



REPORT TO:	Cabinet
DATE:	29 March 2023
SUBJECT:	South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership – Digital Strategy and ICT Roadmap
PURPOSE:	To bring forward a shared Digital Strategy and ICT Roadmap for the South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership that provides direction of travel for future Digital/ICT developments.
KEY DECISION:	No
PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	Councillor Paul Skinner, Leader of the Council
REPORT OF:	James Gilbert, Assistant Director – Corporate
REPORT AUTHOR:	James Gilbert, Assistant Director – Corporate
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	N/a
EXEMPT	No

SUMMARY

When the South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership was formed the Business Case approved by each Council identified key areas of activity to be taken forward to facilitate the Partnership ambitions in relation to improved services to communities and greater service efficiency.

This report brings forward a Digital Strategy and ICT Roadmap (Appendix A) for the South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership. This Strategy would replace existing ICT/Digital Strategies in each Partnership Council.

The implementation of a shared Digital Strategy and ICT Roadmap is one of the identified top 10 priorities for the Partnership in the approved work programme.

The Strategy has been reviewed by a Partnership Scrutiny Task Group. The findings and recommendations from that Task Group are appended to this report at Appendix B.

Ongoing development/investment in Digital and ICT – in an ordered way – will ensure the Councils can maximise the benefits of technology to deliver services and improve service efficiency.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership Digital Strategy and ICT Roadmap at Appendix A be approved.
2. That the findings of the Joint Scrutiny Task Group (Appendix B) be noted.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

For the Councils to maximise the benefits of Digital/ICT in driving efficiency and better serving residents, a shared Digital Strategy for the Partnership, supported by an ICT Roadmap, is required to set out the approach to be taken to future system alignment, investment and development. The Partnership is in a fortunate position in that Public Sector Partnership Services (PSPS) is the Digital/ICT provider to each of the three Councils. A shared Strategy for the Partnership (and PSPS) will benefit PSPS by enabling the company to better plan and deploy resources to focus on common Digital/ICT priorities that support the Partnership's ambition rather than there being competing priorities from individual Councils.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Do nothing – each Council continuing to have its own approach to Digital/ICT is possible but wouldn't be in line with the approved Partnership Business Case. Digital/ICT is a key 'enabler' to achieve much of the ambition set out in the Business Case and is identified as an action in both the Work Programme and Annual Delivery Plan (both of which have been approved by Council).

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1.** When the South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership formed the approved Business Case identified an opportunity to align several areas of policy and strategy across the Partnership.
- 1.2.** In recognition that Digital/ICT is an important enabler for the Partnership and much of the ambition set out in the approved Partnership Business Case, the Partnership's approved Work Programme identifies that a S&ELCP Digital Strategy is one of the top ten priority pieces of work. A such, work has been undertaken early in the Partnership to bring forward a S&ELCP Digital Strategy and ICT Roadmap.

2. REPORT

- 2.1.** The Society for Innovation, Technology and Modernisation (SOCITM) was commissioned jointly by the three Councils to review the Partnership's strategic direction for digital, data and technology and to develop a joint Digital Strategy and ICT Roadmap for the Partnership Councils and PSPS.
- 2.2.** The ICT Roadmap that sits alongside the Digital Strategy provides a number of immediate priority areas for the Partnership to focus on to bring together its ICT provision.

- 2.3.** The Strategy recognises that to bring all ICT together across the Partnership is a long-term ambition and can't be achieved quickly. Across the Partnership Councils there are already several common – and significant - ICT platforms (HR, Finance, as examples) in place and over time it should be possible to align processes and systems creating opportunities to deliver efficiency savings and single service teams Partnership-wide.
- 2.4.** The Strategy also recognises the importance of cyber security and ensuring systems remain up to date and supported. The Councils have recently been awarded £175,000 following a successful funding bid to Government developed by PSPS to support ongoing cyber resilience.
- 2.5.** The Digital Strategy and ICT Roadmap has been informed by SOCITM gaining an understanding of the Partnership's ambition and existing systems, capabilities and resources; supplemented by meetings with Members and Officers. In addition, a Joint Scrutiny Task Group met on 2 occasions when the Strategy and Roadmap were a draft document and had the opportunity to feed their views into the final drafting. The Task Group's report is attached to this report at Appendix B and the recommendations have all been accepted by Portfolio Holders, as below:

Partnership Scrutiny Recommendation	Action taken
Every 2 years, the Digital Strategy and ICT Roadmap should be a Partnership scrutiny topic. In the interim year, the Partnership Annual Scrutiny Review, as part of its scope, should seek assurance the Strategy is making progress.	Portfolio Holders welcome this oversight and recognise scrutiny is important in ensuring the success of this strategy. This has been added into the Partnership scrutiny work programme.
To use 'best practice' from ELDC in upskilling residents in terms of digital skills, with a view to rolling out a training programme to Boston and South Holland residents. As part of this model, to seek feedback from participants on digital service access and journeys.	Funding bids have been made to roll out a similar approach to that in East Lindsey to residents in both Boston and South Holland.
There should be a continued focus on cyber security to ensure it is well embedded within the Partnership and that the importance of cyber security is understood by all.	This will continue to be a key aspect of Digital/ ICT development, as it is at present.
To add a glossary to the Strategy and Roadmap to explain any terms considered technical.	This has been added.

- 2.6.** The Strategy's delivery will be monitored via the ICT/Digital Strategy Board – a key governance board within the Partnership's structure (approved by Council in November 2021). Portfolio Holders will also have ongoing oversight.
- 2.7.** Any projects identified for delivery to support the Digital Strategy and ICT Roadmap would be subject to the development of a detailed Business Case. Therefore, no additional funding is requested at this time.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1. That the ICT/Digital Strategy at Appendix A meets the needs of the Partnership Councils and provides a direction of travel to support the Partnership's ambition.

EXPECTED BENEFITS TO THE PARTNERSHIP

A single Digital Strategy and ICT Roadmap for the Partnership will support the delivery of the opportunities identified in the approved Business Case in relation to improved service delivery to customers, improved service efficiency and financial savings.

IMPLICATIONS

SOUTH AND EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCILS PARTNERSHIP

As set out at 'Expected Benefits to the Partnership'. This delivers on one of the top ten priorities in the Partnership's agreed Work Programme.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

This Strategy will support the delivery of all Partnership and corporate priorities.

STAFFING

None

CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no constitutional or legal matters arising from this report. Such matters may arise as the strategy is deployed and relevant Officers will be engaged on these matters.

DATA PROTECTION

This is a key consideration as this strategy is deployed and the Data Protection Officer will be involved/engaged in projects.

FINANCIAL

The adoption of this Strategy doesn't commit the Partnership to any expenditure. Individual projects that enable the Strategy's delivery will come forward as a Business Case for consideration at the relevant time.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Adopting the Strategy itself doesn't present any risks. The strategy itself should reduce risk to the Partnership as it seeks to create greater resilience, reduce expenditure and improve accessibility of Council services through the better use of ICT and data.

Projects in the ICT roadmap will have risks associated with them and these will be managed on a project by project basis through the project team.

STAKEHOLDER / CONSULTATION / TIMESCALES

Consultation is detailed in Section 2 of the report.

REPUTATION

None

CONTRACTS

No immediate impacts. However, over time it is expected that systems and contracts can be rationalised.

CRIME AND DISORDER

None

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY/ HUMAN RIGHTS/ SAFEGUARDING

None

HEALTH AND WELL BEING

None

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

None

ACRONYMS

- S&ELCP – South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership
- PSPS – Public Sector Partnership Services
- SOCITM – Society for Innovation, Technology and Modernisation

APPENDICES

Appendices are listed below and attached to the back of the report: -

APPENDIX A	S&ELCP Digital Strategy and ICT Roadmap
APPENDIX B	Joint Scrutiny Task Group report

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Background papers used in the production of this report are listed below: -

Document title	Where the document can be viewed
S&ELCP Business Case	Council's website

CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THIS REPORT

Name of body	Date
This report hasn't been to other Committees	

REPORT APPROVAL

Report author:	James Gilbert, Assistant Director - Corporate
Signed off by:	Christine Marshall, Deputy Chief Executive (Corporate Development)

Approved for publication:

Councillor Paul Skinner, Leader of the Council