

Swindon Borough Council's Digital Strategy 2017-2018

Digital Strategy

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together

Digital disruption has sped up change across businesses and governments all over the world. The pressure to transform grows exponentially and the way we develop our organisation will set the tone for the next generation. The challenge is that going digital is not a journey, nor is it a destination, it's the new normal. Digital is the new minimum expectation and a must do for all organisations wishing to survive, let alone thrive.

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Executive Summary

The Digital Strategy here in Swindon sets out the aspirations for a Council of the future. Today Swindon may be behind the curve with our current adoption of technology enabled customer experiences but we are now setting the agenda to be forward thinking Council and we are putting Swindon at the heart of everything we do. Our digital ambitions are going to deliver a set of solutions and 'ways of working' which will free our able customers to transact online when and where they want to with the Council whilst freeing-up scarce resources to concentrate on those vulnerable customers who need our personal help most.

The strategy is accompanied by a plan to 'go-digital' and here in Swindon by digital we mean:

“The exploitation of technology to enable effective efficient business and customer outcomes”

This strategy sets out a clear and simple business intent to our principles and our vision for how Swindon will address the digital challenge. The challenges before us may be a surprise as they are not social media, cyber, or the connected internet of things but are people, culture and communications. Going digital is all about our customers, yes tech needs to enable interactions but that's like saying fuel needs to be in a car, it's not important when it's there, it just doesn't work when it isn't. The real challenges in becoming a great digital council are all about people.



The first iteration – Digital World

Developing a digital strategy is not something you do to an organisation, but something which is co-developed. A lot of digital momentum has been built before its authoring. This strategy has been some time in the making and comes late. It comes late in the knowledge that the Council has been waiting for a digital strategy, looking forward to a digital strategy giving some guidance and ready to accept a digital strategy as a new way of delivering all services here in Swindon. This strategy is unlike any other written in the organisation. This strategy does not set out simply how we will do digital as the name suggests, but more accurately, it sets out how we will do business going forward, in a digital world.

Diagnosis

Some of our customers already communicate and transact with us via digital channels, the most important of which is our web site. www.swindon.gov.uk which achieves over 6,000,0000 unique views per year. Each of our many services are represented on our internet site showing information to support our customers and they are themed together with an overarching structure supporting transactions. The site headlines with the transaction focused approach 'What do you want to do today'. This sets out an ethos for our web site. It isn't meant to be somewhere you go just to read and consume information but somewhere you go to start and complete transactions.

Here at Swindon we support open data standards and access to all non-sensitive, non-confidential data and whilst we have some way to go to fully achieve this, we have made progress in delivering an enterprise dashboard to provide reporting on Swindon's Vision, Priorities (4) and Pledges (30)

<https://dashboard.swindon.gov.uk/>

Starting from the bottom

The position with Digital Services here at Swindon has been hampered by low aspirations and low enabling technology. In 2016 the Council brought back in house an outsourced IT department creating a new agile service with the remit of improving our tools, technology and information to enable us to do our job. At the end of 2016 we were starting 7% of our business transactions on-line and finishing even less. Prior to 2017 Swindon did not have suitable enabling technology to deliver good solutions to support the rest of the organisation to move digitally. It is fair to say we have lacked resources to build and maintain digital services and this bred a lack of aspiration from our business units to drive this or to capitalise on the small steps that had been made. Business leaders had little option than to make the best of the technology they had.

The IT department has changed. Today we have a brand new organisation freed from commercial pressures to make profit and here very clearly to serve the citizens and staff of Swindon Borough Council. The team have all the energy, talent and vision to *enable* the council to 'go digital' and we have a Customer and Business Services function *driving* the agenda at pace.

Digital Exclusion- should we worry?

Moving digitally does risk leaving some behind. We need to be minded of the challenge in service design with **digital by default** but in short, no, we don't need to overly worry. Residents are more ready than we are! [Independent research](#) shows Swindon to be low on the likelihood of overall digital exclusion. It is also notable that that 93% of households already receive broadband speeds of 10 megabits per second and 57% of households receive 4G network coverage. Couple this with better than national average technology skills and we have a positive catchment of tech ready citizens to take up our digital offering. And to further quash the sceptic, the greater number of able customers who do take up our digital offering, the more resources we will have for those who can't take it up.

What does Digital really mean?

Digital is about designing our services from a customer point of view and maximising the use of technology in those services to drive efficiency and effectiveness. It marries the enabler of

technology with the purpose of Customer Services. To reflect this, Swindon's Digital Transformation Programme will be led by the Head of Customer and Business Support.

How are we going to Go-Digital?

Improve Digital Leadership

Leadership is about taking people where they wouldn't go without you and digital leadership is at the focal point of the start of our digital journey.

In a model shamelessly borrowed from The UK Government Digital Strategy we are going to start with Leadership. All decision making Boards in the Council will include an active named digital leader. This doesn't mean a technical expert, it means someone who is representing the digital imperative by thinking about customers, customer designed services and how technology can help them. If we don't think about technology and customers together we risk following the likes of Kodak and Nokia into the local authority equivalent of the digital wilderness.

To support and develop our future digital capacity the Swindon Manager, Swindon Aspiring Leaders and Swindon Emerging Leaders training programmes will all be requested to have a digital leadership component addressing the use of technology to enhance the customer experience and to enable effective efficient business and customer outcomes.

To maintain leadership in this space CMT will be asked to nominate a Board Member to work with the Cabinet Member for Digital Services, the Chief Information Officer and Head of IT, and the Head of Customer and Business Services. Their collective role will be to **EXCITE** the organisation:

Ensure we are customer focused

Xtra Capacity to be provided where needed

Co-ordinate the digital transformation plan and customer and technology roadmaps

Involve, innovate, challenge and lead

Transform legacy services to digital

Empower leaders and evangelize the digital message.

Justify the Excitement

Digital isn't boring, it isn't about same old same old, and it shouldn't be scary. Changing a Council to become more digital is right in every way. Higher quality services, more efficiency, better use of public money, better outcomes for citizens. These are the same concepts for super high volume services such as TV licences as they are for local services. The way we solution them may be different but if we can follow our principles of sharing, if we work with other authorities we can achieve volume and keep costs low.

How will we measure and report our progress?

There are principles which span the user need and service area of the business. If we agree and stick to these principles, we can report on our progress to our customers, this is effectively putting our customers at the heart of our digital challenge and sharing with them our progress via our web site. Baselining ourselves is important and the first pass at this has achieved the following:

Principles to be measured*	Description	Current rating (1-5)
Start with the users	Don't start with the current process or technological opportunity. Research the service user's area and what it means for the design of the service. Remember 'needs' not 'wants'.	1 - Not done
Show, don't tell	Create demo's and prototypes for testing and iterative process development.	2 - Some people, occasionally
Lead from the front	Show leadership and be an evangelist	2 - Some people, occasionally
Keep horizons short	Focus on one thing and work iteratively until it's fixed	2 - Some people, occasionally
Test the process not the tech	Test the end-to-end service in an environment identical to live as practical and with a sample of data representing real users.	1 - Not currently
Full Transparency – even when it goes wrong.	Be open about your successes and failures. Share all management products in the projects.	1 - Not currently
Build bridges, knock down walls.	Share knowledge across the Council by building teams to solve problems and not using existing structures.	2 - Some people, occasionally

Create an opportunity for productivity	Track the metrics in process especially inputs and outputs. Design performance data into the process.	1 - Not currently
Make (design) a plan for being offline	Know how users will be affected and build a plan for them for when the service is not available. <i>(This does not mean build a paper based service just in case)</i>	1 - Not currently
Adopt fully	Encourage everyone at every opportunity to use the digital service	1 - Not currently

*- Principles adapted from UK Digital Service Standards

1 – Not done, 2 – Sometimes, 3 – strong evidence in multiple instances, 4 – comprehensive, 5 – Fully embedded!

The Core Principles of our Digital Services

Our vision for good digital services in Swindon will be delivered by following our 7 digital principles. These are:

1. The guiding principle for all processes and transactions is Digital by design
2. Design with the user's value in mind and from a user point of view.
3. Show don't tell, but do evangelise!
4. Test early, learn, iterate.
5. Measure for operational improvement and analytics based decisions.
6. Solutions should be scalable and reused.
7. Share everything you can.

UK Government, NHS England and Local Partners

While Swindon presses on with its Digital Strategy it does not go alone. Central Government are forging ahead with GDS leading the adoption of high volume transactions through www.gov.uk digital channels; the NHS make steady progress to the 2020 Digital Roadmap delivering outcomes such as 'Paperless working at the point of care'; DWP progress with a full digital service for Universal Credit; neighbouring authorities are all lining up behind digital to capitalise on the efficiency much needed to address the fiscal and demand challenges. Swindon, through its membership of the Local

CIO Council supported by the Society of IT Managers and by Solace, will continue to work with peers across local authorities to deliver solutions and services which meet the tri aims of:

Simplify – Standardise – Share

The Digital Roadmap

The Digital Strategy will be delivered by stabilizing and investing in the IT services and using this new operational competence to underpin service redesign work in the customer facing services. Starting in the contact center the digital transformation's flag ship will be the implementation of a new Citizen Portal. The full digital roadmap can be found here:

Karen to include Digital Roadmap here.

[End]