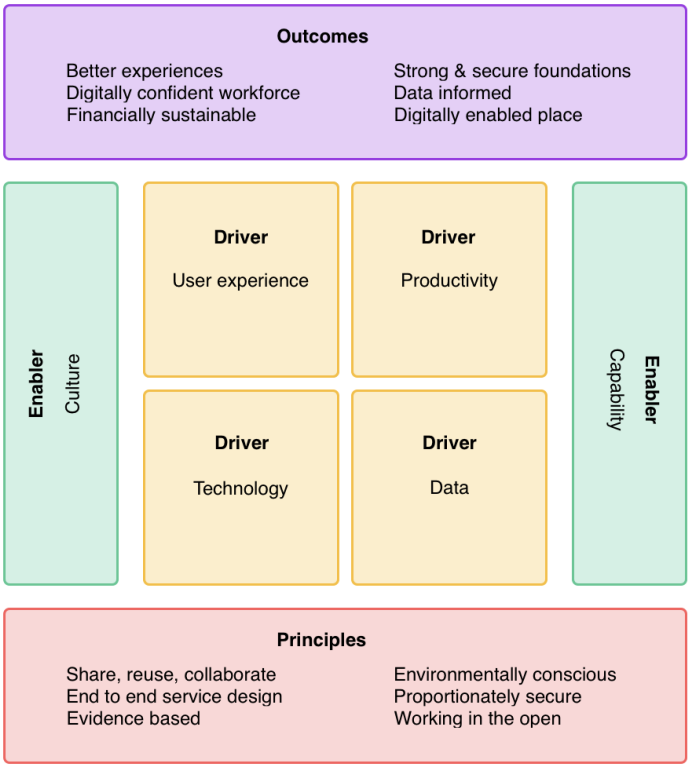
# DIGITAL:2040
# A Strategic Framework for Digital, Data, and Technology at Luton Council



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# Document purpose

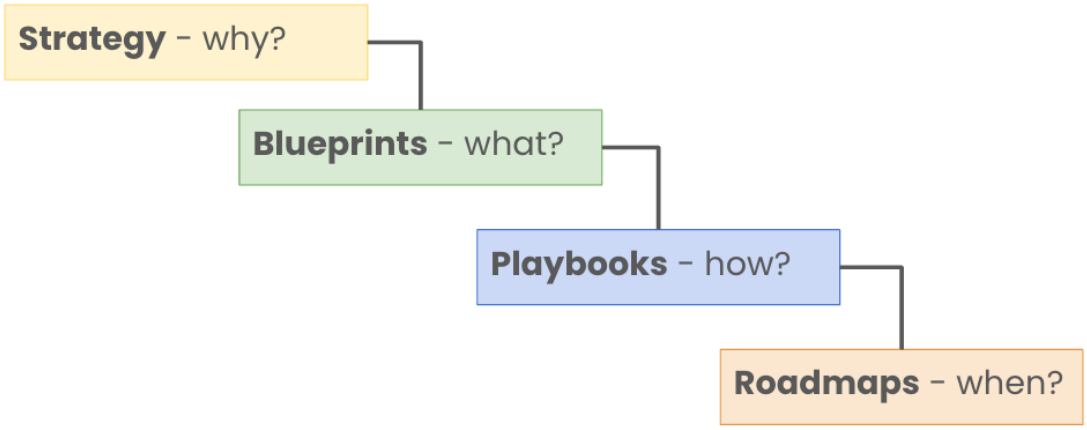
This document aims to provide a working strategic direction for the Digital, Data, and Technology function at Luton Council. It provides a set of parameters and guidelines to support us in the short term with things like:

- Decision making
- Prioritisation
- Culture change
- Organisation design
- Ways of working

This document is not a formal Council strategy, although it shares some characteristics of one. Eventually we would like to have a formal document adopted by the Council, and no doubt it will look very similar to much of this document.

But with an awful lot of urgent decisions to make and work to do, we need something we can use immediately - hence the more informal approach.

This document also doesn't contain everything relating to what we are doing within DDaT at Luton. As a strategy document, it is high level and is focused on a specific purpose. It exists alongside other artefacts that each have a specific purpose.




# Strategy

This **strategy** is high level and long term. It outlines the outcomes expected from the strategy and answers the question **'why**?'. You're reading it now.

# Blueprints

**Blueprints** are created individually for different elements of the strategy, such as core ICT, applications, or user experience. They provide a link between strategy and delivery. They answer the question **'what**?'.

The blueprints will be diagrams showing the architecture of the digital, data, and technology capabilities needed to deliver across our four drivers of user experience, productivity, technology, and data.

# Roadmaps

**Roadmaps** are created individually for each theme. They describe the activities to deliver the strategy outcomes, in other words, the **'when**?'.

Our digital roadmap will outline all the work needed to deliver on the vision outlined in this strategy, whether that be

- Work to digitally transform the many services the council delivers
- Work to improve our technology infrastructure
- Work to use data to design better services and identify areas for preventative activity
- Work to improve our online experience for people inside and outside the organisation

The roadmap will be available across the organisation, so everyone can see what we are working on and what our next priorities are.

# Playbooks

**Playbooks** define the ways of working and approaches to delivering the work. They answer the question **'how**?'.

Our playbooks will document the various approaches we will take to digital work, which can be used depending on the circumstances and context.

For example:

- When and how we perform user research to best understand people's needs
- The process we follow when designing new online customer journeys
- Details of tools, techniques, and approaches to be used when running digital user centred design projects
- Advice and guidance on running agile projects, including when to choose agile over more traditional project management methods.

The playbooks will be published on an internal website and be living documents, always being updated to reflect current practice.

# What we mean by digital, data, and technology

'Digital' doesn't just cover technology, or things relating to the internet. Instead, it describes **the age in which we are operating**, one in which the vast majority of people have access to the internet almost all of the time (but not everybody, of course - more on that later). The impact that this has had on society is so great that it affects everything we do, and how we do it.

The biggest change is to the expectations that people have of the institutions they engage with - they want to be able to have their needs met at any time and in any place, without the need to resort to pen and paper, telephone calls, or having to turn up to an office in person.. They expect to be kept up to date with progress, and not to have to chase for updates.

This is a challenge for councils such as Luton, because we haven't always naturally operated in this way. But it also presents an opportunity, because digital-age ways of doing things makes them more efficient for councils, as well as more convenient for the people we serve.

# When ‘digital’ is not the answer

It is important to flag up that delivering services online is not the answer to every problem we or our communities face. Digital solutions work extremely well for simple, transactional interactions, but they are not as well suited to complex situations or in cases where vulnerable people are involved. There are also cases where even for simple transactions, someone either does not have the access or the skills to use online services, or perhaps they choose not to do so for their own personal reasons.

Our strategy is predicated on making Council services accessible to people no matter what their situation. We do not intend to ‘channel shift’ people - effectively forcing them - to online channels because they may be easier for us.

Instead, our aim is to deliver digital services that are so good, people prefer to use them when they can. If we get this right, enough people will do so to create capacity within the Council to continue to meet the needs of more vulnerable members of the community.

We therefore must take digital exclusion into account whenever working with colleagues across the Council to redesign services. Ensuring a high quality digital experience does not preclude having a high quality experience using other channels.

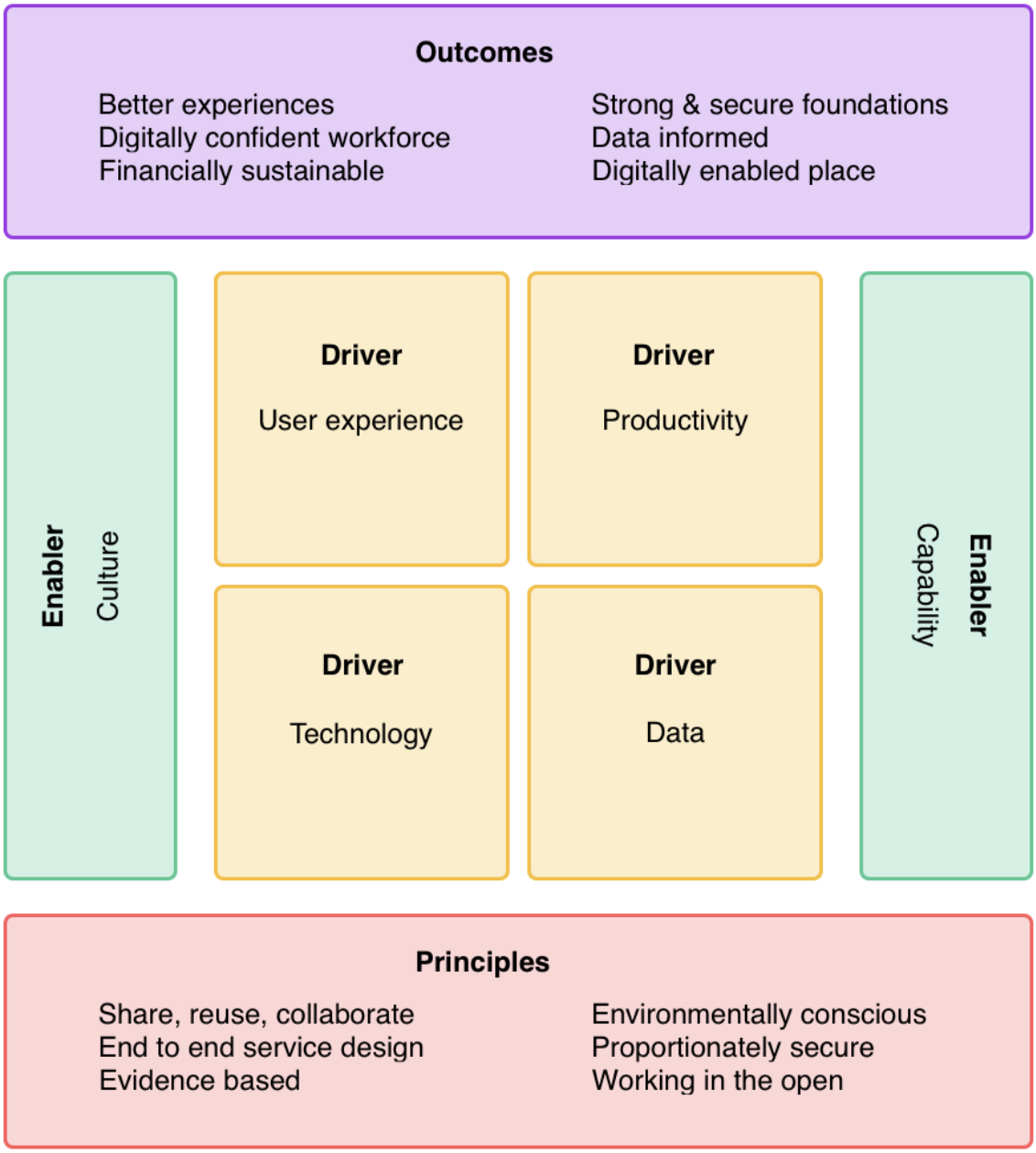
Options to explore when considering this include:

- Non-digital fall backs:
- Assisted digital:
- Digital access:
- Digital skills development:

The Digital Inclusion Toolkit website provides a lot of information about this whole area of work: https://digitalinclusionkit.org/

# Our framework for digital, data, and technology

Our framework for digital, data, and technology outlines the outcomes we wish to achieve from this strategy, the areas of activity we wish to focus on, and the principles that underpin everything we do. The diagram below summarises the framework at a high level.




In the following sections, we explain in more detail each of the elements of the framework.

# Strategic alignment

No strategy exists in a vacuum, and we have to make sure we do not fall into the trap of doing digital for its own sake. Instead, we must have all our work rooted in the Council's corporate mission and the outcomes and priorities it sets out. Likewise, we also must ensure that our strategy dovetails with other related strategies and approaches guiding the Council's activities.

## Corporate plan

The corporate plan for Luton Council 2023-2028 is our key organisational plan, which sets out how we will deliver on our mission over the next five years.

Our mission: To work with everyone to deliver our shared vision for Luton 2040: a healthy, fair and sustainable town where everyone can thrive and no-one has to live in poverty.

The five priorities to deliver this mission are:

- Building an inclusive economy that delivers inward investment to support the growth of businesses, jobs and incomes
- Improving population wellbeing and tackling health inequalities to enable everyone to have a good quality of life and reach their full potential
- Supporting a strong and empowered community, built on fairness, local pride and a powerful voice for all our residents
- Tackling the climate emergency and becoming a net zero town with sustainable growth and a healthier environment
- Becoming a child friendly town, where our children grow up happy, healthy and secure, with a voice that matters and the opportunities they need to thrive
- Creating a modern and innovative council, providing high-quality, efficient services that meet the needs of residents and delivers on the vision for Luton 2040

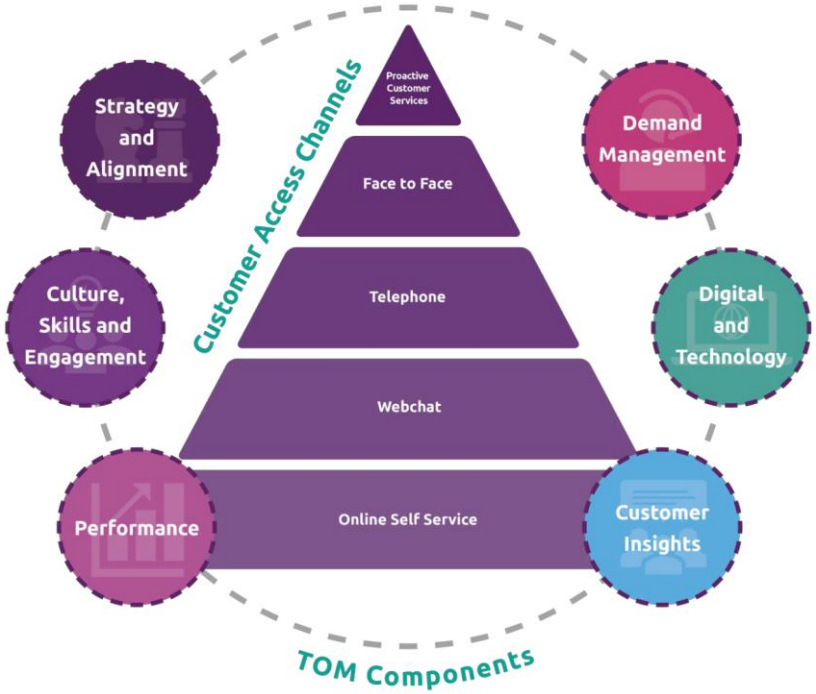
This digital strategy must support the Council to deliver on this mission through the priorities, and we will note how our outcomes and activities contributed to this throughout the document.

# Resident experience target operating model

The Target Operating Model (TOM) will set out how Luton will improve access to services, making things as quick and easy for residents, making the best use of technology, and setting out new ways of working that will enable better outcomes for customers alongside delivering services in the most cost-effective way.

This TOM will be underpinned by a set of technological enablers and recommendations based on the future vision and a set of user requirements. Staff will be aware of the expectations for their roles; residents will feel understood and heard; and the TOM can drive efficiencies across the organisation.

Our approach to digital will play a key role as an enabler for the TOM with our website, digital services platform, telephony and other technologies being vital components of the way we interact with residents. Our commitment in this document to adopting a user-centred approach to service design will also ensure the needs of those contacting us will be at the heart of everything we do.



## People strategy

Having an effective, efficient and engaged workforce helps us to drive forward and deliver our Corporate Plan. To enable this, the Council has adopted a people strategy, which states: “Our vision is to equip and develop our workforce to deliver on Luton 2040”.

The foundations of the people strategy are:

- Our values
- Equality diversity and inclusion
- Leadership and management
- Employee wellbeing
- Quality service delivery

And its strategic themes are:

- On boarding & talent management
- Reward, recognition and benefits
- Engage, listen and learn from our workforce
- Opportunity, skills and growth for all
- Workforce Performance

Our two enablers - culture and capability - map very well to various elements of the people strategy. For us to succeed in our digital ambitions, we have to ensure that we bring the people of the Council with us, boosting their digital confidence and enabling them to do their best work.

# Our Corporate and Social Responsibility

The way in which we deliver this strategy will uphold our corporate and social responsibility. Some of the ways in which we will do this are:

- Introducing apprenticeship roles targeted at Luton residents.
- Facilitating work experience within DDaT and the wider Council.
- Supporting activities across the borough to encourage careers in digital, data and technology.
- Maximising the social value from our suppliers, target these for maximum benefit or the residents of Luton Council.
- Upholding our responsibility as Corporate Parents, both through provisioning opportunities and support for our Care Leavers from partners, and through the provision of laptops and broadband.
- Working with Anchor institutions to put Luton on the map for inward investment and skills growth in digital, data and technology sectors.

This is not an exhaustive list and we will continually work with colleagues and partners to deliver upon our responsibilities in the best way possible.

# Our outcomes

Our outcomes define what will be the result of the strategy being implemented. What will be different? We have six outcomes, and they are explained in detail below.

### 1. Better experiences for people and communities

***Online council services are easy and effective to use, while nobody is left out because they are not internet users.***

Our user experience focus, and commitment to user-centred design approaches, will result in digital services that are so good, people will choose to use them when they can. But we will always design in ways for everyone to be able to engage with us, no matter what their ability to use the internet is.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ✔ Inclusive Economy | ✔ Population wellbeing | ✔ Climate emergency | ✔ Child-friendly town | ✔ Empowered community |

### 2. Digitally confident workforce

***Our colleagues across the council have the skills, knowledge, and mindset needed to make use of the digital tools available to help them do their best work.***

Technology is only useful if people can actually use it effectively. Therefore, we will work with our colleagues to ensure they are confident in using the digital tools available to them.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ✔ Inclusive Economy | | ✔ Climate emergency | | ✔ Empowered community |

### 3. Financial sustainability

***The council is as efficient as possible, ensuring that budgets are used to best effect.***

Local government finances are stretched like never before, and the need to make the best use of every penny in our budget has never been more acute. By using our user experience, data, and technology effectively, we will aim to deliver more efficient services to our customers. This will benefit the bottom line, but also create time savings for staff, allowing them to focus their work on those areas where a real difference can be made.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ✔ Inclusive Economy | | ✔ Climate emergency | | ✔ Empowered community |

### 4. Strong and secure technology foundations

***The council benefits from core technology that enables them to deliver***

***quality services that meet the needs of our communities.***

We will build resilient technology foundations and platforms that are adaptive, inclusive, progressive, and secure. These will be mapped out in our technology blueprints and applied across different technology domains, such as infrastructure, systems, digital platforms, and data.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ✔ Inclusive Economy | ✔ Population wellbeing | ✔ Climate emergency | ✔ Child-friendly town | ✔ Empowered community |

### 5. A data informed organisation

***The council makes evidence-based decisions that take account of data and research.***

The focus on data in this strategy is aimed at placing the use of evidence at the heart of our decision making and design processes. By making all the relevant data available to decision-makers in accessible and usable formats, we will be able to increase the number of decisions informed by evidence.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ✔ Inclusive Economy | ✔ Population wellbeing | ✔ Climate emergency | ✔ Child-friendly town | ✔ Empowered community |

### 6. Digitally enabled place

**Working with partners to enable Luton's civic and commercial organisations to have access to the connectivity, platforms, and skills needed to thrive in the digital age.**

We want to explore the concept of 'civic digital infrastructure', with the council playing an enabling role in establishing the foundations needed to support all organisations working for the good of Luton and its people to achieve their goals, whether in terms of internet access, software platforms and capabilities, and people with the right skills.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ✔ Inclusive Economy | ✔ Population wellbeing | | ✔ Child-friendly town | ✔ Empowered community |

# Drivers

The drivers are the core areas of delivery for the DDaT team and all the colleagues we work with. They are *workstreams with a purpose* - providing a key driver to enable us to achieve our stated outcomes.

| **User experience** |
| --- |
| ***Work which improves the user experience of the people of Luton, whether residents, communities, businesses, visitors, staff, or members.*** |
| It's vital for the success of the Council that our services, whether used by people outside the organisation, or those within, are easy to use and accessible to all. This will require us to take a more user-centred approach to service and system design, which will ensure that people who want to use digital services choose to do so, while those who do not or cannot have equally good alternatives. |
| **Example:** we are completely rebuilding the Luton.gov.uk website to be a more user-focused platform for online information, guidance, and service delivery. |
| **Productivity** |
| ***Work which enables the councils to work more efficiently, enabling us to do better with the resources we have available.*** |
| We want all of our staff to be adding value through their work, and one way we can achieve that is by designing or automating routine administrative tasks. This will free people up to spend their time on creative work that enables the Council to deliver on its mission. |
| **Example:** we will be rolling out the full suite of Microsoft365 productivity software to all staff, making collaboration easier; and this will include piloting AI technology to automate repetitive tasks. |
| **Technology** |
| ***Work which provides the Council, and where appropriate its partners, with the secure, resilient, and flexible foundations needed to succeed.*** |
| Having a robust and flexible technology platform to work from is essential to the running of the Council. It might not always be the most exciting work, but it is often the most important. We must invest time and resources to ensure we are secure and running as effectively as possible. |
| **Example:** we are upgrading our internet connectivity to ensure all our systems work at optimum speed, and outages are kept to a minimum. |
| **Data** |

| ***Work which improves the Council's ability to use data to make better decisions, design better services, and to improve the lives of our communities.*** |
|---|
| We sit on a wide range of data at the Council, much of it locked away in silos that make it difficult to use to support our decision making and service design. By investing in skills and technology, we can develop a data-informed culture that brings data together where it is sensible and ethical, to allow us to make things better for the people of Luton. This could be designing ways to meet their needs better, but it could also mean using predictive analytics to prevent those needs arising in the first place. |
| **Example:** we are running early intervention pilots in Childrens, Families and Education to use data to identify where needs can be predicted and managed before they become critical. |

# Enablers

Enablers support our people to deliver fantastic results. Our focus will be on both developing these enablers within DDaT and across the Council. For digital work to succeed, we need everyone to be on board.

We have two enablers and they are explained in detail below.

| **Culture** |
|---|
| Embedding a digital-age culture within the DDaT function, and across the organisation as a whole, to ensure digital opportunities are realised. |
| Building upon the Luton corporate values (CARES), the culture we wish to adopt in our DDaT work across the Councils is:<br><br>● **User centred -** placing the people using our services at the heart of the design and development process<br>● **Agile and responsive -** working iteratively, to ensure what we are building is the right thing to meet the need, and not being afraid to change course<br>● **Outcomes-driven -** never doing digital work for the sake of it, and ensuring all our projects deliver their stated outcomes<br>● **Curious -** always wanting to find out more about a problem, to find ever-better ways to meet needs.<br>● **Collaborative -** always open to working closely with others, whether inside the Council or across organisational boundaries<br>● **Always learning -** digital is always developing in new ways and to keep on top of this, we need to always be open to learning new things, and creating opportunities for our people to do so<br><br>We will work closely with all colleagues in the Council to support them in adopting this new culture, through learning and development opportunities, and creating chances for people to put the new culture into practice in safe environments. |

| **Capability** |
| --- |
| Actively supporting the learning and development of all staff to adopt a digital mindset, and be confident using internet-era tools and approaches. |
| Digital skills are hugely important for any organisation in this day and age, and we are committed to providing the necessary support to all staff in the Council to ensure they have the confidence to use the tools available to them to best effect. We also want to support the DDaT team to become truly knowledgeable digital specialists with the time and access to learning that they need.<br><br>As well as skills, capability is also about mindset. We need everyone in the Council to understand the importance of digital to the Council's mission, and what role they will play in making it happen.<br><br>This will take the form of:<br><br>● Enabling easy access to curated libraries of good quality online training for people seeking various levels of understanding<br>● Developing our own in-house learning and development activities where a bespoke requirement is identified<br>● Establishing communities of practice to support social learning on various digital-related topics, that any Luton staff can join<br>● Researching into and then designing an appropriate approach for field workers without ready access to internet connections and devices. |

# Our principles

The following strategic principles will guide both what work is undertaken within our roadmap to implement the strategy, and also how that work will be approached, to ensure everything we do contributes towards our vision.

We have six principles and they are explained in detail below.

| **Share, reuse, collaborate** |
| --- |
| ***We will always aim to develop solutions that can be shared, and that are based on existing good practice, produced in collaboration with partners.*** |
| We have already had success in focusing on either open source platforms or other technologies that encourage the sharing of ideas and solutions. As we move into local government reorganisation, this culture and approach will be more necessary than ever. Local government should not be in the business of reinventing wheels for the sake of it: we want to use what already works. |
| **End to end digital service design with the customer at the heart** |

| |
|---|
| ***Projects should focus on meeting people's needs, which will then deliver for the council too.*** |
| We will adopt a user-centred service design approach to our digital work. This means placing our service users at the heart of our work, researching their needs and designing services that meet those needs. By doing so, we will encourage take up of digital services and thus achieve our outcomes around efficiency, as well as accessible services. |
| **Evidence based decisions and design** |
| ***Projects should be chosen because data shows the benefits they deliver, and work designed in line with evidence.*** |
| Effective use of data provides a huge range of opportunities for the council. All digital work we do must be evidenced by data in terms of the outcomes it will achieve - either meeting needs better and cheaper, or preventing them from arising in the first place. This data may come from existing records, or could be generated through our test-and-learn innovation approaches. |
| **Environmentally conscious** |
| ***Digital projects should always reduce our environmental impact rather than add to it.*** |
| Digital can really support the council in its climate ambitions - less use of paper is often a side effect of digitising services. However we must always be aware of the environmental impact of technology choices we make. |
| **Proportionately secure** |
| ***To ensure our systems and processes keep data and information safe, whilst still enabling us to do our best work.*** |
| Keeping our systems and data secure is vital to the proper running of the council, and all the work we do and decisions we make must not compromise this. However we must also balance this need with our requirement to be able to work flexibly and collaboratively, and so must not be so draconian about security so that it impedes our ability to deliver. |
| **6. Working in the open** |
| ***To share our learning and develop our thinking with others by adopting an open and transparent culture.*** |
| In line with the Local Digital Declaration, which we signed in 2020, we wish to continue and develop our practice of 'working in the open' through our blog, and |

talking about our work at events both online and off. We also want to spread this approach internally, by running show and tells and encouraging other teams to adopt digital innovation practices.

# Delivering our strategy

A strategic roadmap will supplement this framework, outlining the projects that sit behind this. The strategic roadmap includes of the following projects:

| **User experience** |
| --- |
| • New Luton.gov.uk website<br>• Implementing a digital (low-code) platform and delivering digital services<br>• Telephony replacement |
| **Productivity** |
| • M365 file storage (SharePoint and OneDrive rollout)<br>• M365 productivity suite rollout and adoption<br>• AI pilots and proof of concept |
| **Technology** |
| • Security Operations Centre (SOC) and Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) replacement<br>• Data Centre Refresh<br>• Virgin Media internet capacity increase<br>• PSTN digital switchover<br>• Housing System replacement<br>• Finance and HR systems reviews<br>• APP replacement<br>• PTU systems |
| **Data** |
| • Data approach/strategy<br>• Data platform<br>• Prevention pilots |

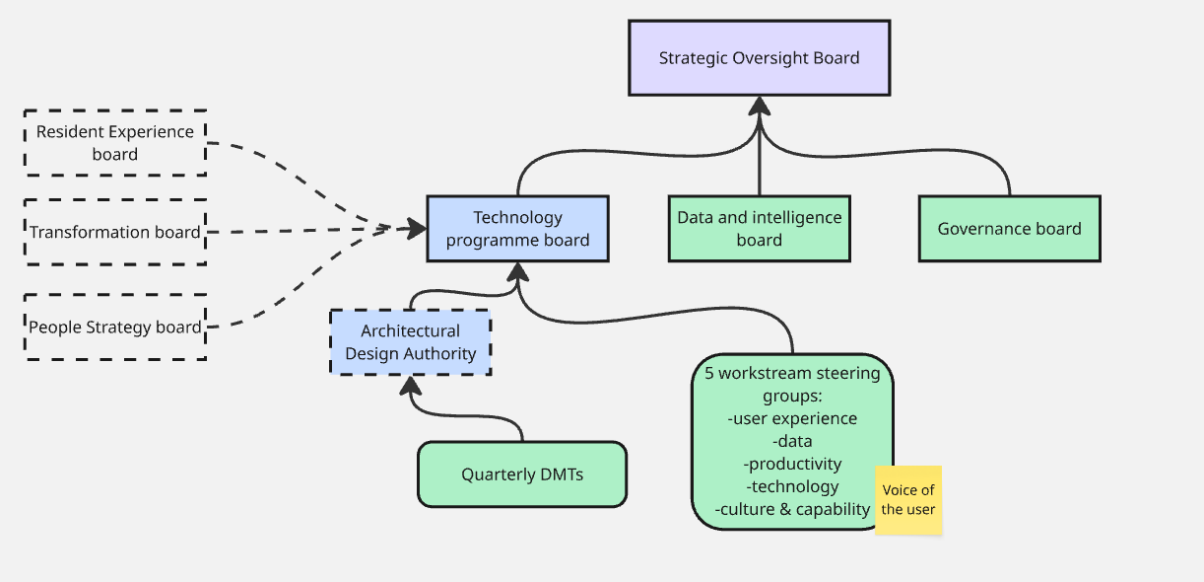
| **Culture** |
| --- |
| • Post TUPE Harmonisation<br>• DDaT peer review actions<br>• Change Management plan – championed by DDaT change agents |
| **Capability** |
| • DDaT Skills assessment<br>• DDaT OCA<br>• DDaT skills development |

- Digital and data Leadership and Management induction training
- Orgainsational lunch & learn sessions

This strategy will be owned and governed through the Strategic Oversight Board. This Board will approve any entries or removals from the Strategic Roadmap and approve associated business cases as well as monitor progress against the roadmap.

# Governance

The core governance for this strategy will link into existing corporate governance around Transformation, Resident Experience and People Strategy.




| Governance meeting | Purpose |
|---|---|
| Strategic Oversight Board | Own the strategic roadmap, approve strategic business cases and funding, prioritise strategic projects and monitor strategic risks and benefits realisation. |
| Technology Programme Board | Own the DDaT roadmap, approve all technology projects and purchases, prioritise roadmap projects, monitor progress and risks and manage resources, manage capital budgets. |
| Data and Intelligence Board | Provide strategic oversight, coordination, and governance for how data is used to inform decision-making, improve services, agree which projects are prioritised and resource management. |
| Governance Board | Risk and compliance monitoring, oversight of information security and data governance. |
| Architectural Design Authority | Own the technical architecture of the Council. Approve new technology and decommissioning of old technology. Solution design. |
| Quarterly DMTs | Approve any new technology projects within each Directorate, including |

| | |
|---|---|
| | associated resources and funding. Agree and prioritise the DDaT roadmap for that directorate. |
| Workstream Steering Groups | To be the voice of the user. Assess whether we are achieving the outcomes for each workstream. Inform activities that may be added to the roadmap to help achieve outcomes. |