

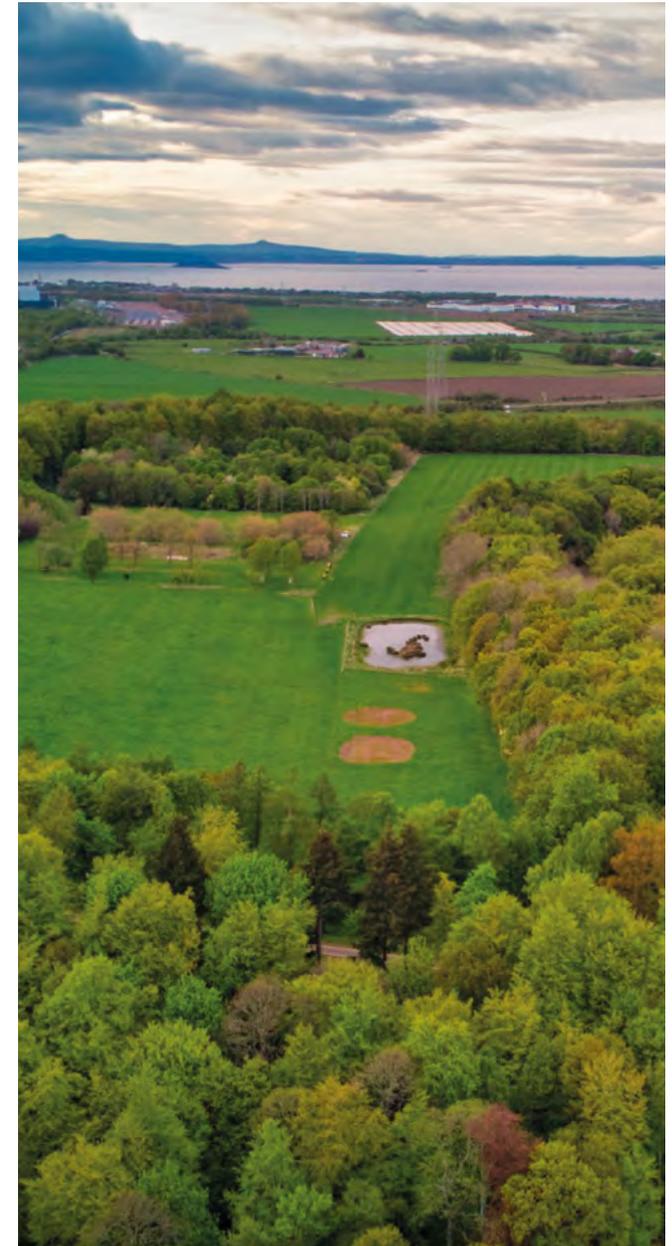
2024-29

Digital Transformation Strategy

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We are on the threshold of a new era in public service delivery, where digital leadership, skills, and infrastructure lay the foundation for a future that is more connected, efficient, and inclusive. This document outlines our roadmap for digital transformation—a shared journey with our staff, partners, and communities—towards a Midlothian Council that thrives in the digital age.



Over the past two decades, the digital revolution has transformed how we live, work, and learn. We are now in an era of unprecedented connectivity and rapid technological advancement, where the power of technology to enhance lives and improve service delivery has never been more evident. At Midlothian Council, our digital transformation journey has been both adaptive and strategic, reflecting our vision for a future where digital inclusivity and efficiency are at the core of everything we do.

The post-pandemic world has accelerated the need for a comprehensive approach to digital innovation, one that places our communities at the centre. By harnessing the potential of new technologies, we are making our services more accessible, empowering our communities, and working to close the digital divide.

Amidst significant financial challenges, we recognise that digital is a key enabler to efficiencies and bridging the financial gap faced by the Council. We are committed to using technology to streamline and automate repetitive tasks, enabling staff to focus on delivering high-quality services. As the needs of Midlothian's residents evolve, we will re-imagine how we deliver a wide range of services, taking full advantage of modern technology to improve outcomes.

With access to rich data, we can proactively address the needs of our residents and make informed, timely decisions. Recognising the dual challenges of cyber threats and the climate crisis, we will ensure our information is handled securely, and that we use technology in ways that minimise our environmental impact.

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Introduction:

Embracing the Digital Future

We will focus on four strategic pillars, working collaboratively with our communities, partners, and workforce to unlock the full potential of digital, data, and technology.

Four Strategic Pillars

Automate: **For an Efficient, Modern Council**

- Streamline and automate tasks to foster seamless collaboration across the Council.
- Leverage digital tools to deliver better value for money and operational efficiency.

Reimagine: **Transform Service Delivery**

- Provide citizens with enhanced services and faster, more responsive support.
- Deliver improved outcomes for all residents of Midlothian by embracing modern service models.

Data: **Deeper Insights and Preventative Operations**

- Utilise data analytics to make quicker, more informed decisions.
- Act proactively wherever possible to anticipate needs and prevent issues.

Secure and Sustain: **Protect and Preserve**

- Employ digital technology to minimise our environmental impact and operate sustainably.
- Ensure our data, systems, and infrastructure remain secure, resilient, and future-ready.

Our Vision: For a Digital Midlothian

We are committed to creating a digitally enabled workforce that can operate with maximum efficiency and agility. By optimising our digital toolset and automating routine tasks, we will empower staff to focus on delivering high-quality services while embracing new ways of working.

Core Digital Toolset

Our priority is to enhance the productivity of our desk-based workforce by optimising the use of digital tools. With the core deployment of the Microsoft Office Suite complete, we are now entering Phase 2, which focuses on:

- **Digitising and Automating Processes:** Converting manual, paper-based processes into digital workflows, developing custom applications to support smarter working, and automating repetitive tasks.
- **Enhancing Collaboration and Information Sharing:** Leveraging tools like Microsoft Teams, SharePoint, and the broader Microsoft 365 suite to foster collaboration and streamline information sharing.
- **Optimising Software Utilisation:** Identifying opportunities to replace third-party software with Microsoft 365 solutions to drive efficiency.
- **Establishing Power BI:** Implementing Power BI as our main platform for data analytics and automated reporting.



Automate:

For an Efficient, Modern Council

Digital Workforce Across Midlothian

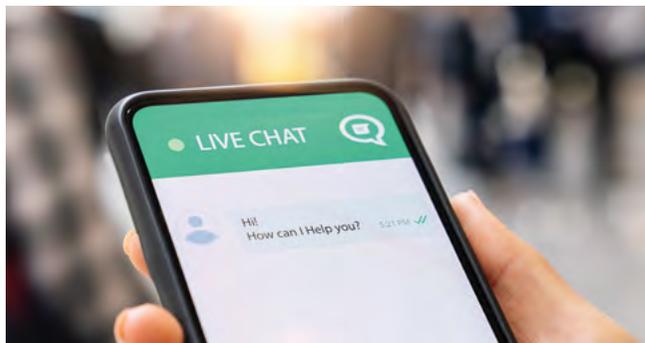
To support flexible service delivery, we are deploying a Hub & Spoke model across the region, providing digital hubs for staff and citizens. We will ensure staff are equipped with the necessary hardware—monitors, docking stations, laptops—and high-speed, reliable internet connectivity at all locations. Service delivery will be supported by a core digital function that is sustainable and built to meet future technical demands.

For areas where standard connectivity isn't feasible, we will explore satellite-based solutions, such as Starlink, ensuring equitable digital access for all staff. Mobile technology will continue to enhance the efficiency of our field-based teams, providing them with real-time access to data and applications from any Council device with phone signal coverage.

Streamlining and Automating Internal Processes

Digital transformation will be the driving force behind improving Council operations, enabling faster task completion and enhancing work quality. By automating repetitive and manual tasks, we will free up staff time to focus on higher-value activities. Key initiatives include:

- **Introducing Self-Service Digital Modules:** Implementing self-service platforms across various Council functions to streamline processes for both employees and managers.
- **Introducing Power-Automate:** Implement automated processes using MS suite to reduce time spent on everyday tasks such as providing information internally
- **Implementing Chatbots (Virtual Agents):** Automating responses to frequently asked questions to improve the speed and efficiency of support services where appropriate.
- **Robotic Process Automation (RPA):** Establishing an RPA function to automate time-consuming computer-based tasks, reducing human error, improving accuracy, and minimising rework.

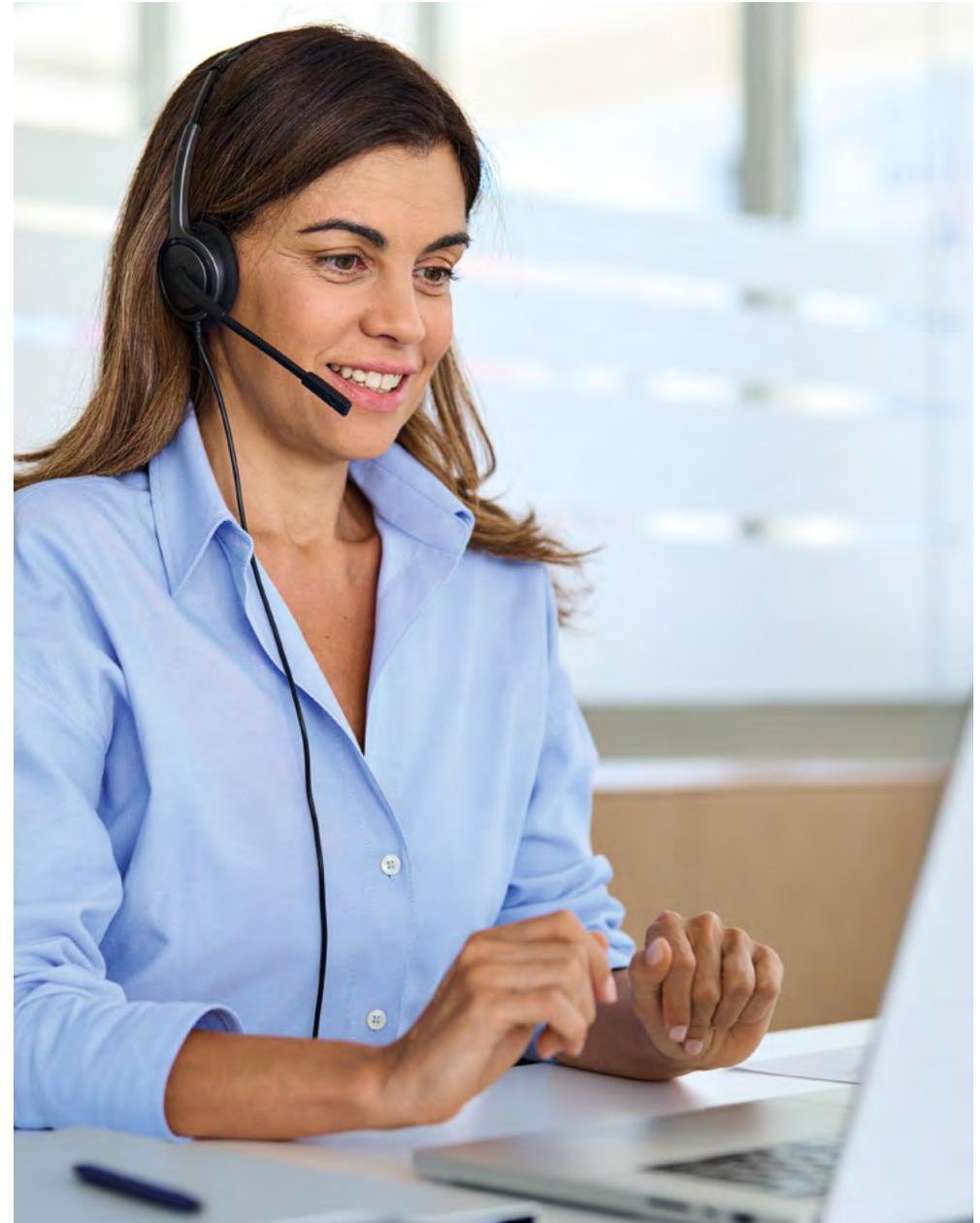


Co-Pilot Transforming the Way We Work

- Embracing the capabilities of Co-Pilot, we will revolutionise our work processes by integrating AI-driven assistance into our daily operations. Co-Pilot will act as a digital partner, providing real-time insights, automating routine tasks, and enhancing decision-making. By leveraging Co-Pilot's advanced analytics and machine learning capabilities, we will empower our staff to work smarter, not harder. This transformation will not only improve efficiency and productivity but also foster innovation and creativity, enabling us to better serve our community and achieve our strategic goals.

A Future-Ready Workforce

Digital skills are becoming essential in both professional and personal life. We will assess current digital skill levels within the workforce and provide targeted training to build confidence in a range of digital competencies. This initiative will align with broader HR programmes, such as Making Performance Matter and recruitment efforts, ensuring we attract and develop top talent. In addition to improving digital skills, we will promote a culture of agility and innovation, empowering staff to continuously enhance their roles through the use of digital tools. Our digital strategy will also support flexible and remote working, promoting a better work-life balance and positioning the Council as an employer of choice. The Digital Strategy is complementary to the Council's Workforce Strategy 2024-2034 which will be launched in December 2024.



Service Delivery Enhancements

- We are committed to expanding digital service options, enabling residents to interact with the Council in ways that are most convenient to them. Through our Customer Services Platform, which launched at the end of 2022, we continue to add more services, ensuring that residents can access the Council anytime, anywhere, and through any device.
- **Enhanced Digital Access:** We will upgrade digital infrastructure in community hubs, such as libraries, to ensure residents have WiFi, device access, and charging facilities.
- **Proactive Service Delivery:** Leveraging emerging technologies, we aim to anticipate and resolve issues before they become concerns. For example:
 - **Road Maintenance:** Using AI-driven computer vision to monitor road conditions and address repairs before potholes develop into significant problems.
 - **Housing Quality:** We are deploying environmental sensors in Council housing to prevent issues like dampness and mould, while ensuring void properties are quickly identified and re-assigned.
 - **Health and Social Care:** Applying data analytics to proactively identify opportunities for early interventions, improving health outcomes for residents.



Reimagine:
Transform Service Delivery

Citizen Interaction

We recognise the importance of flexible service delivery that accommodates all residents, including those who may experience digital exclusion.

- **Expanding Digital Self-Service:** More services and requests will be made available through our website, alongside in-person and phone-based options. Our website will be continuously optimised to ensure accessibility and user-friendliness.
- **AI-Assisted Communication:** To streamline communication, we will introduce chatbots on our website and AI agents within our contact centres. These tools will ensure swift responses, enhancing both the efficiency and quality of our services.
- **Real-Time Updates:** Residents will have the ability to track the status of their inquiries and receive updates through their preferred communication channels (e.g., text, email).
- **Citizen-Centric Design:** We will involve residents in the design and testing of new digital services, ensuring their needs shape future service offerings. Digital platforms will also be used to gather feedback on Council proposals, providing a direct channel for public engagement.

Economic Development

Midlothian will continue to collaborate with partners across the Lothians through platforms such as the City Regional Deal to enhance digital infrastructure, fostering economic growth and innovation.

- **Advanced Connectivity:** Participation in projects that explore cutting-edge connectivity solutions, such as 5G and Long Range Wide Area Network (LoRaWAN), will unlock new economic opportunities, including digital tourism and inward investment.
- **Regional Insights:** These initiatives will also provide richer data and insights about the broader Lothians area, helping to guide future development.



Empowering Digital Learners

Building on the success of the “Equipped for Learning” (EfL) programme, which gained widespread recognition, we are launching the new Equipped for Learning Strategy in 2024. The Strategy ensures that digital technology is harnessed to empower young and not so young people across Midlothian, equipping them with skills for learning, life, and work.

- **Vision:** All Midlothian learners will have the digital tools and skills necessary to succeed in education and beyond, with equal access to opportunities.
- **The EFL Strategy covers key areas such as:**
 - **Personalised Learning**
 - **Leadership & Professional Development**
 - **Collaboration**
 - **Driving Digital Change**
 - **Resources and Infrastructure**
 - **Health & Safety**
- Midlothian’s Community, Lifelong Learning and Employability service supports young people, adults, and families in gaining the skills they need for life, learning, and employment. As digital literacy becomes an essential skill for everyday life, we will integrate digital learning into our service offerings, ensuring residents are prepared for the future.



Health and Social Care

Aligned with the *Midlothian Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) Digital Strategy* and the *Scottish HSCP strategy*, our focus remains on using digital technologies to enhance care delivery and improve the wellbeing of all residents. Delivering the right care in the right place at the right time is the key aim of these strategies and the Council’s Digital Transformation Strategy will work with the HSCP to deliver its key strategic priorities of:

- **Digital Access:** Ensuring residents have flexible, digital access to personal health data and services that support wellbeing.
- **Digital Services:** Increasing the availability of digital health services for both residents and staff.
- **Digital Foundations:** Building the necessary infrastructure, systems, and governance for secure, robust service delivery.
- **Digital Skills and Leadership:** Developing digital skills across the health and social care workforce to enhance service delivery.
- **Digital Futures:** Keeping Midlothian at the forefront of digital innovation in health and wellbeing.
- **Data-Driven Services:** Using data to improve services, drive innovation, and enhance outcomes for residents.

Data Innovations and Solutions

We will unlock the power of data to gain fresh insights into our community, identifying innovative ways to improve lives across Midlothian. By integrating diverse sources of information, both within the Council and from external partners, we can empower our service teams to drive meaningful change. Data will become a central resource in shaping our decisions, enabling us to allocate resources smarter, act more proactively, and deliver services that truly enhance the quality of life for all.

Building Data Capability

Our aim is to create a robust data ecosystem that drives better decision-making and outcomes across all Council services. To achieve this, we will:

- Establish a comprehensive data analytics capability, supported by a corporate data platform.
- Partner with institutions like the University of Edinburgh to harness advanced data analysis tools.
- Focus on data-driven projects that can significantly improve lives, such as early intervention in Health and Social Care and improving educational outcomes by identifying trends in pupil performance.



Data:

Deeper Insights and
Preventative Operations

Fostering a Data-Driven Workforce

We will develop a data-literate workforce to maximise the potential of our data capabilities by:

- Evaluating current staff proficiency in data handling and analysis.
- Providing tailored training programs to build data expertise across all teams.
- Fostering a culture of data-informed decision-making at every level of the organisation.

Data Quality and Transparency

High-quality data is the foundation of reliable insights and decision-making. To ensure we make the best use of our information, we will:

- Prioritise data cleaning and assurance to maintain a high standard of accuracy.
- Develop an Open Data platform, making our data and performance metrics transparent and accessible to the public, enhancing trust and engagement.

Smart Cities and Internet of Things

Our vision for a smarter Midlothian includes expanding the “Smart Cities” and Internet of Things (IoT) infrastructure. By deploying sensor networks throughout the region, we can improve local services and efficiency with solutions such as:

- Real-time air quality monitoring.
- Live updates on car park and leisure centre occupancy.
- Alerts for rural bin emptying.
- Automated quality control for green spaces.



Net Zero and Sustainability

Hybrid Working and Reduced Commuting

As Midlothian Council embraces modern hybrid working patterns, we have significantly increased our use of virtual conferencing technologies, such as Microsoft Teams for meetings and Council committee meetings. This shift has reduced the need for commuting, helping to lower pollution levels. We will continue to explore opportunities where technology can further minimise travel, such as using remote evaluations for property repairs to avoid unnecessary journeys for simpler issues.

Transition to Efficient Cloud Solutions

We are committed to reducing the carbon footprint of digital services by transitioning the majority of our energy-intensive on-premise server workloads to more efficient cloud-based and off-site solutions. This move will substantially cut the environmental impact of our digital infrastructure. Furthermore, we will ensure that our cloud providers adhere to strict sustainability practices and environmental certifications, further driving down our carbon emissions.

Optimising On-Premise Equipment

For equipment that remains on-premise, we will replace end-of-life systems with more energy-efficient alternatives, including optimising air-conditioning systems to reduce power consumption. We are also dedicated to extending the lifespan of our digital assets wherever practical to minimise the environmental impact associated with new equipment production. Future investments in digital infrastructure will prioritise solutions that meet the highest standards of energy efficiency and environmental responsibility. Where feasible, old assets will be reused, recycled or resold to benefit both the community and the environment, and any necessary disposal will be managed to minimise environmental impact.



Secure and Sustain:
Protect and Preserve

Cyber Security

Establishing a Security Operations Centre (SOC)

In an era of rapid digital transformation, ensuring the security, availability, and integrity of our systems and data is more critical than ever. As cyber threats grow increasingly sophisticated and frequent, maintaining a proactive and adaptive security posture is essential. To safeguard our digital ecosystem, we will establish a dedicated Security Operations Centre (SOC) to provide 24/7 monitoring, threat detection, and real-time response. Utilising state-of-the-art threat intelligence platforms and advanced analytics, the SOC will play a central role in mitigating risks. We will adopt a threat-centric approach, continuously enhancing our incident response capabilities and automating processes to minimise human error and response times.

Cloud Security and Governance

Aligned with our Cloud-First strategy, our cloud infrastructures will be optimised for security, scalability, and resilience. We will implement strict governance frameworks to protect sensitive data, including clearly defined data ownership and granular access controls.

Leveraging AI and Machine Learning

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) technologies will bolster our cyber defences. By leveraging predictive analytics, we will proactively hunt for threats, manage vulnerabilities, and automate incident response, enabling us to detect breaches and anomalies in real time.

Cultivating a Security-Aware Culture

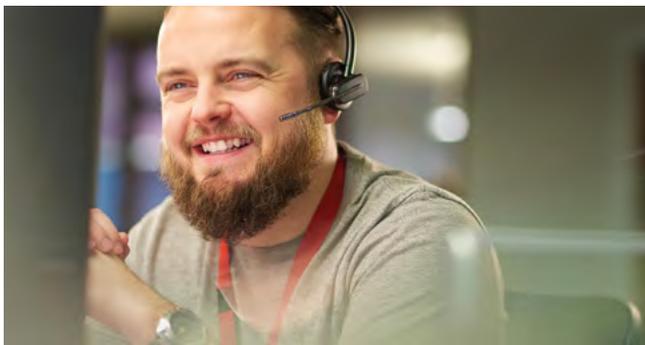
Recognising that people are both a vulnerability and an asset in cybersecurity, we will cultivate a culture of security awareness through continuous training, simulated phishing attacks, and real-world scenario exercises. This approach will help instil a proactive security mindset across the Council.

Balancing Risk against End User Benefits

Understanding that digital transformation brings both opportunities and challenges, we will strive to balance risk management with end user benefits. By implementing robust security measures and fostering a user-centric approach, we aim to protect sensitive data while enhancing user experience. Continuous risk assessments, user feedback loops, and adaptive security protocols will ensure that our digital initiatives remain secure and beneficial for all stakeholders. This balanced approach will help us navigate the complexities of digital innovation responsibly whilst also gaining the most out of our new digital tools.

Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery

To ensure preparedness, we will conduct regular business continuity and disaster recovery exercises, simulating a broad range of cyber events. By adhering to industry best practices and recommendations from leading cybersecurity frameworks, we will build a robust, resilient, and adaptive cybersecurity strategy.



Appendix 01: 5 Year Roadmap

 Automate	 Re-imagine	 Data	 Secure & Sustain
<p>2024-2025</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M365 Core Tools Adoption. • Automation (Robotic Process Automation – RPA) – initial Proof of Concepts and Business Case for dedicated resources as required. • Adoption of further Services onto the Customer Service Portal. 	<p>2024-2025</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Machine Vision (AI) pothole monitoring. • Scope and cost Service Re-design training for staff to support transformation activity. • Equipped for Learning Audio/Visual upgrades, prep for virtual classrooms, and implement review suggestions. 	<p>2024-2025</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Case for Data Analytics platform and resources. • Multi-source data analysis on “Cost of Living”. 	<p>2024-2025</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Continuity Planning and Exercises. • Agree Security Operations Centre (SOC) plan. • Achieve cyber accreditations. • Define Future Cloud Migration Plan. • Reduction in printing through the use of M365.
<p>2026-2027</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish RPA Capability with regular “go lives” of new automation workflows. • MS Copilot “AI Assistant” for staff – pilot & business case. 	<p>2026-2027</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope + pilot website Chatbot. • Investigate, Business Case and Pilots of AI (education administration; care workers write-ups). • Deliver Service Re-Design training. • Predictive Data and Internet of Things projects building on examples such as sensors for Council housing maintenance. 	<p>2026-2027</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish Data Analytics team and deploy agreed data solutions. • Establish and expand key cross-service and organisational dashboards. 	<p>2026-2027</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish SOC. • Staff cyber awareness and readiness campaign and training. • Migrate network drives content to cloud. • Plan for the secure integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI). • Move Finance, Telephony, D360 , Open Revenues, TotalMobile and Networking systems to the cloud. • Reduce the number of High School servers by 50%. • Consider options to move to hosted data centre. • Upgrade remaining servers to Solid State Drive (SSD) storage, which reduces power consumption.
<p>2028-2029</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advance RPA capabilities in to “Intelligent Automation”. 	<p>2028-2029</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish “digital incubator” for rapid build of innovative digital ideas from all areas of the Council. • *NB Education and HSCP digital plans are in development through dedicated forum.* 	<p>2028-2029</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upskill non-data centric staff with the tools to identify paths for change through data analysis. • Focus on advanced data analysis and solutions, including AI. 	<p>2028-2029</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AI tools for advanced cyber threat detection and avoidance. • Finalise network drive to cloud migration. • Migration of D360 & PTC to cloud.

Appendix 02: Near Term Working Plan

The following key work projects are either already underway or will be progressed in Year 1 of this strategy:

- **Microsoft 365**
Ongoing implementation and integration of Microsoft 365 across departments.
- **Digitise / Automate Processes**
Leverage the Microsoft 365 suite of low-code tools to digitise manual and paper-based processes, develop custom applications for smarter working, and automate repetitive tasks.
- **Improve Collaboration & Information Sharing**
Enhance collaboration by utilising SharePoint and other tools within the Microsoft 365 suite to streamline information sharing.
- **Software Rationalisation**
Identify opportunities to replace third-party software with Microsoft 365 solutions, reducing redundancy and cost.
- **Power BI for Data Analytics & Reporting**
Establish Power BI as the primary platform for data analytics and automated reporting.
- **Waste Services – In-Cab Technology & Route Optimisation**
Implement in-cab technology and optimise waste collection routes to improve efficiency.
- **Artificial Intelligence (AI) Pilot**
Conduct a pilot project to assess the maturity and applicability of AI in selected Council work areas.
- **Customer Services Platform**
Enhance digital access to Council services via the website, improving the customer experience.
- **Equipped for Learning**
Upgrade audio-visual systems and Wi-Fi networks to support the “Equipped for Learning” initiative.
- **Core Infrastructure Upgrades**
Migrate to the SWAN 2 network to improve core infrastructure capabilities.
- **Telephony System Review & Upgrade**
Upgrade corporate and education telephony systems to enhance communication capabilities.
- **Satellite Connectivity at Vogrie Park**
Install satellite connectivity to improve internet access at Vogrie Park.
- **Cybersecurity Controls & Network Testing**
Achieve cybersecurity controls accreditation and conduct cyber security incident response exercises .
- **Machine-Vision Powered Pothole Detection (AI)**
Implement a machine-vision system for automated pothole detection and road maintenance.
- **Cost of Living Data Project**
Use data analytics to support initiatives aimed at mitigating the cost of living crisis.
- **HSCP Data Visualisation & Alerts**
Develop data visualisation and alert systems to help identify care escalation within Health and Social Care Partnerships (HSCP).
- **Open Revenues Project**
Transformation of Council Tax, Revenues and Benefits activities to include customer portal, online forms and e-billing.
- **Customer Payments Project**
Improvements and enhancements to payment acceptance functionality to improve customer experience and payment card security.
- **Digital HR/Payroll**
Leverage HR/Payroll system to expand self-service for staff and managers and modernise associated processes.
- **Parents Portal**
Implementation in conjunction with Improvement Service to provide online facility/mobile app for parents.
- **Tenants Portal**
Provide self service facility for tenants and move customer contact online.
- **Access Community Gateway**
Provide self service facility for some aspects of social care client engagement including online forms.
- **Digital Dictation**
Implement Digital Dictation tool in social care case management system and explore options for similar tools to support other services.
- **Core Business Applications Modernisation**
Upgrade and modernise the Council’s core business applications to improve performance and resilience and maintain compliance.

