



Nottingham
City Council

Digital, Data and Customer Access Strategy

2025 to 2028

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Foreword

Foreword Councillor Ethan Radford

In today's rapidly evolving digital landscape, having a clear and purposeful approach to technology is essential. Our council faces both significant challenges and exciting opportunities. This strategy sets out how we will use data, digital tools, and artificial intelligence (AI) to continually improve the services we provide to our residents.

We are committed to modernising our technology. We recognise that the pace of change is fast, and we must adapt to ensure our services remain effective, efficient, and accessible. This strategy outlines our vision to become a modern, responsive, and resilient digital council.

Although we hold a wealth of information, we have not yet fully harnessed its potential to enhance services, inform decision-making, reduce risk, or improve performance. By using accurate and timely data, we can design better services, work more efficiently, and collaborate more effectively. Our ambition is to become a data-driven organisation where data underpins continuous improvement.

The strategy also sets out how we will invest in digital services, automation, and AI to streamline processes, reduce costs, and enhance service delivery and accessibility. We are committed to ensuring that our digital services are inclusive and easy to use for all residents, including those who may find technology challenging. By designing services around the needs of our residents, we will place them at the heart of our digital transformation and promote digital inclusion.

Understanding and responding to the needs of our residents is central to this strategy. By using feedback and data, we will deliver solutions that are relevant and effective. Our goal is to foster a culture of excellent customer service and continuous improvement.

This strategy represents a bold and ambitious plan for the future. It provides a clear roadmap for transforming our services, making better use of data, and improving access for all. By embracing digital innovation, we will ensure our council is well-equipped to meet future challenges and deliver outstanding services to our communities.



Purpose

The purpose of this strategy is to ensure we are an organisation that has a culture of continuous improvement and innovation. It will address the challenges and opportunities our council faces in enhancing its use of data, transforming services through technology, and improving customer access. By developing a comprehensive Data, Digital, AI, Technology, and Customer Access and Insight Strategy, we aim to create a deliverable roadmap that will guide our efforts in modernising our services and operations.

This strategy will help us leverage the wealth of data we possess to improve services, inform decision-making, reduce risks, and drive performance and transformation. It will also address the fragmented and siloed approach to data management, ensuring that we have consistent data standards and policies in place. By improving data quality and governance, we can enhance service design and delivery, increase efficiencies, and foster greater collaboration across the council.

In terms of technology, the strategy will focus on modernising our IT infrastructure, as well as investing in digital tools, automation, and AI capabilities, this will help us streamline processes, reduce operational costs, and transform service delivery, creating a digitally enabled council that is responsive, innovative, and resilient.

Ensuring that all residents, including those who are digitally excluded, have access to and can effectively use our digital services. By designing services that are easy to use and meet the needs of residents, we will put them at the heart of our strategy.

To ensure we deliver against this strategy we will establish a clear delivery plan based on our themes for improvement.



How this strategy supports the Our Council Plan and our Improvement Journey

The Strategy will support key themes of the Council Plan:

- Fostering Governance Transparency and Innovation.
- Adopting a 'One Council' approach

Support the delivery of our Improvement Plan:

- A Council that delivers for Nottingham with clear direction and purpose
- A Council that is well-run with effective people, processes and systems

Future Council: Operating Principles

- Design things around the customer
- Be efficient and productive, and make the best use of our assets
- Prevention through early intervention
- Work collaboratively and transparently
- Be focussed on performance, risk and improvement
- Be led by intelligence, insight and data

Our Workforce Strategy:

- A Talented and High Performing Workforce
- For excellence in Organisational and Leadership Culture

Governance and Oversight

The Digital and Data Enabling Board plays a central role in driving the councils Transformation agenda. It provides strategic oversight, governance, and leadership to ensure that digital initiatives, data use, and workforce enablement are aligned with our organisational goals and deliver real value to staff and service users. The board will oversee the implementation of this strategy, ensuring that outcomes are prioritised, monitor progress and any associated risks are managed.

The Board brings together senior leaders, digital experts, data analysts, operational leads, and workforce representatives to create a joined-up approach to digital development. It ensures that digital tools and data are used effectively to improve outcomes, support decision-making, and enhance the experience of staff and the people we serve.

The Board also champions a culture of continuous improvement and innovation. It supports the development of digital skills across the workforce, promotes data literacy, and ensures that staff have access to the tools and training they need to thrive in a digital environment.



Nottingham
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The Themes of our Strategy



A customer-focused council,
dedicated to understanding and
meeting residents' needs.



Our use and approach to
Artificial Intelligence



A Digital council



A digitally enabled workforce



A Data & Evidence Driven
council



Fit For Purpose Technology &
Systems



Themes

Theme 1: A customer-focused council, dedicated to understanding and meeting residents' needs

Principle: By understanding the needs of our customers, we will enhance and improve the services we offer to our residents.

Aims: Use customer insight to help design services that can be accessed and are accessible to all. Design and provide services around our customers needed, providing easy ways to access our services.

Theme 2: Use and approach to Artificial Intelligence

Principle: We will leverage AI ethically to enhance efficiency, streamline processes, reduce costs, and improve services for residents and colleagues.

Aims: Govern how we use AI to ensure the council adopts an ethical approach to improve our services, streamline processes, and reduce costs. Through the responsible use of AI, we can ensure that our council works smarter and more efficiently, delivering higher quality services to our workforce and residents.

Theme 3: A digital council

Principle: We will use technology to support and make services better for everyone, making things run more smoothly, save money, and improve how we deliver services.

Aims: To become a modern council by encouraging a culture of innovation and experimentation with new technologies and ideas. We will make sure our digital services are safe and protect people's information, designing them to be easy for everyone to use, including those who find technology difficult to use.



Themes

Theme 4: A digitally enabled workforce

Principle: Invest in training and technology to support and empower staff, streamline tasks, and foster a culture of continuous learning and innovation.

Aims: Help our staff learn new skills by giving them the right tools to do their jobs well. Use digital tools to make work easier, cutting down on repetitive tasks, and allowing our staff to focus on what really matters.

Foster a culture where learning and innovation are encouraged, so our workforce can keep improving and providing the best services to our residents

Theme 5: A data & evidence driven council

Principle: We will use accurate, accessible, and insightful data to drive our decision-making processes, enhance our services, and foster a culture of continuous improvement.

Aims: Use high-quality data to inform and improve our strategic and operational decisions, ensuring that our actions are evidence-based and aligned with our goals.
Provide data and resources to our staff, enabling them to effectively interpret and understand data to enhance and improve service delivery.



Themes

Theme 6: Fit for purpose technology and systems

Principle: We are committed to modernising our technology infrastructure to enhance service delivery, ensure data security, and provide reliable and robust systems for all.

Aims: Transition our services to the cloud to improve accessibility, scalability, and efficiency, ensuring that our systems are always up-to-date and responsive to user needs.

Implement stringent security measures to protect customer data, while maintaining reliable and robust systems that support our operations and service delivery.

Theme 7: Continuous improvement

Principle: We will become a learning organisation that has a culture of continuous improvement and innovation.

Aims: Implement feedback loops and regular assessments to continuously improve digital solutions and processes.

Review the way we deliver services through collaboration and best practice.



Theme 1: A Customer-focused council, dedicated to understanding and meeting residents' needs

Nottingham City Council is committed to delivering services consistently, improving standards and meeting the expectations of our residents through its Customer Access and Insight Strategy. This strategy sets clear standards for residents and staff, aiming to deliver high-quality, consistent service across the organisation.

By using data, insight and feedback, the council will better understand resident needs, ensuring we shape our services around what matters to our residents and use insight to improve delivery. It also prioritises digital inclusion, ensuring services are accessible to everyone, including those less digitally engaged and ensures that we remain available to those residents who need us most.

Technology will be used to streamline processes, track interactions, and design user-friendly digital services. This resident-focused approach drives continuous improvement and innovation.

What we're going to do

Gather customer insight and feedback through complaints, surveys, reviews and direct interactions and use this to make continuous improvement and develop our services.

Ensure our staff are knowledgeable, skilled and equipped to assist our residents when contacting the council and empower staff to make the right decisions for our residents.

Agree and publish clear and realistic service standards.

Offer a variety of ways to access our services and help our residents to use them, while streamlining and improving contact points making it easier for customers to get in touch.

Respond to enquiries and service requests and keep residents updated on progress and signposting residents to other partners and organisations where appropriate.

Aim to resolve enquiries at first point of contact wherever possible, freeing up resources to assist those who need our support the most. Keep residents informed about any changes that may affect them.

Review the way we deliver services to our customers, benchmark against other councils and learn from best practice.

Use data to identify failure, predict demand, improve performance and service delivery.



Theme 2: Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence provides the opportunity to transform how the council operates and provides services, empowering staff, streamlining operations, and improving the way residents access our services. In the last 12 months we have embraced this technology by implementing an AI contact centre to support residents, rolling-out a range of solutions to support efficient ways of working, and piloted voice transcription services to support our social workers to complete referrals with our most vulnerable citizens. This strategy builds on those successes while ensuring we have transparent governance and human oversight, as we continue to use this technology ethically to support the workforce and streamline the way the council operates, building an AI-literate workforce which fosters innovation.

What we're going to do

We will establish a centre of excellence to champion and lead on AI opportunities supporting services to harness the full potential of AI.

We will establish Proof of Concepts, working with suppliers and our in-house experts to deliver and evaluate opportunities to implement AI solutions.

Establish an AI ethics board to ensure our AI implementation is governed, appropriate and does not lead to biases, operating all aspects of AI within a documented AI governance framework.

We will provide AI solutions that make it easier for customers to access services through existing telephony and digital channels.

We will be committed to environmentally sustainable AI practices, prioritising energy-efficient and low-carbon solutions aligned with the council's climate change goals.

Active engagement of residents and stakeholders throughout the AI lifecycle, keeping their needs and perspectives central to decision-making.

Encourage innovation and AI success within the council, learning from our partners and other councils to deliver best practices while encouraging experimentation.

We will develop autonomous and generative AI Agents to support colleagues and customers.

Skill and support our workforce in the use of AI, providing training and apprenticeships to foster a culture of innovation and change

Work with and adhere to the UK Governments Artificial Intelligence Playbook on how to harness the power of AI technologies safely, effectively, and responsibly.



Theme 3: A Digital Council

We will expand on our recent successes, using data, digital tools, AI, and technology to improve access to our services, helping to reduce costs, save money, and provide better services to residents. We will ensure that our customers can access the services we offer through simple, accessible intuitive solutions that meet their needs and expectations, while using technology to innovate the way we operate, ensuring our workforce have the tools to support them in their work.

What we're going to do

Become a Digital by Default council, automating and digitising workflows, reducing postage, print and paper-based manual processes, through a digital-first approach.

Design services around the users need, making our digital services accessible, simple and easy to use for our residents.

Ensure that our digital services provide feedback and relevant updates to customers, to reduce avoidable contact and keep our customers informed.

Build on our success with digital and robotic automation to continue to streamline processes, freeing up capacity and providing better outcomes for customers

Ensure that colleagues have the right tools to support them in their work, using technology to reduce administrative functions, increase productivity and enable our workforce to focus on outcomes that support our customers.

Continuously review our website, capturing customer feedback to improve information, accessibility, navigation and ease of use.



Theme 4: A Digitally Enabled Workforce

We want to ensure that our workforce is confident, capable, and able to work in a digital-first environment. We will support our colleagues to embrace digital tools, embedding digital skills into everyday practice and fostering a culture of curiosity and innovation, we will empower staff to grow and adapt.

This approach ensures that all employees are equipped with the tools, knowledge, and confidence to thrive in a digitally supported workplace.

What we're going to do

Ensure all staff have the digital skills and confidence to adapt, work effectively, and deliver excellent services.

Promote peer learning, mentoring, and knowledge sharing through communities like the Change Community.

Build on successful initiatives like apprenticeships and work shadowing to grow internal digital talent. Make digital learning inclusive and accessible for all roles and abilities.

Attract and retain digital and data talent to support a digital-first Council. Highlight innovation through Digital Showcase events to inspire and share success.

Regularly assess digital skills to target support effectively.

Empower leaders to model digital behaviours and champion learning. Embed digital development in performance frameworks and continuously improve using feedback and data.



Theme 5: – Become a Data Driven council

Nottingham - and local government - is at a pivotal moment. Now, more than ever, data must be recognised as a valuable strategic asset, not merely a by-product of service delivery. To meet the complex demands of today and the challenges ahead, we must reflect on our legacy state and move decisively from fragmented, reactive data use to a culture where intelligence drives decisions, strengthens accountability, and informs the design and delivery of our internal and external services.

What we're going to do

Raise Data Quality Standards, embed clear accountability, quality policies, and monitoring tools to ensure data is consistently accurate, timely and trusted across all services.

Unlock Integrated Insights, master our data and develop joined-up datasets and analytical capability to deliver one truth and a single, holistic view of residents and cohorts, supporting smarter, earlier interventions.

Champion ethical, secure and accountable data use, strengthen governance, cyber security and compliance that protects public trust.

Enable seamless data sharing and collaboration, adopt common standards, protocols and aim for interoperable (back-end) systems to support secure, efficient data exchange across teams and with partners.

Build data literacy and capability, deliver a structured programme of training, tools and support tailored to roles and needs, empowering staff to confidently use data in their work.

Strengthen data management and infrastructure, modernise our data architecture and platforms, applying FAIR principles (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable) to improve data availability and value.

Embed a performance-driven, data-positive culture, foster a culture that values evidence, challenges poor-quality data, and makes data-driven decision-making the norm at every level of the organisation.

Drive efficiency through smart data practices, streamline data processes, reduce duplication and automate where possible to maximise productivity and ensure efficient use of resources.



Theme 6: Technology

We will improve our approach to technology by establishing an IT strategy on how we manage systems and services going forward. A new Technical Design Authority will ensure all tech solutions match our strategy and security standards. We will also use cloud platforms for flexible access, strengthening cybersecurity to protect data and build trust.

What we're going to do

Establish an IT Strategy to ensure we have an agreed approach to how we manage our IT service and infrastructure for now and in the future.

Establish a new Technical Design Authority (TDA) to ensure all technical solutions are aligned with the organisation's IT strategy and cybersecurity standards.

Cloud-Based Solutions: Utilising cloud services where appropriate to provide scalable and flexible resources, enabling employees to access necessary tools and data from anywhere, at any time.

Cybersecurity Measures: Strengthen security protocols to protect sensitive information and ensure compliance with regulations, thereby safeguarding the digital workspace and maintaining trust.

Continuous Learning Platforms: Offering online training and development programs to keep the workforce updated with the latest skills and technologies, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and innovation.

Ensure we have a responsive and customer focused IT Service, supporting the workforce to most effectively use the technical solutions available to us.

Adopting a Product Lifecycle Approach to enterprise software development and commercial management.

Leverage technology to increase digital inclusion, digital literacy and collaboration opportunities for our workforce.

Review the IT service catalogue to ensure the devices we use to do our jobs are the right ones and fit for purpose.

Theme 7: Continuous Improvement

What we're going to do

In our evolving digital landscape, continuous improvement is not just a goal; it's a mindset that will drive our success. By embracing a culture of constant learning and adaptation, we ensure that our strategy remains agile, innovative, and responsive to the needs of our users.

Our commitment to continuous improvement means we are always looking for ways to enhance our processes, tools, and technologies. We actively seek feedback, analyse data, and leverage insights to make informed decisions that move us forward. This approach allows us to stay ahead of the curve, anticipate trends, and deliver exceptional value to our customers.

We believe that collaboration and open communication are key to fostering a culture of continuous improvement. By encouraging our team members to share ideas, experiment with new solutions, and learn from their experiences, we create an environment where innovation thrives.

In essence, continuous improvement is the heartbeat of our digital strategy. It empowers us to be better every day, ensuring that we not only meet but exceed the expectations of our stakeholders. Together, we are building a future where excellence is the norm and innovation knows no bounds.



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Digital Inclusion

Digital inclusion means making sure everyone has fair and meaningful access to digital technologies like the internet, computers, and mobile devices, as well as the skills and knowledge to use them effectively. In today's connected world, digital inclusion is crucial to ensure that all customers can access our services. However, many people still face significant barriers to accessing and using digital technologies.

While the benefits of digital technology for delivering, experiencing, and improving the quality of services are well known, these benefits can't be fully realised by everyone unless services are inclusive, designed for change, and meet the expectations of both staff and the public.

Digital inclusion is more than just providing access to technology; it's about empowering individuals and communities to fully participate in the digital age. Embracing digital inclusion can lead to better access to information and services, improved communication and collaboration, and increased economic opportunities. It also allows marginalised and underrepresented groups to voice their concerns, take part in decision-making processes, and advocate for their rights.

We will continue to provide our customers with support to help those that are not digitally literate through our libraries, providing access to computers and training.

The newly formed **Citizen Panel** will support our goal of creating a culture of digital inclusion, ensuring that our websites and web-based systems and services are accessible to all customers. This group will work together to understand the needs of our community and staff, and to identify gaps not covered by existing initiatives or plans.

We will work with Digital Notts to support digital inclusion. This collaboration will help ensure our approach reflects the needs of our communities by engaging with partners and residents. We aim to raise awareness of digital inclusion, embed it across our services, and make it a shared responsibility across the council.



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