

Our digital vision is of better customer experiences, greater independence and improved working through making the best use of information and technology.

In particular we want to:



Make contacting the council, finding information and doing business with us easier for our customers;



Help the council run efficiently, providing staff with the right digital tools for the job; and



Grow Southampton's economy by improving public digital infrastructure and showing digital leadership locally.

For those who use digital services - the majority of our **customers** - we want to make the digital option so quick and easy that you'll rarely need to pick up the phone. Digital information and services should be easy to access, mobile-friendly and designed so you can complete the whole task online, without needing to be in Southampton or call during office hours. Digital technology also makes it easier for customers to tell us what they think, and for us to respond quickly and use feedback to improve services, such as updating information about road closures on our website. We will continue to provide options for residents who cannot access digital services. For all customers, a single customer record will result in quicker service and a better experience, as they will not have to make repeat requests or provide information again.

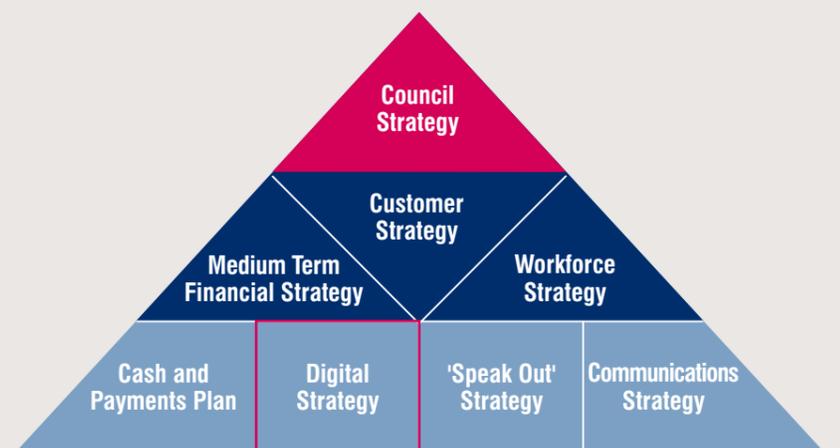
Doing things more digitally **helps the council to run more efficiently**. It is essential that our staff have the right equipment to do their job, and that the systems we use talk to each other. We want to automate processes – for example, it costs us almost nothing to take payments online, compared with taking cash and cheques to the bank – and grow the digital skills of our staff to enable them to become more productive by being able to work flexibly from anywhere. And digital technology can help us work more effectively within the council and with partners such as the NHS, by designing systems that talk to each other so that we all use the same information.

We want high-speed broadband and wireless networks in the city that will mean staff and partners can use technology to its greatest advantage. Our increasing use of mobile technology means that this will become a vital part of our business operating model. A significant additional benefit to a high-speed network will be the important role that this connectivity can bring to **jobs and growth** to Southampton. We also want to work with our universities and local businesses to reinforce Southampton's position as a national leader in digital research, innovation and skills. And we'd like people with great ideas and ambitions to see the city as 'Start-Up Southampton' – the best place to start and grow their business.

What do we know about the city's digital readiness?

- Customers are more satisfied when using online forms than any other method of contact
- Use of the councils' website has steadily increased:
43% of Southampton residents recently used it to look up information
- **77%** would go online to pay a bill such as a parking fine
- **80%** shop or bank online
- **85%** would buy clothes online if that was the only option
- **43%** use a smartphone for online transactions
- However, **11%** don't have access to computers

Where does this Digital Strategy fit?



What are we trying to achieve?

Outcome	What will success look like?
Digital is the first choice for most customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information is easy to find on the council's website • The Southampton Information Directory (SID) provides updated information to help people to be self-sufficient and independent • Customers can apply for services, inform us of changes, request information and pay quickly and easily online • Services are designed so customers can use their own devices, with no need to register or download additional software • Customers can complete most tasks digitally from start to finish, without having to contact the council directly • Support is available for those who need it to get online • Residents of Southampton are involved in the design of digital public services
Southampton has a growing digital economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ultrafast Wifi connectivity is available in the city centre • Planning policy promotes 'Start-up Southampton' as an objective • Superfast broadband and 5G+ mobile networks offer universal coverage • Data that could be economically beneficial is published for free re-use • The council works with universities and other public bodies to attract and develop the UK's best digital talent
Digital data is secure, accurate and well-managed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff have the right equipment and systems to manage digital data well • All data is securely held; sensitive data is digitally protected and safely handled • The council is resistant to cyber-attacks, and invests in future security needs • Data is designed to be re-usable: by council services, by partners, by customers • Data is not kept for longer than it is needed
Public services in Southampton digitally 'joined up'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult education supports digital inclusion in the city • IT systems and expertise are shared with other public bodies to reduce costs and increase service quality • Systems connect securely across public services so that different professionals can safely use the same data • Integration of health and social care systems is a top priority to ensure that people receive joined-up treatment • The council's approach to IT enables flexible working around the city for public employees • Customers get a smoother experience when they are dealing with different public bodies because everyone is using the same information

The challenges that we face



Customers

- The council is behind most residents in terms of digital maturity and ability to do business digitally
- Most residents own digital devices such as smartphones but may be reluctant to use them for council services
- Information needs to be easier to find on the council's website; SID is not up to date
- Many tasks not easy to complete online, for example making payments
- There will continue to be customers who are not able to use digital services and who will need access to skills development
- Preference among the majority for using the phone rather than digital contact



Economy

- Realising the 'Start-Up Southampton' vision is a significant challenge
- Public digital infrastructure will need major investment
- There may be barriers to investment, such as wider economic conditions or government regulations
- Coping with disruptive digital change, for example the gig economy or artificial intelligence



Data

- Constant threat from cyber-attacks
- The council is storing an ever-increasing amount of data, so costs are increasing
- Compliance with new Government directives, such as stronger data protection regulations
- Lack of a strategy for releasing more data under national open standards
- Lack of a single data record for customers, staff, property and debt makes it difficult to offer an efficient and effective service



Integration

- Complexity of getting council systems to talk to each other, and to partner systems
- Challenges of safely sharing data on patients, clients and vulnerable residents
- Risk that partners have different priorities

What are we going to do?

Outcome	Action: What are we going to do?	How will we measure success?
Digital contact is the first choice for most customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of services that are available online • Provide online forms that are easy to use and enable completion of common tasks • Effective use of MySouthampton account for frequent service users • Use of social media to support the website as the ultimate contact channel • Exploit emerging technology including automation software, bots, artificial intelligence, voice recognition etc • Make it easier for customers to find the information they need on our websites, by ensuring all pages have clear and informative content • Ensure web content is accessible regardless of the device the customer is using • Automatic updates to keep customers informed on the progress of their case • Publish an up-to-date comprehensive directory of activities and services to help users find support that meets their needs • Help the council put digital tools in place that allow customers to give feedback • Improve and update SID • Make it easier to pay online • Implement a single direct debit process for any council service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the proportion of digital contact with the council • Reduction in the number of contacts chasing progress on previous enquiries • Increase in website satisfaction • Achieve an average rating of 4 for web forms • Customers who want a MySouthampton account see all data in one place • Increase in productivity of customer-facing staff • Reduction in visits to the 'Contact us' page • Improvement in website satisfaction • Increase in contacts through new digital channels • All council websites are adaptive • Automatic updates for the top 25 journeys • All online processes provide automated updates • Feedback tools launched • Increase online direct debit take-up
Southampton has a growing digital economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure external investment in ultra-fast fibre, Wifi and 5G connectivity for the city centre • Make more datasets available under open data standards • Work with universities and other partners to attract and retain digital talent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southampton is known for good connectivity • More businesses are attracted to the city • Improved city centre fast Wifi coverage, including free • 5G rollout starts in 2020 • More open datasets released • Increase in digital start-ups
Digital data is secure, accurate and well-managed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuously monitor cyber-threats and upgrade protection • Ensure staff using digital systems are trained on data protection responsibilities • Implement good data management practice, policies and procedures including 'single copy, multiple usage' • Ensure data is seen as a crucial asset 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum impact from cyber/phishing/malware etc attacks • Reduction in data stored and costs • Data errors are corrected and duplicate records merged • Data supports analysis and decision-making
Public services in Southampton digitally 'joined up'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission adult education to support digital inclusion and digital literacy in the city • Work closely with schools to maximise the digital skills of all children • Ensure health and social care professionals can securely share and access agreed data • Ensure public employees in Southampton are able to work flexibly from each other's premises 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased digital literacy in the city • Improvement in health/social care service quality • Increase in the use of premises by staff from different agencies