

# Swindon Programme – Digital Access Strategy

**Resources O&S Committee**

**Date: 18 January 2017**

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Wards:	All
Parishes Affected:	All

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## **1. Purpose and Reasons**

- 1.1 This report introduces the Council's draft approach to all of Swindon's residents are able to engage with the Council as the Council moves more of its customer services online.
- 1.2 This report seeks to give members of the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee confidence that a coordinated approach to modernising customer services is in place and that this approach is being developed in conjunction with the Council's Digital Inclusion Strategy which aims to ensure that all of Swindon's residents are able to access the universal services which the Council provides.
- 1.3 The Organisational Excellence work stream is one of four themes within the Swindon Programme. The Swindon Programme is a £30m savings programme intended to ensure that the Council is financially and operationally sustainable by March 2020.

## **2. Recommendations**

The Committee is recommended to:

- 2.1 Recognise that the proposals are currently very much in draft form and offer any views to the report author at the meeting on 18 January 2018 where a fuller explanation of the proposals will be presented

## **3. Digital Access Strategy**

- 3.1 By 2020 the Council has committed that over 85% of resident transactions will be completed online.
- 3.2 The accompanying paper "Modernising Customer Services" outlines how we will achieve this ambition. However, it is recognised that this approach will, if not mitigated, create a barrier between the Council and some of its residents.
- 3.3 The Council's Digital Access Strategy seeks to outline the Council's approach to mitigating that barrier and ensuring that, while all interactions which can be completed digitally are done so, the Council has support in place (either directly or indirectly) to support residents for whom digital access is a challenge.

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Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Samantha Mowbray, 07823 525337, smowbray@swindon.gov.uk.

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3.4 The strategy will contain the following sections:

3.4.1 The current and projected demographics of Swindon's population

3.4.2 The barriers to digital access and the populations of Swindon particularly at risk of exclusion

3.4.3 Approaches that the Council commits to taking to ensure that residents are able to interact with us online

3.4.4 Approaches that the Council commits to working with other partners on to ensure that residents are able to interact with us online

Work already undertaken to support the development of the Council's Digital Access Strategy

3.5 The Council's first Aspiring Leaders cohort has worked hard on the initial research and ideas for the Council's Digital Access Strategy after being commissioned to do so as part of their "Business Challenge" which forms part of their leadership programme. They have presented their findings to both the Organisational Excellence board and the Cabinet Member Advisory Group on Digitalisation. A snapshot of their work will be presented to the Committee on 18 January 2018.

## 4. Alternative Options

4.1 The Council could choose not to change the way it offers customer services to its residents. However, it is considered that this would not be in keeping with the way in which modern organisations engage with their customers and residents and have considerable financial and reputational implications for the Council.

## 5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

5.1 There is a likely cost for the delivery of this strategy but this has not yet been worked up.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

5.2 As described in the body of the report. There may be a desire to consult with key external stakeholders on the contents of the Digital Access Strategy once a draft is complete.

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

5.3 The delivery of the Organisational Excellence workstream will lead to staffing reductions in some of our services as we reduce duplication, fix broken

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processes and automate some service delivery. We are working with colleagues in HR and OD to prepare staff and managers for change and have engaged early with union colleagues to ensure they are aware of any implications of the projects for their members. We have profiled the likely change in staffing requirement within Customer Services over the life of this project and are hopeful that we can reduce numbers through natural wastage should final proposals be similar to what is suggested here and adopted by Cabinet in March.

## Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.1 A number of DIAs have already been undertaken in relation to Digital Services and possible changes to customer services. DIAs will be considered throughout the project scoping process and will be conducted before any business cases are developed and final proposals made.

## Risk Management

- 5.2 There are a number of risks associated with this project and they are contained within the Organisational Excellence risk register which is available should members of the committee wish to see it.

## **6. Consultees**

- 6.1 The Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

## **7. Background Papers**

- 7.1 None

## **8. Appendices**

- 8.1 None