



# Digital Strategy

2021 | 2023

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# 1. Introduction

Being a Digital Council needs to be a fundamental part of who we are – it will allow us to work with our partners who are already engaged in digital innovation to support and develop the county of Worcestershire and deliver on the ambition of being an even better place to live in and do business. Making Worcestershire a place where staff, members, residents, visitors, communities and businesses flourish.

## The Digital Customer Perspective:

Digital is transforming everyday lives on a global scale and will continue to do so at an ever-increasing pace. Having access to the internet is now often described as the fourth utility – and is an important consideration for communities and businesses. This need to be better connected is also changing what people want and need from Worcestershire County Council.

People want and expect transactional services and information to be available through their own devices, 24/7 – mirroring their experiences with on-line retail and banking. This means that digital engagement with the Council needs to evolve and expand from self-service to self-management so that customers are in charge; and can actively manage their own information and requests. Over 50% of transactions with council customers are now undertaken on-line with high levels of satisfaction, making services more accessible and often improving the speed and efficiency of service delivery.

## The Digital Council Perspective:

The Council has embarked on a whole-organisation redesign programme to ensure it can meet the future needs of its communities and businesses in a sustainable way. The organisation redesign will address an increasingly challenging financial position set against a backdrop of growing demand for services and the need to respond to the creation of a new (Council owned) company to deliver Children's Services (Worcestershire Children First).

The objectives of the organisation redesign are to review the Council's current ways of working to identify opportunities for transformation, improving efficiency, being leaner, increasing productivity, reducing silo working and aligning services to common outcomes to release the necessary savings. The Digital Strategy is a key component in enabling these outcomes. Its purpose is to support and enable the Council to realise its Corporate Plan, Shaping Worcestershire's Future, and to become a common theme running through all our strategies.



## Environmental Perspective

Digital technology could transform the environmental agenda and is a key enabler in supporting low carbon activity across the council. Enhanced connectivity and analytics can accelerate new, low carbon approaches across sectors that have a large environmental footprint. The Council must build on the new wave of digital technologies to revolutionise the way the business operates to contribute to the countries zero net carbon emissions objectives.

## Linked Strategies & programmes

The Digital Strategy has been written to align with and complement our other national, organisational and partner strategies to deliver a whole council approach, as listed below.

National, WCC and Partner Strategies:



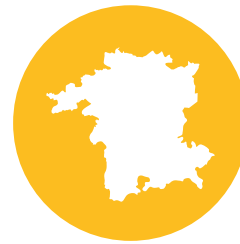
UK Digital Strategy



National Data Strategy



Building Digital UK (BDUK)



Corporate Plan - Shaping Worcestershire's Future



Strategic Economic Plan / Local Industrial Strategy



IT Technology Strategy



Adults Digital Strategy



Environment & Infrastructure Technology Strategy



Worcestershire Library Strategy



Hereford & Worcestershire STP Digital Strategy



Integrated Care for Older People in Worcestershire Strategy



Smart and Green - Green Alliance

In addition to the Organisational Redesign Programme the Council has several cross cutting organisational transformation programmes currently in progress or in the early stages of development:

- ◆ Digital Transformation Programme
- ◆ Re-Imagined Front Doors & Customer Management Strategy
- ◆ Organisation Transformation Programme
- ◆ Social Care Case Management Phase 2
- ◆ Economy and Infrastructure Technology Programme
- ◆ People Technology Programme
- ◆ Worcestershire Children's First Technology Programme
- ◆ Digital Skills Programme (Public Health)
- ◆ Sustainable Transformation Partnership

The Digital Strategy is designed to provide a "One Council" approach to the Digital design principles and capabilities needed to underpin the delivery of each of these transformation programmes.



## 2. Where are we now

This Digital strategy builds on and supersedes our previous Digital Strategy 2013 – 2017 which has delivered a core set of foundations and principles on which we can further develop our organisational digital maturity and capability.

Over the past 4 years our digital transformation ambitions have been to:

**Deliver  
services  
online**



**Ensure online services  
are easy to use and  
simple to follow**



**Enable**

  
**24/7  
365**  
**access to  
services**

**The cost of  
handling customers  
is reduced to the  
lowest possible  
level through  
process re-design**



**All transactional  
services are  
designed  
'end-to-end'  
where possible**



To deliver against these digital ambitions the Customer Access Programme was created which primarily focused on delivering improved online services to drive channel shift online. The programme successfully delivered a significantly improved website and has delivered over 40 customer facing and back office digital applications. This has led to approximately a 42% per annum reduction in assisted contacts since 2015. In some cases, we have seen significant successes with nearly all contact shifting to the online self-service channel. For example; School transport applications are now operating at 98% self-service and Waste Services operating at 71% self-service.

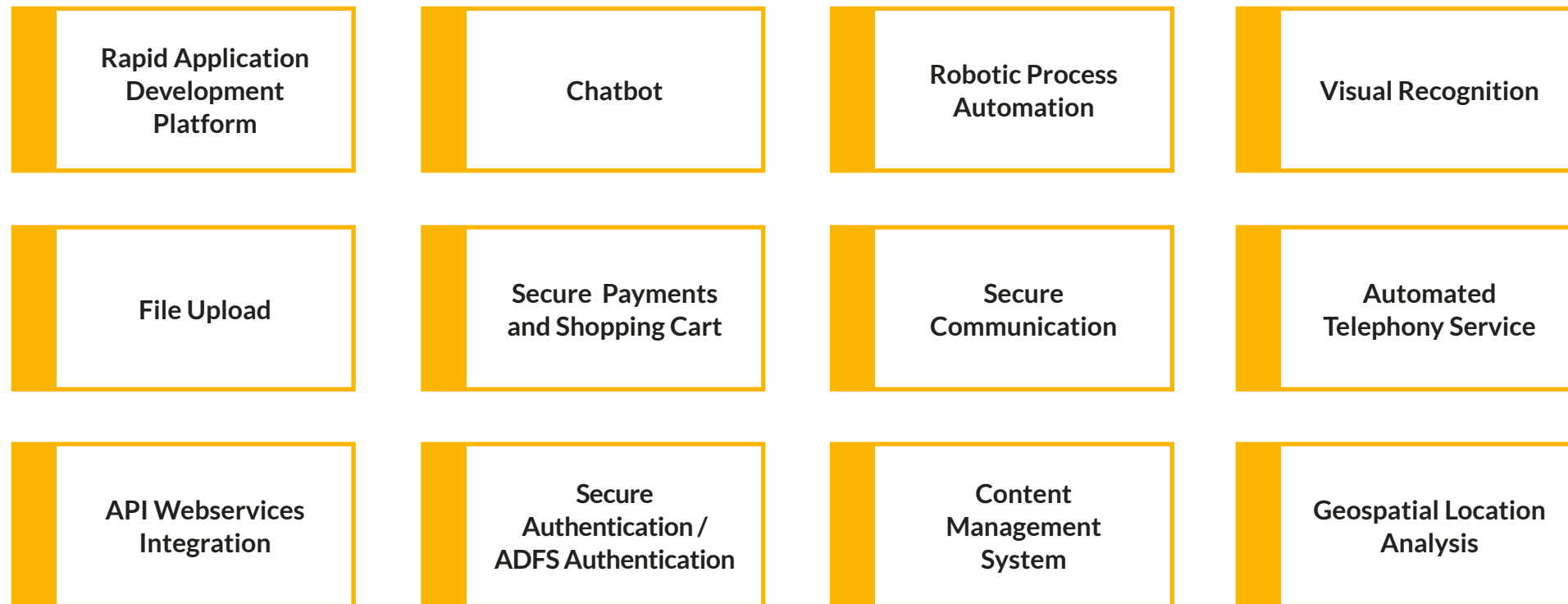
The digital infrastructure that underpins digital services for the county's communities and businesses is provided by several commercial providers. In terms of fixed broadband provision, it is largely via Openreach, Virgin Media, Airband and Gigaclear, with some alternate networks also operating. Locally Worcestershire County Council via Superfast Worcestershire has supported improvements in broadband infrastructure in the county, since the programme began in 2013 Superfast coverage (24Mbps or greater) has increased from 69% for residential premises and 44% business premises to 97% overall (Oct 20). Worcestershire supports the Central Government drive for Gigabit capable broadband for all by 2025, current Gigabit capable infrastructure coverage stands at 34% (Oct 20). For mobile coverage all four major UK Mobile Network Operators (EE, o2, 3UK and Vodafone) have a presence in the county. A 2019 drive trial reported that signal availability on 4G was available on 98% of the route, for 3G on 98.2% and 2G on 96.7% from at least one operator.



## Current Digital Delivery Capabilities

To enable the delivery of the Customer Access Programme the Council has invested in a number of key digital systems to create a suite of technologies known as our “Customer Access Platform”. This has given us the capability to deliver bespoke digital solutions at pace and lower average cost per application. Delivery times for digital solutions average between 6 to 8 weeks which is approximately 4 times faster than was previously possible using traditional technologies.

Our “Digital Transformation Platform” includes the following digital technologies:



The Council has also established a core capacity and a robust methodology for delivering digital transformation through the creation of the:

- ◆ Strategic IT, Digital & Customer Services Team – A team of experienced IT and Digital Programme and Project Managers that are specialists in delivering technology projects.
- ◆ Web & Digital Innovation Team – A team of experienced Business Analysts that are specialists in analysing business requirements and business process redesign, who work alongside Developers, Web Designers and User Experience specialists to deliver digital solutions
- ◆ Agile Delivery – We have created a robust Digital Delivery Methodology utilising the principles of Agile project delivery that is followed for all digital transformation projects.



## Current Organisational Digital Maturity

Through various workshops and group exercises with a range of stakeholders from across the organisation we have established that whilst our current digital delivery capability is strong, there are five areas in which there are further opportunities that will enable us to become a leading digital council.

### Digital Workforce

- ◆ A significant proportion of our current workforce lacks the digital training, skills and knowledge required in a digital organisation.
- ◆ We do not have a fully embedded “Digital First” culture across the whole organisation.
- ◆ Staff are not as productive as they could be due to lack of intuitive easy to use digital systems impacting our ability to carry out basic administration self service functions.

### Digital Services

- ◆ Approx. 50% of customer contact comes through online / self-service channels.
- ◆ Digital solutions have been delivered following some business process redesign but not end to end service redesign.
- ◆ There are further opportunities for automating manual and repetitive tasks which would remove waste and create a leaner service delivery.

### Digital Customer

- ◆ Information, Advice & Guidance is customer focused for most services, but we do not deliver a personalised experience with targeted information.
- ◆ We have not fully adopted the Government Digital Service design principles across all the services that we provide online.
- ◆ There is high demand for front line services because of poor signposting through the right channels to our information, advice and guidance.
- ◆ We have an existing digital literacy / digital inclusion programme for the residents of Worcestershire.
- ◆ We have not delivered a whole council single front door experience or Customer Portal.





### Digital Data

- ◆ We have too many disparate data sets and do not have a consolidated single version of the truth.
- ◆ We lack consistency in the way data is recorded within systems & across systems, leading to poor data quality (i.e. no master data management).
- ◆ We need to further increase our ability to share data internally and with key strategic partners.
- ◆ We do not always have access to real-time data to make informed decisions.
- ◆ We do not maximise use of our Information assets.

### Digital County

- ◆ Limited implementation of smart sensors / automation within our buildings that would improve operational efficiency.
- ◆ Use of some smart devices across the county to share real time information with the public (i.e. Kiosks, Car Parking Digital Signage).
- ◆ High percentage of superfast broadband & 4G connectivity across the County
- ◆ The Fibre to the Premises coverage in Worcestershire (9%) is around half of the UK average, whilst the 'Gigabit capable' coverage (34%) is slightly above the UK average.
- ◆ Worcestershire has one of the first 5G testbed networks in the UK, operating from sites in Malvern and Worcester.



## Local Digital Declaration

The Worcestershire County Council, alongside District partners, has signed up to the **Local Digital Declaration**. The declaration is a commitment with other partners such as SOLACE, CIPFA, the LGA Government Digital Service and a cross section of local authorities and sets out our shared vision for world class public services. It commits all of us to work together to make sure that the vision is made a reality. It is a collective ambition for local public services in the digital age and our commitments to realise it by delivering services that are efficient, modern, responsive and simple and delightful to use.

For example we achieved as successful bid to provide Local Authority Housing services with Registrations data in order to reduce the time that families on the social housing list wait for a Council property.

## Government Digital Service Principles

The Digital Service Standard is a set of 14 criteria to help government create and run good digital services. All public facing transactional services must meet the standard. It's used by departments and the **Government Digital Service** to check whether a service is good enough for public use. Worcestershire County Council has already adopted these principles within the design of its digital services.

# 3. Where do we want to be

## Our Vision

*“We will use modern technologies to enable digital opportunity, fundamentally improving how we serve our customers and communities. Streamlining the delivery of our services so they can be provided in the most efficient and cost-effective way possible.”*

## Our Future Digital Council

We want to create the conditions for the next generation of local public services, where digital technologies are an enabler rather than a barrier to service improvements, and services are a delight for all to use. To deliver against this objective requires both a culture shift and a digital technology shift, and we've established overarching design principles to help us do it:

1

We will design our services around the needs of the communities and businesses, putting them at the heart of all we do.

2

We will break our dependency on inflexible and expensive legacy technologies that are a barrier to providing joined up systems and services.

3

We will design safe, secure and useful ways of sharing information to build trust among our partners and communities, to better support the most vulnerable people, increase digital inclusion, and target our resources more effectively.

4

We will demonstrate digital leadership, creating the conditions for genuine organisational transformation to happen, and challenging all those we work with to embrace the Local Digital Declaration.

5

We will embed an open culture that values, incentivises and expects digital ways of working from every member of our workforce. This means working in the open wherever we can, sharing our plans and experience, working collaboratively with other organisations, and reusing good practice.

6

We will create an environment for the county that promotes and encourages wider adoption and application of digital technologies, including the right infrastructure and digital skills.

These overarching design principles underpin our future ambitions for the type of digital organisation we want to become, these ambitions are categorised into the following 5 priority areas:

### **Priority 1 - Digital Workforce**

- ◆ An organisation which embraces a digitally trained and skilled workforce that ensures staff can make the most of available digital systems, supporting them as “Smart Workers”, whilst ensuring the use of online services / systems is undertaken in a safe and secure way.
- ◆ Encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace by equipping staff with the digital values, skills and knowledge necessary to fulfil their potential.
- ◆ Our aim is to empower staff to thrive and prosper in the digital age by equipping them with the digital values, skills and knowledge necessary to fulfil their potential.
- ◆ We will use a common definition of core digital skills and capabilities requirements to enable staff to participate in, and contribute to the digital world
- ◆ A workforce of digital leaders who embrace the principles of our local digital declaration.
- ◆ An organisation that has digital embedded in its DNA and an established culture of “Digital First” and constant service improvement.
- ◆ A workforce that views our digital systems as a key enabler in supporting them to deliver their role successfully
- ◆ A near paperless organisation that maximises the use of technology to avoid the need for reliance on paper and manual processes.

### **Priority 2 - Digital Services**

- ◆ Further increase in volume of online contact with focus on end to end self-service (minimal service interaction)
- ◆ Ambassadors of the ‘Government Digital Service’ principles
- ◆ A Digital First Council that has digital at the heart of its service design with a strong focus on lean service delivery and eliminating waste.
- ◆ Maximise the use of emerging digital technologies to automate services and provide end to end solutions that are fit for purpose and are capable of adapting to changes in business requirements.
- ◆ A council with the required infrastructure security to provide safe and secure online services.
- ◆ Creating digital services and experiences for community support provided to people at home, specifically domiciliary care.





### Priority 3 - Digital Customer

- ◆ A fully digitally enabled council that provides personalised content based on customer interactions
- ◆ An exemplar of delivering an excellent digital customer experience with the majority of customer contact via our self-service channels, ensuring that at the same time we are inclusive for people with disabilities or other legally protected characteristics and people who don't have access to the internet or lack the skills or confidence to use it.
- ◆ Fully embedded Government Digital Service design principles in the delivery of all customer facing digital services
- ◆ Ensure we are digitally inclusive by making sure our customers have the right access, skills, motivation and trust to confidently go online to increase their digital literacy
- ◆ An organisation that delivers a seamless experience for the customer
- ◆ We will engage with the community and listen to what they want from digital services.
- ◆ Designing our services from a customer perspective.
- ◆ Promoting independence and wellbeing through the use of digital services and technology.

#### Priority 4 - Digital Data

- ◆ A council that supports and embraces joining up data sets to provide a single view of our data
- ◆ Utilising customer information and intelligence to commission better services for our customers
- ◆ An organisation that embraces sharing data internally and with external partners to solve common problems and provide better joined up services to our customers.
- ◆ An information led organisation that utilises our data sources to provide real time information for improved service delivery and informing strategic decisions
- ◆ An organisation that has the ambition to support the Archive & Archaeology Service to meet the challenges of digital preservation, ensuring continued access to digital information in the future
- ◆ Aware of the opportunities of better utilisation of our data, sharing our data where appropriate within the principles of open data

#### Priority 5 - Digital County

- ◆ Innovative in our use of technology to create smarter buildings and workplaces for our staff
- ◆ A modern and forward-thinking council that utilises smart devices, sensors and automation to improve operational efficiency, share more information with the public and improve the quality of services and resident welfare.
- ◆ A leading county in the provision of digital connectivity infrastructure to support communities and local businesses e.g. fibre to the premises / gigabit capable broadband, provision for edge computing, 4G / 5G and other wireless technologies.
- ◆ We will use modern technologies to enable digital opportunity aligned to the low carbon agenda, fundamentally improving how we serve our customers and communities



## 4. Delivering Our Priorities

To successfully achieve the digital vision, short term, medium term and long-term organisation priorities have been identified. A technology and data strategy will be developed to support the implementation of the Digital Strategy.

A digital approach means that services are designed from the customer's point of view to make it easier for them, not bound by organisational constraints. Alongside the corporate priorities, the digital programme will engage with all services to ensure they have plans to adopt the principles of the Digital Strategy.

### The five priorities for delivering the digital strategy are:

#### Priority 1 – Creating a Digital Workforce

- ◆ Provide staff with access to training and opportunities for upskilling to maximise the use of our core digital capability.
- ◆ Create a continuous rolling programme of communication and engagement sessions to promote and raise awareness of our strategy, capabilities and principles and to embed a “Digital First” culture.
- ◆ Apply principles of Lean/Six Sigma before designing digital solutions that are intuitive, resilient, fit for purpose and that reduce our reliance on paper-based processes.
- ◆ Embed digital personas in every job specification and where there are skill gaps use apprenticeships for upskilling.
- ◆ Use of staff reviews to identify digital skills gaps and training requirements.

#### Priority 2 – Delivering Digital Services

- ◆ Design all digital services in line with the Government Digital Service principles
- ◆ Review all council services and undertake a programme of service redesign using lean/six sigma techniques, maximising the use of digital to automate and increase productivity.
- ◆ Deliver automation and end to end services through Robotic Process Automation, Chatbots and other Artificial Intelligence solutions that are now available within our current digital technologies.
- ◆ Review and replace legacy systems and technologies to create a modern, intuitive and fit for purpose workplace





### Priority 3 - Digital Customer

- ◆ Invest in our websites to provide the additional functionality required to deliver a mobile first and personalised experience.
- ◆ Review and enhance all information, advice, guidance and digital systems in line with the Government Digital Service Design principles.
- ◆ Fully adopt the Government Digital Service Design principles and ensure they are adhered to when procuring or developing new digital solutions.
- ◆ Maximise the opportunities within Public Health and our Libraries Service to delivery digital literacy training and awareness sessions.
- ◆ Work with communities and businesses to ensure they have digital skills and access to people with digital skills.
- ◆ Maximise the use of digital technology where it is not possible to provide a physical single front door as part of our Customer Management Strategy.

### Priority 4 - Digital Data

- ◆ Maximise the use of system integrations, data analytics tools such as Power BI and SSRS to deliver integrated data and digital solutions
- ◆ Utilise AI technologies and other sources (e.g. National Fraud Initiative) to create single views of data by automating the consolidation of data, identifying duplicate data, flagging triggers and alerts (e.g. Master Data Management)
- ◆ Establish a council wide strategy for the preservation of digital records and invest in implementing a solution within Archive & Archaeology Service.
- ◆ Work with our NHS partners within the Sustainability Transformation Partnership to establish and implement an Integrated Care and Wellbeing Record.
- ◆ Explore opportunities for establishing a commercial model and platform for sharing data with businesses



### Priority 5 - Digital County

- ◆ Invest in modern digital technologies such as; modern way finding, resource management, building management and audio-visual equipment
- ◆ Continue with the delivery of major projects and schemes as identified within our Transport Strategy such as; real time highways and passenger transport monitoring, air flow sensors to monitor congestion
- ◆ Work with commercial operators to support and facilitate improvements of mobile 4G/5G technologies and fixed broadband infrastructure capable of Gigabit speeds to communities and local businesses through the Superfast Worcestershire and Connectivity team
- ◆ Engage with, investing when necessary, in central government supported connectivity programmes e.g. Outside-In

# 5. Delivering Change, Monitoring Progress and Measuring Success

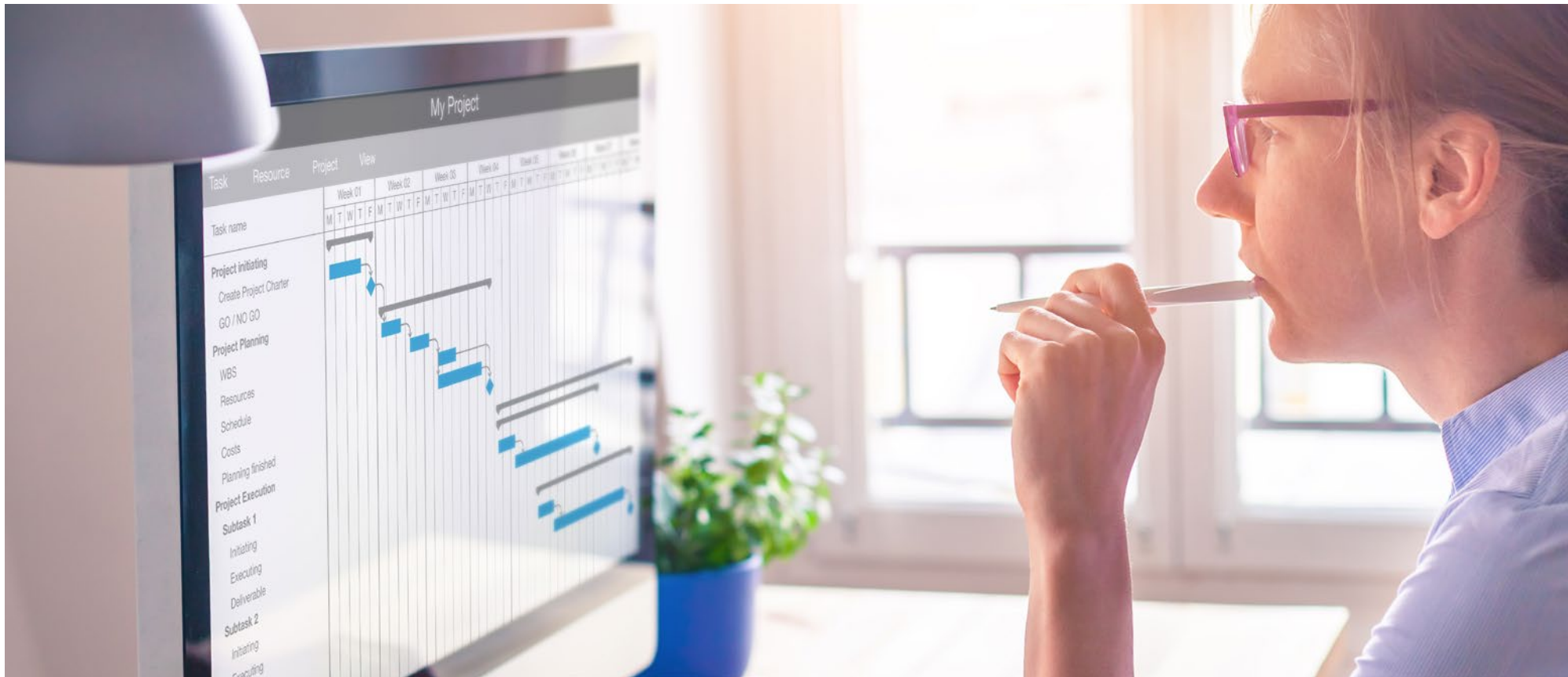
The Digital Transformation Programme will be the vehicle for delivering our Digital Strategy.

## Resourcing the Delivery

Existing resources from within the Strategic IT, Digital and Customer Services Team and the Web and Digital Innovation Team will form the core delivery team. Further resources from across the organisation will also form part of the delivery team, for example the IT & Digital Learning and Development Lead from Human Resources and Organisational Development..

Additional resources and investment may also be required if the pace of delivery required by the business is greater than our current delivery capacity. The request for the additional resource and investment would be outlined in a Digital Transformation Programme Business Case once an initial prioritised programme delivery plan is established.





## Monitoring and Reporting Progress

It is essential that we can monitor progress and ensure that the work we are doing is delivering a tangible difference to our staff, members, residents, visitors, communities and businesses of Worcestershire. Therefore, this strategy will be supported by a robust implementation plan which will evidence the delivery of our priorities and will set out key milestones and achievements.

The strategy will set out our three-year approach to becoming a Digital First organisation and will remain unchanged. Whereas the Digital Transformation Implementation plan will evolve and change as we meet each milestone. This plan will set out the detail of how we will deliver the Digital First objectives along with timescales for delivery.

Progress in implementing the strategy and delivery plan will be reported to the Digital Transformation Programme Board on a monthly basis, with the option to report to the Chief Officer Group as necessary. Progress will be reported to the Cabinet Lead for Commissioning and Transformation on a periodic basis, with the opportunity for ad-hoc progress reports as required. The Digital Transformation Programme Board includes representatives from across the organisation and provides the first layer of governance on the delivery of Digital Transformation projects including the prioritisation of project activity.

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