship to Policy Framework/Corporate Priorities	<i>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.</i>
Relationship to GM Policy or Strategy Framework	<i>The Data Strategy is aligned to the Greater Manchester (GM) policy and strategy where required.</i>
Financial	<i>There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.</i>
Legal Implications:	<i>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.</i>
Equality/Diversity Implications	<i>The Data Strategy's aim is to enhance informed data driven decision making which can improve citizen experiences and promote equality.</i>
Sustainability Implications	<i>The Data Strategy can support sustainability by enabling Trafford to identify and address key environmental, social, and economic challenges, such as reducing carbon emissions.</i>
Carbon Reduction	<i>The Data Strategy can support better data driven decisions to support carbon reduction.</i>
Resource Implications e.g., Staffing/ICT /Assets	<i>Some actions within the Data Strategy are resource dependent.</i>
Risk Management Implications	<i>No direct impact.</i>
Health & Wellbeing Implications	<i>Health and wellbeing will be improved through the implementation of this Data Strategy through improved data.</i>
Health and Safety Implications	<i>No direct impact.</i>
Socioeconomic duty Implications	<i>The Data Strategy supports the Socioeconomic duty.</i>

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 it 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: GB

Legal Officer Clearance: EM

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.

