Slough Borough Council

Report To:	Cabinet
Date:	20th March 2023
Subject:	ICT & Digital Strategy 2023-2026
Lead Member:	Cllr Zaffar Ajaib
Chief Officer:	Sarah Hayward, Executive Director of Strategy & Improvement
Contact Officer:	Simon Sharkey Woods, AD Chief Digital & Information Officer
Ward(s):	N/A
Key Decision:	YES
Exempt:	NO
Decision Subject To Call In:	YES
Appendices:	Appendix A – ICT & Digital Strategy – Capability, Capacity & Resilience

1. Summary and Recommendations

Summary:

1.1 This report sets out the proposed new strategy for all ICT & Digital services at Slough Borough Council for the period 2023 to 2026.

1.2 The report provides the case for an "adaptive strategy" that allows for rapid improvements and change where the fixed points are our vision (what the best version of our organisation is, as defined in our corporate plan) and the council's purpose (why we exist, and why it matters).

1.3 The report describes three core themes. These are linked to technology infrastructure and support service improvements, a refreshed approach to digital channels for residents, and a new structured approach to the platforms that bring together data from across the council and partners to inform decision making.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is recommended to:

1.4 Approve the refreshed strategy for ICT & Digital services as detailed in this report and the full strategy document which can be found in Appendix 1.

Reason: Approval will allow the ICT & Digital team to progress with work that will lead to a more sustainable and effective technology and digital service.

Commissioner Review

Commissioners have reviewed this report.

2. Report

Introduction

2.1 The directions issued on the 1st December 2021 to Slough under Section 15(5) and (6) of the Local Government Act 1999 stated the need for "An action plan to achieve improvements in relation to the proper functioning of the Authority's IT." The modernisation programme, approved in the Cabinet meeting of March 2022, continues to resolve the legacy issues to achieve the proper functioning of IT. This strategy moves that on and is the approach to ensuring technology and digital services remains fully aligned to the needs of residents and staff beyond this, and never again requires this level of intervention.

2.2 Technology strategies in the past have been a mix of key technology decisions and milestone improvements to the services being described, effectively making them more like a programme plan. Recent advances in the way that technology services are consumed, particularly Cloud services, as well as the increasing rate of technology innovation means that this traditional approach is no longer applicable and new thinking is required to ensure services are delivered well.

2.3 The adaptive strategy proposed for 2023 to 2026 focuses on capacity, capability, and resilience. It is designed to be flexible enough to cope with rapid changes of focus and priority, and to exploit the right technologies as and when they become available.

Options considered

2.4 When considering how to approach a new paradigm for the way technology and digital services were provided, the AD Chief Digital & Information Officer had to factor in a high level of uncertainty at Slough Borough Council. As a result of this, traditional approaches that included a commitment to fixed, timebound works was not going to be a viable option.

2.5 A review of the latest thinking found a more flexible, agile based approach that would provide a way of being able to adapt more rapidly to anything that was required to serve residents and staff effectively. The adaptive strategy that has been built and can be seen in Appendix 1 is aligned to this approach.

Background

2.6 A comprehensive strategy for the provision of technology and digital services at Slough Borough Council has not been established since the insourcing of the service back from the transactional service provider several years ago. The challenges following the move back in-house, the Covid-19 pandemic, the major re-organisation of roles and responsibilities during the Our Futures programme, and the financial crises that followed, has meant there has not been enough stability to make a credible plan for future services.

2.7 Following the establishment of a programme of works to modernise and fix legacy technology infrastructure, endorsed by Cabinet in March 2022, the recruitment of more resource into the team, including Slough's first AD Chief Digital & Information

Officer, as well as the stabilising of the wider management team at the council, the environment is sufficiently stable to enable a plan to now be proposed.

2.8 The levels of uncertainty do remain high, and this has been factored in to the strategy that is shared with this report.

2.9 The 3 core themes of the strategy are:

- The modernisation of the existing technology infrastructure and a reset around the way that IT support services are provided to users.

- A reset in the way we organise ourselves to exploit new digital channels that have the potential to simplify the way we interact with residents.

- Building approaches to collating information and data that empower the council to develop deeper insights and support informed decision making.

2.10 To support the refreshed approach the ICT & Digital team will be increasing its transparency about how it is performing and will be seeking to provide as close to real-time data about what we provide to staff internally, and to residents on digital channels.

3. Implications of the Recommendation

3.1 Financial implications

3.1.1 There are no new finance implications as a result of this high-level strategy. The financial impact of ICT & Digital works will be managed through the usual budgeting processes of the council.

3.2 Legal implications

3.2.1 There are no known direct legal implications of this strategy.

3.2.2 The indirect positive effect of this strategy will be to reduce the risk of service failure across the council, lower the potential for cyber-attacks, and improve our stance in respect of the data protection act.

3.3 Risk Management Implications

3.3.1 The risk of major failures of critical services will reduce as the activities that flow from this strategy are progressed.

3.4 Environmental Implications

3.4.1 The work to significantly improve the approach to IT service management will have an impact on managing hardware that will mean we use equipment more efficiently. This should prevent waste and ensure we have the smallest possible footprint in terms of the use of physical devices.

3.4.2 The focus on the use of Cloud/internet-based services will also lower the carbon footprint of what we do as we will be sharing resources with others rather than building infrastructure for ourselves that is only partially utilised.

3.5 Equality Implications

3.5.1 There are no known equality implications as a result of this strategy.

4. **Background Papers**

None

ICT & Digital Strategy 2023-26 – Capability, Capacity & Resilience
Date Approved: (tbc March 2023 Cabinet)
Date of Review: (March 2024)

Version Control

Version	Date	Updated by	Description
0.1	30/01/2023	Simon Sharkey Woods, AD Chief Digital & Information Officer	First draft issued before the formal governance started.
0.2	03/02/2023	Simon Sharkey Woods, AD Chief Digital & Information Officer	Second draft issued with proposed board paper with Cabinet.
0.3	10/02/2023	Simon Sharkey Woods, AD Chief Digital & Information Officer	Draft following feedback from stakeholder's pre-2nd stage governance.
0.4	17/02/2023	Simon Sharkey Woods, AD Chief Digital & Information Officer	Draft following feedback from s151 and monitoring officers. Version for Commissioners and CLT.
0.5	28/02/2023	Simon Sharkey Woods, AD Chief Digital & Information Officer	Revised draft following feedback from Commissioners.

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Strategy at a Glance

Capability, Capacity & Resilience

In the most successful authorities, the ICT & Digital services provision has been moving from being a support service to having a transforming impact on the role of local government, the operating model of the authority, how public services are delivered, and how communities are engaged. As a result of many factors, Slough Borough Council has not moved as quickly on this change as other authorities, and the time is now right for a reset that enables the organisation to accelerate its adoption of new ways of working. This is a key element of the work required to establish Slough as a sustainable and impactful council for the community.

The ICT & Digital Strategy detailed here has been built to support the refreshed corporate plan. It sets the direction for the next three years and is part of establishing corporate control of all the technology and digital services across the council. It also underpins the strategic ambition of the authority to become an enabling council, providing increasing value for residents through services that are joined up and easy to access.

An adaptive strategy

In this adaptive strategy the fixed points are our vision (what the best version of our organisation is, as defined in our corporate plan) and the council's purpose (why we exist, and why it matters). The broad strategic themes that have emerged are linked to the direction set by stakeholders, feedback around issues from residents, and to the experience and learning of undertaking work that moves us in the direction we are taking. Over time we expect our strategic themes to change in focus, size, significance, and priority. Rather than establishing fixed workstreams, and rigidly pursuing them at the expense of any other possibility, we will accept and welcome change as an opportunity to increase value and continually improve.

Accountability

Although the work of ICT & Digital is moving away from rigid workplans, we will constantly review our focus and priorities. Transparency and accountability are built into the proposed approach. We will track the pace, quality, and efficiency of everything we do. The strategy will be overseen by the AD Chief Digital & Information Officer and delivery monitored by the ED Strategy & Improvement.

Themes

The core themes of this strategy are:

- **Modernisation & IT Service Management Reset** – on-going focus on modernising and improving services, and the re-design and implementation of new ways of working that will provide IT resources to staff that work reliably and improve the efficiency of the way we work for residents. This theme includes:

    o The continuation of works to stabilise and improve existing services.
    o A new approach to ICT support that enables users to self-serve and manage their issues easily.
    o Control of user access and permissions that ensures security and tight control of data access and licencing costs.

- o A continuing focus on diversification and the lifting of critical services to robust Cloud/internet-based options to minimise risk and lower maintenance costs.
- o Tighter control of technology assets to ensure that all assets provide the maximum value to the authority.
- o Support for staff to exploit the tools and services we have available so that they can operate increasingly efficiently.
- o An ambition to reach a fully optimised state against the ITIL 4 framework within two years.

- **Digital Reset** – a re-design of the way the council builds and serves access to services via digital platforms. This will include:

  - o Supporting the move of the council from being primarily a public service provider to become a community enabler that links all local providers together for the benefit of residents.
  - o Enhancing the ability of the council to have more direct, intelligent interaction with citizens and communities.
  - o Establishing a model that allows for the organisation to evolve and change without huge cost and effort, thereby future proofing the organisation to remain a sustainable entity.
  - o Only implementing digital access to services where we are confident that the expectation set at first point of contact is met by the actions that then follow.

- **Exploiting data more effectively** – improving the awareness of what data we have, how we use it, the quality of it and how we can bring it together to inform the decision making across the council to drive efficiency and impact. This will include:

  - o Utilising technologies that enable the transformation, aggregation, and presentation of data.
  - o Building and actively managing a central view of all the key data assets in use across the council.
  - o A refreshed approach to data quality that identifies data asset owners and establishes the responsibility for maintaining high quality data.
  - o The ability to provide, in near real-time, access to information about organisational performance through dashboards or reporting.
  - o The ability to increasingly undertake deeper analytics to test thinking around new ways of serving residents and to drive continual improvement.

Welcome and Introduction

Following a period of analysis and research we are glad to present the ICT & Digital strategy. It is a component of the wider change taking place at Slough Borough Council to ensure we head towards a sustainable future operating model and provide impactful services for the people we serve. It is directly linked to our corporate plan and is underpinned by principles that will remove the need for such a radical change in future years. These principles include:

- Corporate management of all ICT & Digital infrastructure
- An organisation prepared to learn and adapt at pace

- A focus on continual improvement
- Culture and behaviours that encourage challenge and debate
- Working collaboratively

Introduction

The IT department in councils was for many years a small, back-office organisation setup to provide basic technology support services for devices and line-of-business applications. For the more progressive public sector organisations, this perspective has changed, and technology and digital services has become one of the core components of more radical organisational transformation. Technology has fundamentally impacted the way services are provided and more rapidly changed working practices over the past 5 years than in the previous 20 years. This is continuing at pace and at the time of writing, technologies such as ChatGPT and other AI based services were gaining profile and efficacy. Slough Borough council has not been able to progress as quickly as other organisations due to a range of issues including, but not limited to, the transactional services contract that was in place for a number of years, the Covid pandemic, and the recent financial difficulties. It is now time to reset and increase the pace of adoption of new ways of working. This will support the council in reaching a sustainable state and improve our impact for residents into the future.

Purpose of this strategy

This strategy is designed to provide a model for the way ICT & Digital services are provided so that the council can adapt more quickly and easily to the changing needs of the residents it serves. It will help the council grow its impact and do this whilst working to maintain tight financial control. Where investments are made, they will be based on formal return-on-investment (ROI) modelling so that the benefits of any such investment have a robust business case.

Scope of this strategy

The scope of this refreshed strategy for ICT & Digital is wider than any that have come before. This is due to the increasing use of technology across all aspects of an organisation. The scope includes:

- The management of all technology systems, devices and services used by staff to support the work being done to provide front-line services to residents.
- Provision of all the resident facing services provided by the council that are provided through the internet on a range of digital platforms.
- The hosting and maintenance of all data assets used to support the council to undertake its activities.
- All back-office infrastructure managed by the ICT & Digital team on behalf of the council.
- The management of all internet provided (Cloud) services provided to users to manage the work they undertake.
- The management of security across all technology and digital services to ensure the risk of disruption to services is mitigated.

Setting the Scene

Current State of Services

At the time of writing the ICT & Digital Team was midway through a major programme of modernisation work linked to investments made in March 2022 to help resolve some urgent and pressing issues with the back-office infrastructure. As well as resolving fundamental problems the work has included the lifting of some services to internet hosting (Cloud) provision which has lowered risk and improved service quality. Our core ERP (enterprise resource planning system, covering finance, HR, payroll etc.), and our revenues and benefits system are examples of this change. The work has also had a focus on strengthening our approach to cyber security so that the council is more resilient against the increasing threat of cyber-crime.

An update on the progress of this work was provided to Cabinet in December 2022 and the paper presented by the team also alluded to the development of this strategy. Phase one of the modernisation work will continue throughout 2023 and further business cases will be created later in the year for future phases of activity that continue to improve the foundational elements of the infrastructure the council requires to meet its ambition. ICT & Digital services will never be in a static state and the council should expect an agile style continuum of planning and delivery as a normal part of the way services will be managed in the future. In this new paradigm the ICT & Digital team will need to work in close collaboration with all services as we seek to identify increasingly efficient ways for services to be provided.

IT Service Management Maturity

To deliver a consistent high-quality service there are a number of things that need to be in place. The industry standard for how to establish good ways of working in IT can be found in the ITIL framework. Version 4 is the current iteration of this framework. The ITIL 4 framework identifies five levels of IT service management process maturity:

1. **Initial** – the IT service management (ITSM) processes are not particularly organised or useful.

2. **Repeatable** – the ITSM are partially project-based for some elements.

3. **Defined** – the ITSM processes are defined and documented in a way that provides an holistic approach for the service.

4. **Managed** – with 3. (above) in place ITSM is then actively managed and tracked to ensure consistency.

5. **Optimised** – all processes and functions are documented, aligned to robust governance, tracked, and therefore provide an opportunity for continual improvement.

At the current time, and albeit subjective due to a lack of detailed analysis, we estimate that the IT service management practices in place are around 1 – 2 on this scale. A recently refreshed focus on improving ITSM has the ambition to improve this position and aspires for

the team to be optimised in two years. This is important because it will lead to lower overall IT costs, higher service levels and standards, improved employee productivity and efficiency, and higher customer satisfaction through consistency.

Resource

The team has an approach to the resource required to meet the aspiration of this strategy and it started with a full team restructure in 2022. The original shape and size of the team was insufficient for the future ambition of the council and was heavily dependent upon expensive interim resource that would be unsustainable in the longer term. The restructure has established a flatter, more open structure and has new roles that have been established to manage financial control, procurement, risk, audit and digital services. The team will continue to evolve over the coming years, but another such largescale restructure should not be required. The 4 core areas of the team are:

- **CONTROL** - Control is a multi-disciplinary area with its own autonomous managers giving an appropriate level of separation. It covers the ICT&D Programme Delivery Team, Enterprise Architecture, and Governance, Compliance & Reporting.

- **CORE** - Core is where the technical staff that cover projects as well as the 2nd and 3rd line support of all applications and systems reside. This group will continue to need significant capacity in the medium term. This area is managed by our Technology Operations Manager.

- **CUSTOMER** - Customer is the primary contact point for staff to engage with the ICT & Digital Team. Incidents and requests are made via the customer channel through the ServiceDesk, and new works are discussed through the business partnering function. Both elements are managed by our ICT&D Services Manager.

- **DIGITAL** - Digital is the lead area on work to provide public facing services that help the Council to be more efficient and to ensure residents receive the best possible service at the first point of contact.

Some of the interim resources we have in the team have chosen to move to become permanent team members and we have been successful with several external recruitments. More are planned and it is hoped that recent changes in the market will make it possible to attract skilled candidates.

Despite the progress we have made, not everything we do will be covered by permanent members of staff and for some areas, particularly highly specialist areas, we will still need to augment the permanent team with some interim or 3rd party resource to support the work we will undertake.

On top of the restructure and ongoing recruitment we have also been in discussion with other parts of the council about where some roles and responsibilities should sit in a future state. At the time of writing, we are considering a potential move for some specialists working on digital services so that we can bring all the skill in this area into one place. Any moves of this type are linked to our ambition to make the council more efficient in the way it operates.

Links

This strategy is not standalone and will support many other strategies and plans being developed across the council. We have been engaging with many teams to ensure what is detailed here will be a genuine support for other key focus areas. The most critical alignment is between this strategy and the refreshed corporate plan. We are now in close and regular contact with the team leading on this to ensure the plan and this strategy are aligned.

Other key pieces of work this will align to include (but are not limited to):

- A refreshed Data Strategy
- A refreshed Customer Services Strategy
- Slough Borough Councils Property Strategy
- Slough's ongoing development of hybrid working

How We Made This Strategy

The key developments and events that have led to this strategy being written and shared, are detailed below:

- The recruitment of the first Associate Director & Chief Digital & Information Officer (AD CDIO) at the council. This is the first time there has been an individual with a technology background at this level of the council.

- The review of the status of ICT & Digital services by the newly recruited AD CDIO.

- The completion of the restructure for the ICT & Digital team to enable it to have the capacity to meet the demands it was receiving and the changing operating model of the council.

- Progress against the technology modernisation programme of works and the learning from undertaking these works.

- Closer collaboration with other areas of the council, especially business and customer services, HR, strategy, and communications.

- Emerging thinking from across the local government sector.

- Increasing opportunities for the intelligent use of internet based (Cloud) technologies in support of the council.

- The improving culture at the council enabling more cross departmental collaboration and thinking about the future use of technology.

Our Priority Areas

The 3 priority areas of this strategy are:

1. Improving the reliability of technology services and transforming the way support is provided for them.

2. Resetting the council's approach to the way residents access services and increasing the volume of interactions through lower cost digital channels.

3. Supporting the exploitation of data more effectively so that the council can prioritise precious resources to have the most impact for residents.

These will now be covered in more detail.

1. Improving technology and support

The ICT & Digital team is, at time of writing, in the process of working through phase one of the modernisation programme, initially approved by Cabinet in March 2022. This modernisation has progressed at pace although the volume of activity is less than originally envisaged nearly a year ago. This is predominantly down to the amount of unforeseen work, and issues with acquiring the resource and specialist suppliers that were needed to support the team and complete the work.

The continuation of phase one of the modernisation programme to stabilise and improve existing services will remain a key priority until at least the end of 2023. As new phases of work are required, new business cases will be created, and all governance followed to ensure the appropriate oversight for senior staff and Members. A key element of the future work will be our ambition to lift more services to internet-based (or Cloud) options. This not only reduces the ongoing costs of supporting these services, it also diversifies the locations where our critical systems are located thereby increasing the resilience of the councils operational activities.

Our approach to any remaining locally managed infrastructure will be to simplify wherever we can. This will be heavily linked to the new operating model in terms of the office space we have, and how we support the hybrid working future. As well as making sure we only have what we genuinely need, we will factor in the total life costs of maintaining and upgrading any infrastructure that is deployed. This will prevent the need for a major reset like the current modernisation programme in the future.
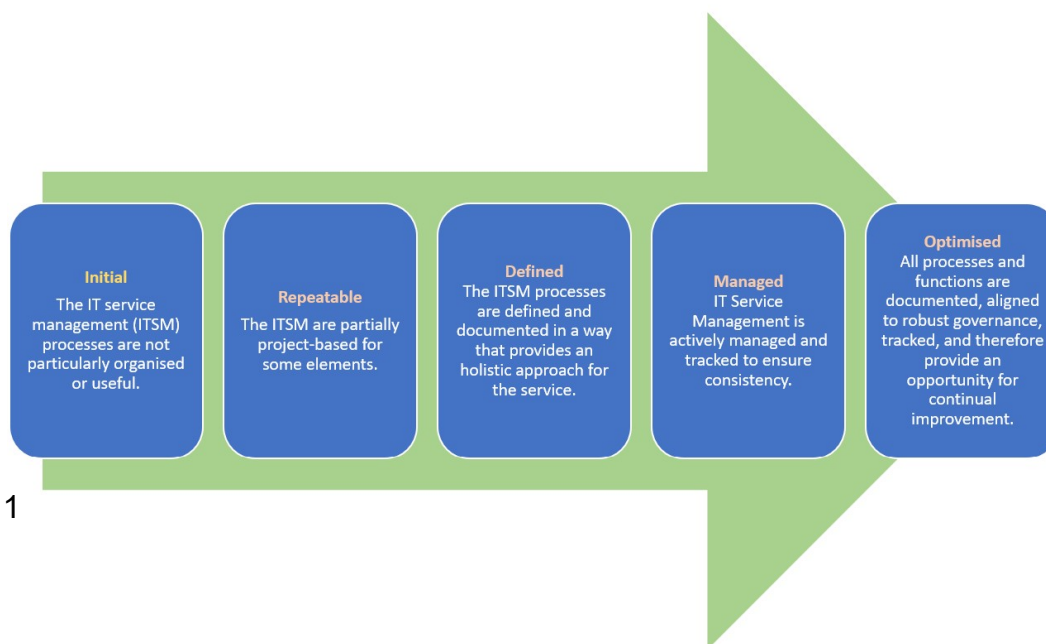

Figure 1

The support service linked to everything that is provided by the ICT & Digital team will be improved significantly through the adoption of standard operating procedures (SOPs) that will drive consistency. The result of taking this approach will be consistency in the way services are provided for all staff. We will also be adopting a modern, appropriately scaled IT service management system which will provide users with a self-service portal. Users will be able to request support or services, and track progress from the new portal. Our target is to improve the quality of IT service provision by aligning to the ITIL 4 framework and moving from 1-2 (minimal structure)

on the maturity scale, to 5, where all processes and functions are documented, aligned to robust governance, tracked, and providing an opportunity for continual improvement.

The ICT & Digital team will also work to actively manage the details of users on the core directory. This will improve security, allow for single sign-on (SSO) to various services, and ensure we are only licenced for what we use.

To help each team across the council to improve its use of technology we will also start, during 2023, to take an holistic approach to the discussions we have so that we can evaluate the whole experience, instead of fixing point issues. This new approach will move around from team-to-team, and we will start with a few smaller teams to test the concept. The plan is to discuss the equipment being used; the skills required to utilise all the services that are available and have discussions about what elements of the work of the team could be automated. We are planning an initial trial of the concept in the Spring of 2023.

Working with HR, the ICT & Digital team will also have a focus on upskilling staff more generally on the services we provide. As well as exploiting what we already have more effectively, this will enable us to keep up to date with the increasing developments taking place, especially with the Cloud services we use.

2. Resident access to services

Improving the way that council and residents interact is essential if Slough Borough Council is to achieve a sustainable model for the future. If the interactions are not good enough and the expectations that are set are not realistic, the participation in the public service process will be limited to protest and complaint. The council has experienced a significant amount of this in recent times.

Local authorities are increasingly becoming custodians of a marketplace of services that residents require to achieve their life outcomes. The focus for a council like Slough will be on dealing with democracy, governance, data and the analysis of need. The council will support communities to become more resilient for themselves by the effective signposting of services and by monitoring and continually improving what residents access. Where transactional services are provided by the council the interaction will need to be increasingly frictionless and impactful. In other words, all access points to council services need to be simple and easy to use and deliver what is expected of them. Although digital channels will increase, not everyone in our community is digitally enabled and this will need to be accommodated through mediated access where required.

The ICT & Digital team will take a lead role in redesigning the governance within the council so that the thinking on how to create more efficient points of access to services is joined up and coherent. The ambition is to improve Slough Borough Council's maturity in this area and transform the customer journey for our residents.
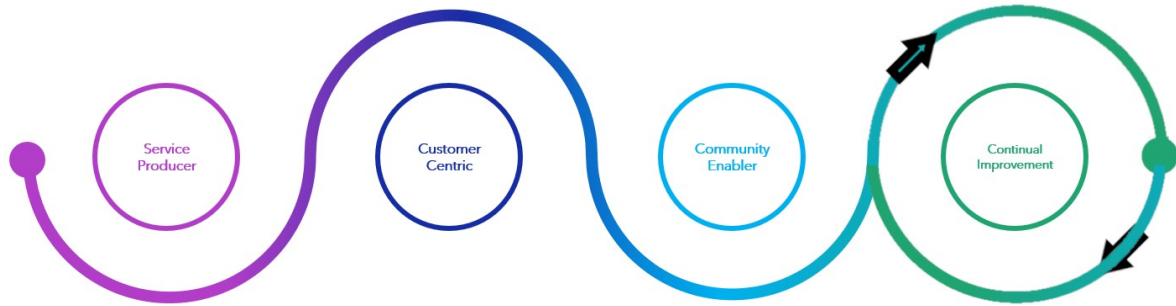
Figure 2

The council will increasingly move from service provider, to moving to be customer centric, and ultimately position itself as a trusted community enabler. Once achieved, the council will then focus on continual improvement, a process that will enable it to adapt to changes in technology, new ways of working, and the shifting expectations of residents.

Minimising the effort for residents to engage with the council will of course improve the efficiency of the council as well. Precious resources can be directed back to improving the impact of what is provided instead of wasteful spending on inefficient back-office process.

The ICT & Digital Team will re-establish new ways of working linked to provision of omnichannel services throughout 2023/24. From 2024 through to 2026, the team will increasingly work with directorate across the council and external partners to continually improve what is provided.

3. Empowering the use of data

The recent events at Slough Borough Council have caused an inconsistency in the way that data is recorded, managed, and used to the benefit of the organisation. The ICT & Digital team has a responsibility to actively support better ways for staff to capture and manage what is required, and to collaborate with the Strategy team on ways to use what we have, to continually improve our ability to make decisions and target the finite resources at the council to greatest impact.

The AD Chief Digital & Information Officer currently chairs the Data Strategy Group. The group has been debating how to reset the position for the council and has recently moved into an action orientated mode where some clear outcomes have been set. These will help provide a better understanding of what we have, the quality of the data available, and how we might bring it together to best effect.
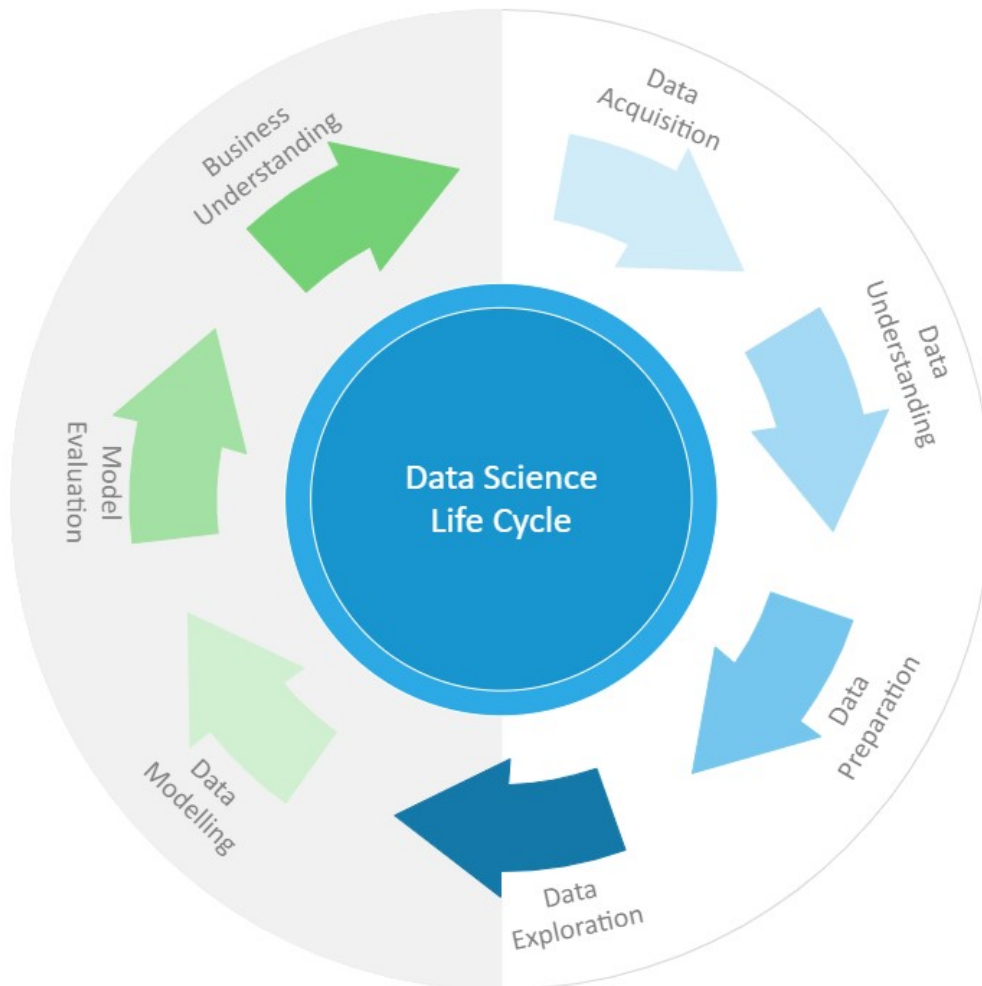
Figure 3

Figure 3 above shows the data science lifecycle. To date, Slough Borough Council has not been able to undertake much of the kind of modelling found in many other organisations. This is linked to inconsistency in the way that data is captured and managed, combined with the need to establish a comprehensive corporate level oversight of the data available. The issues have meant that the council has been predominantly working on the elements shown in shades of blue. There is a significant effort required, as well as resource implications to consider, for Slough Borough Council to significantly uplift its approach to the areas shown in green. There is, however, likely to be a strong business case to do this.

The ICT & Digital team will be reviewing the platforms and services that will offer the best foundational environment for undertaking deeper analysis and modelling during 2023. We will be seeking to build on the tools and investments we have already made to maximise the return on investment of anything that is already in place. As the governance and working practices evolve, the technologies we seek to deploy will also continually evolve. The ICT & Digital team will seek to maintain research on best practice across the industry with a particular focus on local government. By carefully adopting technologies that can change and evolve, the council will be able to exploit the potential in new functions and features at a higher rate than before and will not be left behind.

Next Steps

This strategy has been written in a way that acknowledges and takes account of the levels of uncertainty that exist at the council whilst it builds a new operating model that is affordable, and impactful. This ICT & Digital strategy aligns to the evolving corporate business plan and has a focus on capacity, capability, and resilience. There has been significant progress during 2022 and so we are also now seeking to embed the learning of the work done to date into the approach for the next 3 years.

Key elements of the work taking place in 2023/24:

- A continuation of the modernisation programme with a focus on working through the activities linked to the original approval from Cabinet in March 2022.

- The development of business cases for further investments in ICT & Digital that are focused on improving efficiency and/or lowering risk for the council.

- A focus on establishing consistent practice and service management maturity based on ITIL principles.

- Agreement on the architecture and approach to bringing our data together to understand our residents and inform decisions and then ultimately, to support the building of models that utilise AI and machine learning to provide increasing insight around the way we provide services.

- Establishing a culture of continual improvement within the ICT & Digital team that supports our ability to lower costs and improve the quality of the services provided.

- Increasing engagement and collaboration with service departments via our model of business partnering, and through engagement with senior leadership forums.

- The establishment of coherent, inclusive governance that enables the council to build more effective and impactful engagements for residents, especially through digital channels.

During 2024/25 we will then continue by:

- Continuing to improve our approach to service management to achieve a fully optimised service that has the ability to continually adapt and learn.

- Finding more ways to link the services provided by Slough Borough Council with partners and to find ways to amplify what they do to have an even greater impact on the lives of residents.

The work taking place in 2025/26 will evolve over the coming year or so and will be heavily dependent on what other key strategies set for the future state of the council. These include:

- Data Strategy

- Customer Services Strategy
- Slough Borough Councils Property Strategy
- Slough's approach to hybrid working

Measuring Success

During 2022 the ICT & Digital team started working on a monthly service report to enable all stakeholders to track our progress against the most important areas of what we do. Our plan for 2023/24 is to:

- Continue to evolve the service reporting we undertake with increasingly more of it being linked to near real time dashboards and analytics that are available all the time, not just in the scheduled reporting.

- Continue phase one of the modernisation programme as defined in the Cabinet report of March 2022.

- Achieve ITIL maturity level 4 for IT service management.

- Finalise the approach to corporate data architecture systems.

- Establish the new governance and complete the initial re-design of services provided by digital channels.

During 2024/25 we plan to:

- Achieve ITIL maturity level 5 for IT service management

- Establish Slough Borough Council as the key enabling organisation in Slough in terms of residents accessing what they need from all service providers in the area.

Performance measures for 2025/26 will be identified over the coming 12-18 months as a clearer picture of Slough Borough Council's future state emerges.

Glossary

AI – Artificial Intelligence. Applies to systems endowed with the intellectual processes characteristic of humans, such as the ability to reason, discover meaning, generalise, or learn from experience.

Cloud (computing) - The practice of using a network of remote servers hosted on the internet to store, manage, and process data, rather than a local server or a personal computer.

Data Asset – Any data, held in any format, that is valuable to an organisation and the work it undertakes.

ERP – Enterprise Resource Planning. A system providing core back-office services such as finance, HR etc.

Hybrid (working) – A working pattern that includes working from a range of locations, typically with the most time spent in an office or working from home.

ICT – Information & Communications Technology

ITIL – Information Technology Infrastructure Library. This framework describes processes, procedures, tasks, and checklists which are neither organisation-specific nor technology-specific but can be applied by an organisation toward strategy, delivering value, and maintaining a minimum level of competency.

ITSM – IT Service Management. A generic term for the operating processes undertaken by a technology team.

Machine learning - The use and development of computer systems that can learn and adapt without following explicit instructions, by using algorithms and statistical models to analyse and draw inferences from patterns in data.

Omnichannel - Denoting or relating to a type of customer interaction which integrates the different methods of contact available to residents (e.g. online, in person, or by phone).

ROI – return on investment (model). A way of explaining how increased investment can save money in the medium and longer term, typically over 3 or 5 years.

SSO - single sign on. The use of a single set of credentials to login to multiple services.

SOPs – standard operating procedures. The agreed processes to undertake key tasks across the team that must be followed for consistency.

Sources

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4. Initial ICT Improvement Programme (Cabinet meeting - March 2022)

    (https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/documents/s68217/IT%20Improvement%20Programme.pdf)

5. ICT & Digital Update – Progress and next steps for the proper functioning of IT at SBC (Cabinet meeting – December 2022)

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