TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to:	**Executive**
Date:	**27/01/25**
Report for:	**Information**
Report of:	**Leader of the Council**

<u>**Report Title**</u>

Trafford Council Digital Strategy 2025-28

<u>**Summary**</u>

This report provides a summary of Trafford Council's Digital Strategy.

<u>**Recommendation(s)**</u>

It is recommended that the Executive:

1. Note the Digital Strategy.

<u>Contact person for access to background papers and further information:</u>

Name: Paul James, Chief Digital Officer
Extension: 07790369528

Background Papers: None

CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS	
The Best Start for our Children and Young People, Healthy and Independent Lives for Everyone, A Thriving Economy and Homes for All, Address the Climate Crisis and Culture, Sport and Heritage for Everyone	The Digital Strategy will support digital transformation of Services; enable staff to work efficiently; and provide reliable IT infrastructure and applications to support delivery of each of the Council's corporate priorities.
Relationship to GM Policy or Strategy Framework	The Digital Strategy is aligned to the Greater Manchester Digital Blueprint (2023-26) and the Greater Manchester Health and Care Digital Transformation Strategy (2023-27).
Financial Considerations	There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Digital investment is proposed and managed via the Council's Capital Programme.
Legal Implications:	There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. Any related procurement will be undertaken with support from STAR procurement

CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS	
	and will follow procurement legislation. The control, storage, and use of data will be done in accordance with the Council's information security processes and will comply with data protection legislation.
Equality/Diversity Implications	Empowering Trafford residents and communities to improve their skills and confidence, particularly among those who are digitally excluded; and enhancing the council website so that services are easy to use and accessible are Digital Strategy priorities. Equality Impact Assessments will be produced for specific projects, where appropriate.
Sustainability Implications	Sustainability is a key theme within the Council's Digital Enterprise Architecture Principles and considered when planning digital projects and investment. Examples of digital work where sustainability is considered are - an agile workforce reduces travel; re-using existing systems; reducing the amount of unnecessary data stored; the Council's Data Centre and Cloud Strategy.
Resource Implications e.g. Staffing / ICT / Assets	Delivery of the Digital Strategy involves a large and complex portfolio of projects. Existing resources will deliver most of the projects but additional resource may be required for some projects or the targeted delivery timescale may need to be extended.
Risk Management Implications	There are no direct risk management implications arising from this report. Digital and IT risks are managed via the Corporate and Service risk management processes.
Health & Wellbeing Implications	The health and wellbeing of residents, communities, and the workforce is a key consideration for many of the projects within the Digital Strategy. The aim is to ensure that digital solutions are designed and delivered to support improved health and wellbeing.
Health and Safety Implications	There are no direct health and safety implications arising from this report.
Socioeconomic duty Implications	The Digital Strategy supports the Council's socioeconomic duty. Specifically, via the - digitally skilled residents and a thriving digital economy priority.

1.0   Background and Context

1.1 Digital performs an important role in supporting the Council and partners to deliver the vision and priorities for the borough. Digital enables the workforce and Council services to operate more efficiently and to better meet the needs of Trafford residents, communities, and businesses.

1.2 Trafford has developed an updated Digital Strategy for 2025-28 which reflects the refreshed Corporate Plan and priorities. The updated Digital Strategy also builds on the excellent foundational work delivered through the 2020-23 Digital Strategy and explores the potential of digital innovation to support service modernisation and improvement. The ambitions set out in the Council's Digital Strategy and Delivery Plan will be an important contributor in achieving Trafford's Corporate Plan outcomes. Trafford's strategy has been developed in alignment with other locality, regional, and national strategies.

1.3 Trafford will continue to deliver and embed the Digital Target Operating Model (TOM) which is designed around three tiers of support for the people and businesses of Trafford, and improvements to internal operations and corporate support functions. The aim is to move services, support, and transactions to lower cost delivery models where appropriate, without compromising on the user experience.

1.4 Not all people will be able to access digital services for a variety of reasons; and not all services can be delivered digitally. However, increasing the range and use of digital services releases council resources to support more complex needs through non-digital channels.

2.0 Digitally Ambitious Trafford

2.1 There is much to do over the next four years, with the commitments under each of the Council's digital priorities needing to be delivered due to business priorities, existing digital solutions at their end of life, or necessary improvements to how the IT & Digital Service operates.

2.2 *Easy to use and accessible website and digital services.* Trafford's residents and businesses want to engage with the Council through digital channels but expect a high-quality experience. People will abandon these channels or choose alternatives if the experience is poor or if they cannot find what they need. The move to Digital can help achieve efficiencies while improving the customer experience. It also allows the Council to redirect resources to support those who are most in need and require more complex, direct support.

2.3 *Digitally skilled residents and a thriving digital economy.* Digital technology is becoming an increasingly important part of people's lives and how businesses operate. Therefore, enabling our residents to access digital services and develop the skills to engage with the digital world is a key focus. The Council will also collaborate with industry to enhance the borough's digital infrastructure and economy.

2.4 *Modern digital tools and training for the workforce.* Digital tools and digital ways of working allow employees to maximise their potential and work more efficiently. The Council delivered new tools to the workforce in 2023 and will continue to implement all the available features as these tools evolve. Support with adoption and changes to business processes is the focus for 2025 to fully maximise the Council's investment. Further work will be done on automating mundane and repetitive tasks to free employees' time so they can focus on more valuable and productive work.

2.5 *Secure, reliable, and resilient digital infrastructure and business applications.* Technology underpins most Council services and is becoming increasingly complex, requiring a more coordinated approach to management and support. Investments in technology must be carefully planned to incorporate service modernisation and address the changing needs of residents. Technical solutions and business

application roadmaps, guided by an Enterprise Architecture approach, along with effective contract and supplier management, ensure the Council can effectively manage its digital estate.

2.6 ***Effective IT & Digital support, maintenance, and project delivery.*** The IT & Digital Service is the primary delivery function for Trafford Council, responsible for managing, supporting, and maintaining most IT solutions and infrastructure used across the organisation. Significant improvements have been made in recent years, including the launch of the IT Hub and enhancements to IT processes and policies. Further improvements are planned to strengthen service provision, optimise processes, and enhance governance.

3.0 Primary areas of focus and priorities for 2025

3.1 There is real scope for improvement of the Council's website to ensure that residents are able, with ease, to access the information and services they need digitally. The IT & Digital Service will work with business areas to improve their content and online services. This can be achieved by using the existing tools and approaches implemented through the 2020-23 Digital Strategy. Substantial improvements to the website, online services, and internal processes will be prioritised during 2025.

3.2 Emerging technology opportunities will be explored but the primary focus for 2025 is to progress the wealth of foundational improvement work already identified with existing tools. Artificial Intelligence (AI) opportunities will be investigated, as this is expected to unlock new ways of service delivery, but this will be focussed on proof-of-concept initiatives during 2025.

3.3 As a lean Council with great ambitions, it is inevitable that the work described within the Digital Strategy and Delivery Plan will need to be prioritised and resourced appropriately. The IT & Digital Service will work with individual directorates to review their business plans and facilitate prioritisation through the Finance and Change Board. When working effectively this should ensure resources are focussed on progressing the most important and beneficial re-design areas.

3.4 A Digital Enterprise Architecture approach and principles were introduced during 2023 to provide an organisational view of the council's digital infrastructure, data, and business solutions. Roadmaps for business applications and IT infrastructure have been captured in detail, which enables a proactive approach to planning upgrades and replacements. A business partner model will be explored to help strengthen relationships with stakeholders and increase awareness of digital opportunities.

4.0 Consultation

4.1 Internal consultation with Directorate Management Teams and other stakeholders has been undertaken and the draft Digtial Strategy was updated to incorporate the feedback. Resident consultation on the Digital Strategy was not undertaken but resident feedback and input is regularly sought on the website and other digital services to ensure their needs are fully understood and digital services are easy to use and accessible.

5.0 Recommendations

5.1 It is recommended that the Executive note the Trafford Council Digital Strategy.

6.0   Key Decision: No

Finance Officer Clearance: *GB*
Legal Officer Clearance: *EM*

CORPORATE DIRECTOR'S SIGNATURE

To confirm that the Financial and Legal Implications have been considered and the Executive Member has cleared the report.

G. Bentley