Slough Borough Council

Report To:	Cabinet
Date:	20 May 2024
Subject:	Local Government Digital 360 Review
Lead Member:	Cabinet member for customer service, resident engagement, digital, data and technology.
Chief Officer:	Will Tuckley Interim Chief Executive
Contact Officer:	Stephen Menzies Interim Director of Digital, Data and Technology
Ward(s):	N/A
Key Decision:	NO
Exempt:	NO
Decision Subject to Call In:	YES
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – LGA Digital 360 review report

1.   Summary and Recommendations

1.1.   The Local Government Association (LGA) undertook a Digital 360 Review of the Council's ICT&D service covering six themes: leadership, data, organisation capacity, security and resilience, services, and value. The full review is appended to this report.

1.2.   Across these six themes, the LGA have made nine recommendations which would improve the Council's digital capability and capacity, enabling Slough's recovery. The actions to implement the recommendations are Council wide, highlighting a need to work more collaboratively, make better use of resources through more effective prioritisation and having a clear vision of what a digital council would look like.

1.3.   To fully address the recommendations it is proposed that the Council review and revise the existing ICT&D strategy and develop a council-wide digital strategy.

Recommendations:

1.4.   It is recommended that Cabinet:

a) Notes the content and recommendations contained in the LGA Review, Appendix 1; and

b) Requests a revised digital strategy be submitted to Cabinet for approval in September 2024 by the Director of Digital, Data and Technology.

Commissioner Review

1.5.   *"Commissioners note the content of this report and recognise that technology underpins every area of the Council's work and without it we cannot sustain or improve services. Simultaneously the smarter use of technology can bring opportunities to not only the council but residents, businesses, and partners. The refreshed strategy will need to be driven by the new operating model with revenue and capital implementation costs aligned with the rolling medium term financial and capital strategies. Future investment decisions will need to clearly demonstrate the delivery of business priorities within an affordable envelope, including the adoption of 'invest to save' approaches, which whilst enabling council wide improvements, helps to ensure that investments made in technology is maximised, associated efficiencies identified, and benefits realised."*

2. Report

2.1. In January 2024, the Local Government Association at the request of the Commissioners undertook a review of the progress made by ICT&D. The LGA review highlighted several organisational challenges for the Council to address which included:

- improving the Council's culture;
- working more collaboratively across the Council;
- breaking down siloed working practices; and,
- establishing a shared vision for digital.

2.2. It also highlighted several successes including the successful implementation of the ICT&D target operating model, strong delivery against the infrastructure modernisation programme, and the establishment of a technical design authority.

2.3. This report publishes the findings of the LGA review and seeks approval to bring a revised digital strategy for the Council to a later Cabinet meeting.

Options considered

2.4. The Council has considered three options:

i. Review and revise the existing ICT&D Strategy to produce a council-wide digital strategy – **recommended**

This option provides the Council with the best way to ensure that the LGA review recommendations are actioned, brings together the wider work of ICT&D supporting the service departments and offers opportunities to increase the pace of change through a shared vision of digital delivery for the Council – aligning service provision, technology, and better digital offering to our residents.

ii. Evolve the existing ICT&D strategy to align to the recommendations within the LGA review – not recommended

The ICT&D strategy would continue to evolve, not only during the annual review process but tactically as the Council's need for change and progress drives changes in priorities and changes in delivery.

This is not recommended as it does not effectively address the actions outlined in the LGA review and does not support an increased pace of change and recovery for the Council.

iii. Do nothing, continue as we are – not recommended

This is not a viable option as it does not address the recommendations of the report, nor does it support the Council's recovery agenda.

3. Background

3.1. An LGA Digital review is an external assessment of the Council's digital capacity and capability against the 12 Local Government Digitisation Outcomes. The digital review requested by the Commissioners had a scope which covered six areas:

- **Leadership** – Leaders drive the use of digital technology to achieve strategic/operational goals, creating a culture which facilitates organisation transformation.
- **Data** – Data practices follow standards and are focused on improving services and informing policy making.
- **Organisational capability** – Digital technology is at the heart of the way it works and trains its workforce in how to use them and has talent pipelines to benefit retention and relieve pressure on recruitment.
- **Security and resilience** – The Council's networks, infrastructure, data and services are as secure as possible.
- **Services** – services are designed around the needs of residents/users, guided by government design principles and standards.

- **Value** - the Council targets its resources effectively by harnessing the opportunity of digital technologies.

3.2. Mention was made of the success from within the service area:

- Successful implementation of a target operating model, recruitment of a full permanent management team including a head of digital services – viewed as a key role in driving our digital agenda forward.

- Significant foundation work completed – new corporate telephony platform, move to a better more secure wide area network, migration of the data centre to a government approved secure location, and, step change improvements in cyber security and resilience.

- A more focussed, sustainable, and professional service – with positive staff feedback on improved communications, better service reporting, a dedicated technology adoption resource and the Astro IT Help Hub.

- Implementation of a Technical Design Authority (TDA) to ensure that all new technology and digital infrastructure fits with the technologies already in place and that we are maximising the value of all investments made and deliver improved services to residents.

3.3. The recommendations are wide reaching. The Council's intervention is in a second phase where transformation work needs to accelerate. The best option to the Council is to carry out a full review of the existing ICT&D strategy and deliver by late summer a revised digital strategy. This would address each of the recommendations, but more importantly embed digital across all service areas delivering better services to residents.

Implications of the Recommendation

Financial implications

3.4. Whilst the recommendations of this report publishes the findings of the LGA review and seeks approval to bring a revised digital strategy for the Council to a later Cabinet meeting, it is important to acknowledge that the financial implications of adopting a revised digital strategy and wider ICT strategy will be significant.

3.5. The proposed revisions to the ICT&D strategy and the development of a council-wide digital strategy will necessitate a careful allocation of resources, particularly financial resources. It is imperative that these allocations align with the Council's overall financial planning and budgetary processes.

3.6. Any activities arising from the approved digital strategy will require thorough consideration within the context of the Council's existing financial commitments and available resources. Therefore, a comprehensive prioritisation exercise must be conducted to ensure that resources are allocated to initiatives that best align with the Council's strategic objectives and deliver value for money.

3.7. Additionally, the delivery of such a comprehensive digital strategy may require adjustments to the Council's budget allocations, including reprioritisation of existing expenditures or seeking additional funding sources, depending on the scope and scale of the proposed actions. Failure to adequately fund and support the implementation of the digital strategy could pose risks to the Council's ability to achieve its strategic objectives and fulfil its obligations to residents. Hence, it is crucial to integrate financial considerations into the planning and implementation processes to mitigate these risks and ensure successful outcomes.

Legal implications

3.8. There are no legal implications for this report. However, the publication of the full LGA review and recommendations contained in the report is welcomed, as it demonstrates a continued improvement in transparency within the Council. This review will be included in the Council's assessment of governance contained in its Annual Governance Statement as several of the issues raised are themes which are cross cutting and relate to wider governance matters.

Risk management implications

3.9. The table below details two risks:

Status	Description	Mitigation
Amber	No action is taken on the review recommendations whilst the digital strategy is developed.	Any recommendations that can be actioned ahead of the digital strategy are being progressed from within ICT&D.
Amber	Delivery of the digital strategy is delayed, leading to a loss of momentum in delivery recovery activity.	There is sufficient capacity within ICT&D to support strategy development. Workshops will be utilised to support cross Council collaboration Regular updates will be provided to elected members and the corporate leadership team.

Environmental implications

3.10. None

Equality implications

3.11. None

Procurement implications

3.12. None

Workforce implications

3.13. None

Property implications

3.14. None

4.   Background Papers

None

Digital 360

Slough Borough Council

31st January - 2nd February 2024

Feedback Report

1. Executive summary

The Digital 360 (D360) team spent three days with Slough Borough Council on the 31st January, 1st and 2nd February 2024. We thank Slough for their ongoing feedback as we continue to refine the approach. What follows are the observations and opinions of the D360 team.

The challenges Slough Borough Council faces have been well documented and have framed the context of this review. The government intervention in December 2021 issued directions to the Council to achieve widespread improvements, and specifically in relation to the proper functioning of IT. Since then, Slough has made some progress in improving its core infrastructure and technology. The Council is more resilient and there has been some progress in developing core IT processes. However, without an accountable leader continuing to drive this work forwards, progress will stall.

The Council has a new political landscape following the recent all-out elections. Members see ICT as key element of the transformation journey and are keen to align business and ICT transformation. As such, in 2022, they committed ~£4M to ICT modernisation, however with a fraction of this left, there needs to be serious consideration as to how these improvements are funded beyond FY24/25.

There is recognition at a senior level of the importance of digital transformation to the Council's recovery, but it is unclear how the Council intends to achieve this. Executive directors see ICT provision as key to success and understand the need for continued investment, however the desired outcomes or detail as to how and what is lacking.

The focus on foundational ICT projects have been necessary to create stability in the IT service, however there is limited evidence of truly transformative digital activity that changes outward-facing outcomes, such as improvements in services and outcomes for the people of Slough.

The Recovery and Transformation Board provides some centralised governance function, however, individual services are responsible for their own transformation journeys which has led to a disjointed approach. The wider conditions for digital success including data standards, design principles, and joined up governance of service design and delivery are missing. Additionally, there is evidence of tactical projects emerging, but generally staff are unaware of what good digital transformation looks like, and there is a significant risk that some of this tactical work may need to be redone. Of particular note are absences of a current corporate focus on customer experience and data, or a realisation of the wider digitalisation outcomes such as participation, data, connectivity, partnerships, or digital inclusion.

The Council has been through some volatile reorganisations, leading to loss in knowledge and skills. This has since led to issues with capacity, capability and retention. There is still a sense of transience due to senior changes and movement at all levels of the organisation. The organisation remains in flux which has implications on transparency, control and accountability across the organisation. Therefore, it is difficult to measure performance or determine a level of assurance. For a digital transformation programme to be successful, there needs to be greater clarity of purpose, demonstrable commitment from senior leaders, and learning and development support to build the required knowledge and skills to change ways of working. Critically, technology must not be considered in isolation of the people skills and process changes necessary to be truly transformative.

Key recommendations resulting from the D360 are listed below. We look forward to providing future support and signposting as the Council develop an action plan to deliver those recommendations. Next steps can be found below in .

2. Table of recommendations

Item no.	Recommendation
Leadership	

R1.1	Slough should urgently seek to appoint a strategic Digital, Data and Technology director to focus on continuity for the ICT service and grow the digital transformation agenda. Without this, progress may stall, and the Council will not realise the opportunities that digital transformation and innovation presents for a modern effective and sustainable Council that meets the needs of the people and communities of Slough.
R1.2	Given the extent to which there is a need for digitally enabled change to underpin efficient service delivery and workforce enablement, we recommend that this post reports directly to the Chief Executive, ensuring digital opportunities are considered as part of the organisation's strategic dialogue.
Direction and strategy	
R2.1	Slough should conduct a review of its Council-wide change portfolio to inform the priorities for ICT, digital and other strategies and should create a single prioritisation framework to use ongoing in the management of organisational change. This should include, but should not be limited to, a review of the 70+ ICT projects - prioritise, start or stop projects dependent on biggest impact for staff, residents and /or support the financial recovery. We recommend that you continue the good foundational work already started within ICT to build core processes, capabilities and governance – these provide a necessary foundation for operational stability. Projects which signal visible change should be considered as enablers alongside larger transformation initiatives to maintain momentum and buy in.
Digital Transformation	
R3.1	Greater consideration should be given to the opportunities for digital transformation at scale, to support improved resident and employee experience and to release cashable savings and support cost avoidance.
R3.2	Greater consideration should be given to participation, service design, data, partnership and digital inclusion.
R3.3	Slough should explore the significant opportunity for a single programme improving resident experience which brings together service design, multi-channel delivery and enables end to end integration of service delivery, delivering benefits to residents and efficiency to the organisation as well as enabling greater transparency in processes and performance, rebuilding trust with communities.
R3.4	Slough should place greater emphasis on the capabilities and focus required to bring the data strategy to life, including modern data skillsets.
Values, behaviours and culture	
R4.1	To create the successful conditions for success for digital enablement, Slough must begin to systematically change and model positive behaviours at every level. Colleagues need to be enabled to make best use of the available technology, by being involved at every stage of design, testing and supported by appropriate training as required.

	To reinforce the necessity for collaboration and customer focus, it would be helpful to consider creating a set of organisation behaviours collaboratively with colleagues across the organisation as part of a new workforce strategy. These should be part of performance management, recruitment, recognition and should actively encourage colleagues to embrace change.
R4.2	Slough should maximise the value of all available resources and capacity for technology, digital and data in the Council.

Budget, teams and individuals relating to technology, digital and data are currently distributed around the Council, which results in reduced efficiency, resilience and missed opportunities to deliver corporate wide improvements.

Consideration should be given to aligning all of these resources more consistently, whether through structural change or through more collaborative and less siloed decision-making and approaches. |

3. Reflections on Key Topics

Leadership

Focus has rightly been on driving improvements to the core IT infrastructure of the Council. The current Associate Director Chief Digital and Information Officer (AD CDIO) has done a good job at steadying the ship, reinvigorating the service, leading the team, and successfully delivering some challenging ICT modernisation projects. There have been a series of important projects delivered such as a data centre migration, implementation of a new housing system, greater automation in revenue and benefits, website translation work, a new recruitment system and the introduction of a Technical Design Authority (TDA).

The lead member is an experienced ICT professional with a great deal of specific knowledge. Members are engaged and have good awareness of the key ICT issues, including the wider conditions for success such as people and culture. Members see ICT as a key element of the transformation journey and are keen to align business and ICT transformation to improve the lives of the people of Slough. There are times where members find themselves wanting detailed information from middle managers and operational staff. Officers should be harnessing this knowledge and expertise of members but supporting them to stay strategic and providing the right information at the right level so that members can fulfil their roles effectively.

The Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) has mixed levels of digitalisation awareness, and none are digital or data specialists. Although some members of the team have had direct responsibility for oversight of ICT in previous roles, there is a reliance on the drive of the AD CDIO for specialist knowledge and information on progress.

When this role becomes vacant from mid-February there will be a strategic gap, whereas there has been both CLT and member acknowledgement that digitalisation is a fundamental foundation the next phase of recovery. Members and CLT must keep their finger on the pulse, and without someone with gravitas and experience in driving ICT modernisation and outlining the digital transformation direction, progress will stall, and momentum will be lost.

Although there are other options in consideration, such as stepping up internal resources and providing them with external coaching and mentoring, this is a significantly riskier approach than having a suitably experienced director level post in place, particularly considering that modernisation and transformation is a strategic priority which has so far been challenging.

Slough should urgently seek to appoint a strategic director to focus on continuity for the ICT service and grow the digital transformation agenda _{R1.1}.

Additionally, given the extent to which there is a need for digitally enabled change to underpin efficient service delivery and workforce enablement, we recommend that this post reports directly to

the Chief Executive, ensuring digital opportunities are considered as part of the organisation's strategic dialogue _{R1.2}.

It is recommended that:

R1.1	Slough should urgently seek to appoint strategic director to focus on continuity for the ICT service and grow the digital transformation agenda.
	Without this, progress is highly likely to stall, and the Council will not realise the opportunities that digital transformation and innovation presents for a modern effective Council that meets the needs of the people and communities of Slough.
R1.2	Given the extent to which there is a need for digitally enabled change to underpin efficient service delivery and workforce enablement, we recommend that this post reports directly to the Chief Executive, ensuring digital opportunities are considered as part of the organisation's strategic dialogue.

Direction and strategy

Slough are currently in the process of developing a corporate Target Operating Model (TOM) for the Council, and several strategies which cover data, properties and customer experience amongst others.

Members have recently approved a new ICT and Digital strategy 2023-26 which provides a helpful set of strategic principles which explain the approach to ICT modernisation and data. However, it does not contain a clear sense of direction in terms of what the future state is nor how the Council will approach achieving it.

The lack of a defined corporate TOM and the simultaneous development of several other ICT-interdependent strategies is a barrier to defining the direction of travel for ICT and digital transformation. To some extent, these gaps will also hinder the team's ability to prioritise the 70+ projects left to be delivered with the ~£4M worth of modernisation funding previously approved by Cabinet. So, while there is a portfolio of change in ICT, there remains no single organisational plan against which ICT projects can be effectively prioritised. Without a central strategy for digital transformation as part of the Council's recovery plan, there will remain a disconnect between the way ICT plans its projects and wider business and financial planning across the Council.

The prioritisation process is further complicated by an immature understanding of the user journey and needs of residents, and unmapped interdependencies with other strategies. For example, the plan for Observatory House and other properties, service level transformation plans, and how residents interact with the Council and their experience in doing so. Tactical projects are being developed that look at individual customer technology solutions, or that re-direct residents to more cost-effective delivery channels without appropriate traceability, risk creating greater complexity and technical debt over time, and negatively impacting resident access to services.

ICT operate outside of the Council's core budgeting process, and this will cause a challenge next year. The ICT team is currently drawing on the previously approved ~£4M but will run out of money two thirds of the way through FY 24/25. This money has been spent on ICT stabilisation and not linked to business outcomes. Additionally, a small amount of this money has been spent on operational activities such as new laptops. There is no alignment of ICT spend to service needs, leading to the lack of integrated service and financial planning.

Despite these barriers, Slough should conduct a review of its Council-wide change portfolio to inform the priorities for ICT modernisation, digital transformation and other strategies _{R2.1}. This holistic review should be conducted independently, and as soon as possible. Caution should be placed on the review delaying or stalling the foundational work already started within ICT to build core processes, capabilities and governance – as these are a necessary foundation for operational stability. The 70+ ICT projects should be within scope, but not the whole scope, and the outputs of

the review should include a list of these projects prioritised dependent on the biggest impact for staff, residents and/or support for the financial recovery of the Council.

There are clearly some potential projects which signal visible change to staff and members, such as working Wi-Fi and MS Teams working well in the Council chamber. These should be considered as enablers alongside larger transformation initiatives to maintain momentum and achieve buy in.

It is recommended that:

R2.1	Slough should conduct a review of its Council-wide change portfolio to inform the priorities for ICT, digital and other strategies.
	This should include, but should not be limited to, a review of the 70+ ICT projects - prioritise, start or stop projects dependent on biggest impact for staff, residents and /or support the financial recovery.
	We recommend that you continue the good foundational work already started within ICT to build core processes, capabilities and governance – these provide a necessary foundation for operational stability.
	Projects which signal visible change should be considered as enablers alongside larger transformation initiatives to maintain momentum and buy in.

Digital Transformation

There is recognition at senior levels and wider of the importance of digital transformation to the Council's recovery. Digitalisation is broad and there is not yet a shared understanding of its meaning across Slough. This has led to varying and limited understanding of the opportunities and challenges it presents across the organisation. Slough would benefit from considering the 12 digitalisation outcomes, and identifying which present the greatest impact at scale for their recovery journey, their staff and for the people of Slough R3.1.

Of these outcomes, there are several which have not been closely considered as part of the Council's digital ambitions. These are financial sustainability, participation, data, partnerships, and digital inclusion, alongside enabling disciplines such as service design and user experience R3.2.

The Council's financial sustainability has limited the amount of transformation investment beyond fundamental infrastructure. However, presenting a corporate transformation agenda which first and foremost articulates the benefits of transformed services for residents, as well as cashable savings and cost avoidance, is critical to the Slough's success during and beyond financial recovery. ICT has a critical role to play, and the Council should start now to think of IT as a digital enablement function, rather than a back-office service. Slough will always be playing catch up if these opportunities are not grasped at the same time as stabilisation and foundational infrastructure.

There is evidence of low-level digitalisation initiatives within services. For example, interactive voice response (IVR) changes have been implemented, but in some cases route people back to the website and the customer impact remains unmeasured and not understood. The risk here is that service areas continue with tactical solutioning rather than scalable capabilities. A joined up and strategically cohesive view of wider or more impactful resident experience opportunities must be established.

There is a notable absence of a current corporate focus on customer experience. There are extremely limited examples of service design, quality standards, data standards and user research leading to inconsistent approaches disjoined methodologies for the design and implementation of digital projects. The Council has struggled to recruit specialist talent in the past, although recently has introduced a product ownership model and appointed a digital customer engagement role. The organisation should continue to build capabilities within this team and expand the scope of the work beyond user journeys that start on the website.

Customer service advisors must access 16 different systems to help residents because there is no front to back integration for the majority of systems or end to end process design except in small areas of the Council. This alone puts pressure on average call handling times, which could be reduced if Customer Service Advisors accessed via a single interface. There is a shared aspiration to engage better with communities and residents and a significant opportunity to establish a single

programme for improving resident experience which brings together service design and integration, delivering benefits to residents and efficiency to the organisation as well as rebuilding trust with communities R3.3.

The Council is currently developing a Data Strategy. Data is primarily used currently as a reporting and monitoring tool, with a reliance on a 'rear view mirror' view of performance. There is no master approach to data engineering, architecture, tooling, or the capabilities to do so that would enable more pre-emptive and predictive capabilities to be delivered over time. To bring the Data Strategy to life, and to start using data to design services around user needs and engage and empower citizens to build their communities, greater emphasis is needed on these capabilities R3.4.

It is recommended that:

R3.1	Greater consideration should be given to the opportunities for digital transformation at scale, to support improved resident and employee experience and to release cashable savings and support cost avoidance.
R3.2	Greater consideration should be given to participation, service design, data, partnership and digital inclusion.
R3.3	Slough should explore the significant opportunity for a single programme improving resident experience which brings together service design and integration, delivering benefits to residents and efficiency to the organisation as well as rebuilding trust with communities.
R3.4	Slough should place greater emphasis on the capabilities and focus required to bring the data strategy to life.

Values, behaviours and culture

The Council has been through some volatile reorganisations, which has led to widespread loss in knowledge and skills. This has since led to issues with capacity, capability and retention. Slough currently has a ~20 per cent staff turnover rate and many service leads are interim and have been with the Council for 12 months or less. This had created a sense of transience due to senior changes and movement at all levels of the organisation.

This in part has resulted in a lack of transparency, control and accountability with little clarity on roles and responsibilities, and focal points for strategic priorities. Digitalisation projects in particular suffer from a lack of clarity of purpose, demonstrable commitment from senior leaders, and learning and development support to build the required knowledge and skills to change ways of working. There are examples of projects left partially implemented and the impact unmeasured. For example, using IVR to reduce the number of phone calls by redirecting to the website. In this example, no customers engaged in mapping the user journey, there is no traceability for where the calls are going and no evidence that this has been a successful project except that fewer calls are made. This is one example which illustrates how, without an agreed change management approach or associated communications narrative, adoption and performance and thus assurance cannot be measured.

Success is rarely celebrated and is not being used to build momentum and signal positive change. Equally, poor performance cannot be managed due to the lack of robust appraisal process. Staff have fed back they feel 'over commissioned' and 'under supported'. There is also anecdotal evidence of staff disengaging because they do not believe things will change. Senior managers are aware of these tough messages from staff and should respond to them appropriately with empathy and positive action. Senior leadership recognise recruitment and retention is an issue in enabling the recovery plan but there needs to be greater recognition, that not following through on actions from staff engagement and feedback, compound and increase this risk.

From an equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) perspective, employees recognise the need to reflect the community it serves to build trust, however, there does not seem to be an open 'conversation' about EDI. Senior managers have committed to implementing the recommendations of a recent external EDI review by Kinetic, and this will go some way to addressing the wider cultural and behaviour issues. However, some staff feel this has not been taken seriously enough and worry the findings will be dismissed as a group 'of negative staff'. Although not in the explicit scope of this review, it is important to note that during the D360 respondents cited examples of bullying and racism

from across the Council. This will of course cause great concern and should make the urgent need for a cultural shift as a foundational enabler even more explicit. This must be seen as a core part of the recovery journey which will support recruitment, retention and create an open culture where staff can raise concerns such as this and see consistency in how they are addressed [R4.1].

Slough at all levels tends to work in silos. For example, there are small technology teams working directly with social care platforms which illustrates the need for clarity in roles and responsibilities between services and ICT. There has been some positive progress in developing a business partner model within ICT, which has led to greater automation with revenue and benefits systems with a measurable impact on residents. But there remains an opportunity to build this into a corporate change agenda and maximise overall capacity.

ICT have created 'Astro Support Hub' to support services and introduce service management which has improved the profile of ICT, alongside other projects such as the new TDA structure. However, techniques used to support change are very 'tell' and focused on the outbound activity rather than how it is being received. Overall, there needs to be a complete shift in how the organisation communicates and collaborates on digital projects [R4.2].

It is recommended that:

R4.1	To create the successful conditions for success for digital enablement, Slough must begin to systematically change and model positive behaviours at every level.
	Colleagues need to be enabled to make best use of the available technology, by being involved in design testing and training as appropriate.
	To reinforce the necessity for collaboration and customer focus, it would be helpful to consider creating a set of organisation behaviours collaboratively with colleagues across the organisation as part of a new workforce strategy. These should be part of performance management, recruitment, recognition and should actively encourage colleagues to embrace change.
R4.2	Slough should maximise the value of all available resources and capacity for technology, digital and data in the Council.
	Budget, teams and individuals relating to technology, digital and data are currently distributed around the Council, which results in reduced efficiency, resilience and missed opportunities to deliver corporate wide improvements.
	Consideration should be given to aligning all of these resources more consistently, whether through structural change or through more collaborative and less siloed decision-making and approaches.

4. Learning for other Councils

Below, we have listed key learning points, where we believe that other Councils are demonstrating good practice. It also includes areas where Councils have recently implemented a recent project or change initiative where other organisations could learn from the implementation process.

- Brent, Technical Design Authority - Building an enabling digital culture – procurement, governance and security - 1 March, 10am-11:30am | Local Government Association

5. Guidance/ thought leadership to consider

| Leadership | • Transformation Capability Framework | Local Government Association |
| Organisational capability | • Digital Readiness Check |

Security and resilience	• **Supply chain security guidance** • **Cyber risk (overview) - The challenge for local government** • **Cyber Security Toolkit for Boards** • **LGA Cyber 360 Framework**
Data	• **Data security** • **A guide to data security** • **Data sharing**
Connectivity	• **Device Security Guidance** • **Connected Places Cyber Security Principles**
Inclusion	• **Home	Digital Inclusion Toolkit (digitalinclusionkit.org)**

6. Background to Digital 360 Approach

In September 2021, the Local Government Association (LGA) developed a new cyber security 360 review in partnership with Councils, the Cyber 360 programme. In late 2023, the LGA began to explore broadening the scope of the 360s and applying the methodology to cover reviews focusing on the 12 digitalisation outcomes. Now the LGA has begun to pilot this approach with Councils of which Slough is one of them.

What is a Digital 360?

A Digital 360 is a funded improvement tool, managed and delivered by the sector for the sector. It is designed to complement and add value to a Council's own performance and improvement focus.

This Digital 360 provided an opportunity for Slough to explore their application of the key components of digitalisation needed to have an impactful outcome for residents, businesses, and communities. The review fostered a safe, friendly but challenging environment for the Council to think critically about its own strengths and areas which require improvement.

A 360 aims to support Councils to

- Reflect on digitalisation challenges and opportunities in the context of the whole organisation.

- Build awareness, knowledge and skills across service areas.

- Hear a friendly but challenging external opinion.

The 360 team:

Digital 360s are delivered by LGA staff, experienced officers and external experts. The make-up of the team reflected the Council's requirements and the focus of the Digital 360. Team members were selected on the basis of their relevant experience and expertise and were agreed in advance with the Council. The team who delivered the Digital 360 at Slough Borough Council were:

- Timothy Spiers, Director for IT, Innovation, Digital and Transformation, Oxfordshire County Council

- Barry May, Assistant Director for Resident Experience and Digital, London Borough of Barnet

- Dave Sifleet, Senior Technical Advisor, Local Government Association

- Kate Lindley, Director, Change Network

- Dave Briggs, Director, SensibleTech

- 360 Management Team

  o Jamie Cross, Bespoke Support Programme Manager, Local Government Association

  o Daniella Akinfenwa, Programme Support Officer, Local Government Association

Scope and focus

The team were asked to explore the following question:

'How are the goals and vision for Slough's people, place and organisation supported by digitalisation, now, next and future?' with a particular focus on

- The operating model
- The pace of change
- Roles and responsibilities
- Risks

Each Digital 360 is underpinned by the [12 digitalisation outcomes for local government](#), developed in collaboration with SOLACE and SOCITM. These outcomes provide a sector-led, collaborative method of providing expert guidance and feedback to senior leadership and management in relation to good practice that Councils can employ to improve as a digital Council and digital place.

The outcomes are designed to help frame the conversation about digitalisation which often means many different things to different people. Understanding strengths and weaknesses, and how they interact is crucial in delivering digitalisation agendas that meet the needs of local communities.

The team focused on the following outcomes:

- Leadership – Leaders drive the use of digital technology to achieve strategic and operational goals and create a culture which facilitates organisation transformation.
- Data – Data practices follow standards and are focused on improving services and informing policy making.
- Organisational capability – The Council puts digital technology at the heart of the way it works and trains its workforce in how to use them and has talent pipelines to benefit retention and relieve pressure on recruitment.
- Security and resilience – The Council's networks, infrastructure, data and services are as secure as possible, and the Council is as resilient as possible to cyber attacks.
- Services – the Council's services are designed around the needs of residents and users and are guided by government design principles and standards.
- Value - the Council targets its resources effectively by harnessing the opportunity of digital technologies.

The 360 process

Slough Borough Council's Digital 360 took place over three days which were: 31st January, 1st and 2nd February 2024.

Over the three days, the team reviewed a range of information to ensure they were familiar with the Council, the challenges it is facing and its plans for the future. The team gathered information and views from more than 27 meetings, in addition to further research. The 360 team spoke to 30 individuals across the Council, including both officers and Councillors. The team worked flexibly over two workstreams, and many of these conversations were two on one, or two on two. The Digital 360 took place in person at the Council's offices.

Constraints

The 360 took place over three days and consisted of conversations with Council nominated participants. The team reviewed all the documentation provided, however this was a subsection of all available. This feedback is based on what the team heard, read and saw during this brief time at Slough.

7. Next Steps

We appreciate that senior managerial and political leadership will want to examine these reflections and suggestions to determine how the organisation should proceed. We are happy to meet with the Council to discuss the findings in more detail and present our feedback.

Immediate next steps

Any Council who participates in a Digital 360 has the option to participate in any of the other bespoke support from the LGA's Cyber Digital and Technology programme. Currently this includes:

a) Cyber 360
b) Reaction Exercises
   This involves two facilitated table-top cyber security response and recovery exercises, a technical incident response exercise and a non-technical business continuity exercise. Both exercises are designed to test how well the Council responds to and recovers from a cyber incident which results in complete or sustained loss of data or system access.

Follow up support

The LGA's Cyber, Digital and Technology Team have an evolving support offer for Councils.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Cyber Unpacked: The LGA has released [a series of explainer videos on cyber security concepts aimed at non-technical audiences](). These videos are a tool for members and Council officers to raise awareness and improve understanding, which can aid decision making when engaging with cyber risk.

- Our [free e-learning course]() on embedding cyber resilience in local government supply chains

- We host a [range of events and training]() for the sector across the cyber, digital and technology programme including webinars, roundtables, masterclasses and workshops.

- Our [networks and associated partner networks]() are designed to support officers working in cyber, digital and technology roles within local government.

- Our [Local Government Digitalisation Almanac](): A Simple Guide for Local Councils aims to make the topic of digitalisation more accessible and understandable. It is focuses on 12 digitalisation outcomes and includes simple steps, practical examples and recommended reading to support Councils in pushing forwards with their digitalisation journey.

- We lead on the development of key messages and [consultation responses]() to cyber, digital and technology policies, working in partnership with Socitm and Solace. All responses are informed through roundtable engagement with Councils and through our networks.

- We provide non-technical support to Councils to respond and recover from cyber incidents, including supply chain incidents and vulnerabilities. Our team has an on-call capability, which means that we are available to support 365 days a year. You can find out who to get in touch with by visiting [our on call webpage]().

- We produce a free monthly e-bulletin containing sector highlights, security updates and upcoming events. You can [subscribe to our Cyber, Digital and Technology bulletin online]().

The LGA is well placed to provide additional support, advice and guidance on a number of the areas for development and improvement and we would be happy to discuss this.

Clare Hudson, Senior Regional Advisor, and Harry Parker, Senior Regional Adviser, are the main contacts between your authority and the Local Government Association. Their contact details are clare.hudson@local.gov.uk and harry.parker@local.gov.uk.

Thanks

Many thanks to the 360 team and to everyone who took the time to speak with us at Slough Borough Council.