Staffordshire County Council

Digital Innovation Strategy 2024 -2029

Staffordshire County Council

Contents

Foreword

by Pat Flaherty, Chief Executive and Cllr Ian Parry, Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources

This document outlines our vision for embracing **digital innovation** across Staffordshire County Council.

In five years, our goal is to be an agile adopter of digital innovation. We aim to rapidly learn and adapt, embracing failures as opportunities for growth, while ensuring that digital advancements enable our organisation and workforce to operate more efficiently.

In an era being increasingly defined and shaped by **digital innovation,** the role of technology and digital solutions within the public sector is a constantly evolving picture. Digital can be a huge and exciting catalyst for innovation and efficiency but it's imperative that we understand and shape what that future looks like for us. Staffordshire County Council is committed to meeting the growing needs of its residents and continuing to deliver services with ever greater effectiveness, having a refreshed digital strategy is critical to provide the organisation with a roadmap for our digital future for the next five years and beyond.

Our new **Digital Innovation Strategy** is not merely about adopting the latest technologies; it's a holistic approach aimed at leveraging digital tools to enhance accessibility, transparency, and responsiveness. By strategically harnessing the power of data, automation, and digital platforms, we aim to optimise processes, improve service delivery, and foster a more inclusive and participatory model.

Through collaborative partnerships, workforce engagement, co-designing solutions with service areas and residents as well as a commitment to continuous improvement, we will all embark on a journey towards a more digitally enabled future, seeking to ensure interaction is seamless, efficient, and empowering for all.

Our **Digital Innovation Strategy** will serve as a roadmap for navigating the complexities of the digital landscape while staying true to our core strategic mission of creating an innovative, ambitious and sustainable county, where everyone has the opportunity to prosper, be healthy and happy.

Pat Flaherty

Cllr Ian Parry

The Digital Revolution

Digital innovation is already happening across Staffordshire County Council but it's important that as an organisation we understand how we can harness these changes and innovations to maximise opportunities for both our workforce and our residents. It is also important that, despite the fast-evolving digital landscape and uptake of new digital technology, we will seek to not exclude our residents who don't have the skills or access to take advantage of the opportunities digital can bring. **>>>**

The Digital Revolution

Digital is a fundamental part of the change that Staffordshire County Council aspires to make as we develop how we work and how we engage and interact with our residents and communities to deliver our ambition of becoming an even greater place to live, work and do business with.

Like all local authorities Staffordshire County Council will continue to face significant challenges in the years ahead. These challenges are likely to include adapting to evolving demographic trends, meeting increasing demands for essential services within constrained budgets, addressing infrastructure needs and ensuring effective responses to emergent issues such as climate change and any potential public health crises.

In light of those challenges, we feel that embracing digital can help us to achieve increased efficiency, automation and effectiveness. Whilst we recognise that digital technologies can provide a powerful set of tools and approaches to innovate, they are rarely the whole solution, we remain committed to working with colleagues and residents to

understand the real nature of the challenges to be addressed and help you understand how they can be solved holistically.

Approaching Digital Innovation in this way will allow us to create efficiencies and free up vital capacity across the workforce to focus on the most critical work we do to support our residents. We want to use the opportunity of digital innovation and the benefits embracing it can bring to rethink the way that we deliver services rather than continuing with the status quo.

The **Digital Revolution** presents lots of opportunities for the organisation to enhance the way things are done but also brings challenges that we must understand and prepare for. To do this we need to focus on designing digital processes and solutions with a strong emphasis on user experience and ease of use, whilst proactively addressing the increased threats of cyber-security and regulatory compliance that greater adoption brings. We can only achieve that by working in collaboration across the organisation.

Vision & Aims

Our vision for the future is that Staffordshire County Council will **drive digital excellence** to enhance our services, **fostering inclusivity** to build a **smarter more connected future** for our communities and workforce.

We want to make the most of the opportunities that digital offers to empower our frontline workforce to support our most vulnerable residents and promote independence, ensuring new technology enhances and compliments our human workforce. We want to ensure we have the right digital infrastructure in place across Staffordshire to make the most of digital opportunities and improve digital inclusion across the county. To do this…

We Will

- Empower our staff through innovation, cultivating a culture of digital fluency to support our teams navigating the evolving digital landscape. We will test, learn and fail fast where necessary.

- Improve access to information and resident's services. Making sure that council systems are easy to use for all residents and internal processes are as simple and as effective as they can be.

- Have consistent technology and connectivity available that is accessible for both businesses and residents.

- Seek to identify digitally excluded residents, providing access to devices and digital skills where possible to enable as many residents as possible to safely participate in the digital world.

- Use our data to better understand our customers and improve the way we deliver services by making quick and robust decisions for residents.

- Rationalise and support delivery of the organisation's dynamic digital delivery plan, ensuring it adds value and supports strategic goals across the organisation.

Digital Principles

To achieve this ambitious and exciting vision we have developed the following principles to underpin our vision and set the direction of travel for the organisation in the years ahead.

D I G I T A L

D — Data-driven Decision Making:
We will seek to base initiatives on actionable insights derived from robust data analytics to ensure informed and effective decision-making.

I — Inclusive Design:
Prioritise inclusivity by designing solutions that are accessible and user-friendly, regardless of abilities or backgrounds.

G — Governance and Compliance:
Uphold governance standards and regulatory compliance to safeguard privacy, security, and ethical use of data across all aspects of Digital Innovation.

I — Iterative Development:
Embrace an agile and iterative approach to development, fostering continuous improvement and adaptation to evolving needs and challenges. We will keep looking outwards to learn from others.

T — Transparency and Accountability:
Maintain transparency in processes and outcomes, fostering trust among stakeholders, and ensuring accountability for digital initiatives' success and impact.

A — Adaptability and Scalability:
Build flexible and scalable digital infrastructure capable of accommodating future growth and technological advancements. Ensuring our digital team is flexible to the fast-pace of technological change.

L — Leverage Emerging Technologies:
Explore and leverage emerging technologies such as AI, IoT and Automation to drive innovation and enhance service delivery.

How Did We Develop Our Strategy?

We recognise that effective digital innovation requires the collective awareness and insights of our members, workforce, and senior leaders. Forming our Digital Innovation strategy has been a culmination of extensive engagement with stakeholders across all levels of the organisation.

Activity was undertaken to assess the organisation's current capability and aspiration using a maturity model to quantify the Council's current level of digital maturity. Although we have pockets of maturity across the organisation Staffordshire County Council is aspiring to be a "Digital Council" and we can only achieve that by working in collaboration across the whole organisation.

Over the last 12 months, through a series of collaborative workshops and engagement sessions we collated input from our diverse community of stakeholders, ensuring that their voices were heard and where possible their perspectives were integrated into the strategy. This has included but

not exhaustive to; understanding where we want to be as an organisation, learning from other local authorities and current market leaders, shaping the vision, developing and shaping our pillars and a refresh of our Digital Board.

Through the shaping and delivery of this work we're deeply committed to fostering inclusivity, especially with our communities and customers, ensuring that, wherever possible, residents can benefit from our digital initiatives.

Our workforce remains the backbone of the organisation and their input has played a pivotal role in the development of this strategy, providing invaluable frontline insights into operational challenges and opportunities for future innovation.

This inclusive approach has helped make this strategy a truly representative reflection of our collective aspirations and ambitions for Staffordshire County Council.

Our Digital Roadmap

Our new **Digital Innovation Strategy** will serve as a roadmap for digital advancement, efficiency, and customer-centricity, providing Staffordshire County Council with a robust framework for the next 5 years and beyond.

In five years, our goal is to be an agile adopter of digital innovation. We aim to rapidly learn and adapt, embracing failures as opportunities for growth, while ensuring that digital advancements enable our organisation and workforce to operate more efficiently, effectively, and cost-effectively. We see a future digital landscape where we have;

- A deeper understanding of local patterns of demand and resident interaction with local government and partners, allowing resources to be more effectively planned, directed and managed.

- More effective management of demand on services – e.g. enabling user self-service.

- More efficient ways of working, ensuring officers spend time on what matters most.

- Reliable, faster and more precise handling of routine, repetitive tasks – allowing costly professional resources to be targeted at work that adds most value.

- More effective ways of working that provides a better quality of customer experience.

Alignment Across The Organisation

The **Digital Innovation Strategy** matters to Staffordshire County Council, we believe Digital Innovation will help us to create the future opportunities and growth helping the Council to deliver outcomes in a more effective and efficient way.

It is recognised that the **Digital Innovation Strategy** will be fundamental to how we operate as an organisation in the years ahead, aligning intrinsically to the organisation's Strategic and Delivery Plans. For it to be successful, it's equally important that it aligns with and complements our existing and future strategies across the organisation. This includes working in collaboration with our corporate colleagues, such as our Information and Communications Technology and Information Governance teams, to ensure our efforts are coordinated and effectively support our strategic priorities.

Understanding these links and interfaces and exploring the potential digitisation of services, including the introduction of new technologies, presents a real opportunity which ties together our collective priorities for building and growing our strong foundations. These interdependencies will be monitored and managed via the introduction of a new Digital Programme Board for Staffordshire County Council bringing together subject matter experts from all areas of the organisation.

SCC Digital Innovation Strategy

People Strategy

Collaborate and co-design with our workforce to develop and integrate digital solutions as part of the everyday.

Champion digital development, innovation and creativity across the whole workforce.

Information & Communications Technology

Ensuring digital innovations align with internal ICT strategy and that they are embedded safely.

Work in partnership to deliver digital initiatives, collaboratively address evolving infrastructure needs.

Information Governance & Compliance

Digital initiatives adhere to governance standards and legal regulations to protect privacy and security standards.

Ensure the ethical use of data across all digital developments.

Digital Infrastructure Strategic Framework

Digital projects leveraging gigabit connectivity and 5G opportunities.

Collaboration to enable the growth of the digital economy in Staffordshire.

Communities Strategy

Co-designing solutions with community partners to ensure that digital initiatives are developed with community needs and feedback in mind.

Improved digital tools and platforms to support community objectives.

Customer Experience Strategy

Sharing insight to ensure that digital initiatives are tailored to enhance the customer journey.

Improved technological infrastructure to implement customer-centric solutions.

Climate Change Adaptation Strategy

Embracing digital innovation to help deliver successes within our climate change declaration.

Collaboration to monitor and manage the council's carbon footprint, track impact of carbon reduction initiatives, and enhance the efficiency of climate change adaptation measures.

Six Strategic Pillars

The **Digital Innovation Strategy** serves as our roadmap for how we will achieve our digital vision. To make this achievable the **Strategy** comprises six strategic pillars which serve as the cornerstones to delivering against our vision. Each pillar will have it's own objectives and a plan that sets out how they will achieve the outcomes of the **Digital Innovation Strategy.**

1 DIGITAL CHAMPIONS

2 DIGITAL COUNCIL

3 DIGITAL PLACE

4 DIGITAL INCLUSION

5 DIGITAL DATA

6 DIGITAL PIPELINE

Digital Champions

1

Empowering our staff through innovation, cultivating a culture of digital fluency to support our teams navigating the evolving digital landscape.

Empowerment: We'll build a digital culture where our teams have the skills and tools they need to succeed.

Advocate Innovation: We'll drive innovation by supporting safe deployment of digital solutions and new technology.

Collaborative Leadership: We'll encourage teamwork to use digital tools for improving results.

We will…
- Grow our Digital Champions Network for sharing digital innovation best practice and ideas.
- Leverage Digital Champions to boost ongoing learning and digital expertise.
- Seek feedback to improve and innovate our digital processes.

Success Indicators:
- An active community that shares and talks about innovative ideas.
- A culture that supports and celebrates new thinking and ideas.
- Champions who lead by example, encouraging learning and helping within their teams and projects.

Digital Council

2

Improving access to information and resident's services. Making sure that council systems are easy to use for residents and internal processes are as simple and as effective as they can be.

Customer-Centric Accessibility: We'll make information and services more accessible for residents, aligning with our Customer Experience Strategy, ensuring optimisation of our processes for smoother interactions.

Strategic Partnerships: We'll build partnerships with technology experts and community groups to improve the impact of our digital projects.

Exploration of Emerging Technology: We'll safely bring in new technologies, making sure they add value to our organisation.

We will:
- Enhance our website and seek feedback to continuously improve it.
- Explore new technology in a safe way to help us plan our pipeline of work.
- Maximise our existing technology, platforms and partnerships to make our daily tasks easier, improve teamwork and enhance our digital services.

Success Indicators:
- Our website will provide a great user experience, meet accessibility standards, and we'll encourage community feedback.
- Our pilot programmes will inform the secure integration of new technology, making our work more efficient and reducing manual tasks.
- Our partnerships with technology experts will yield valuable learning, and we'll benefit from insight from other public authorities.

Digital Place

3

Enabling consistent technology and connectivity that is accessible for both businesses and residents.

Robust Connectivity: We'll influence and promote the delivery of reliable, high-speed digital infrastructure for residents, ensuring seamless communication and data transfer across Staffordshire.

Bridging the Digital Divide: We'll collaborate to enhance communication, digital skills, and inclusivity, raising awareness and eliminating accessibility barriers for residents and businesses.

Promote the Opportunities and Benefits of Digital Infrastructure: We'll encourage the adoption of digital infrastructure in Staffordshire, supporting innovations and technologies with better connectivity.

We will:
- Keep track of the current connectivity status in the county and push for faster implementation of high-speed internet technology, focusing on areas that are hard to reach.
- Explore and showcase the benefits of gigabit capability such as faster data transfer, improved connectivity for remote work and remote healthcare.
- Encourage dialogue on potential collaborative initiatives to enhance the County's digital infrastructure and contribute to our overall Digital Place.

Success Indicators
- A clear understanding of the county's internet connectivity and targeted solutions to address issues.
- Visible improvements in bringing high-speed internet to areas that previously had limited access.
- Collaborating with partners to demonstrate opportunities of improved connectivity to businesses and communities.

Digital Inclusion

4

Identifying digitally excluded residents where possible and provide access to devices and digital skills to enable as many residents as possible to safely participate in the digital world.
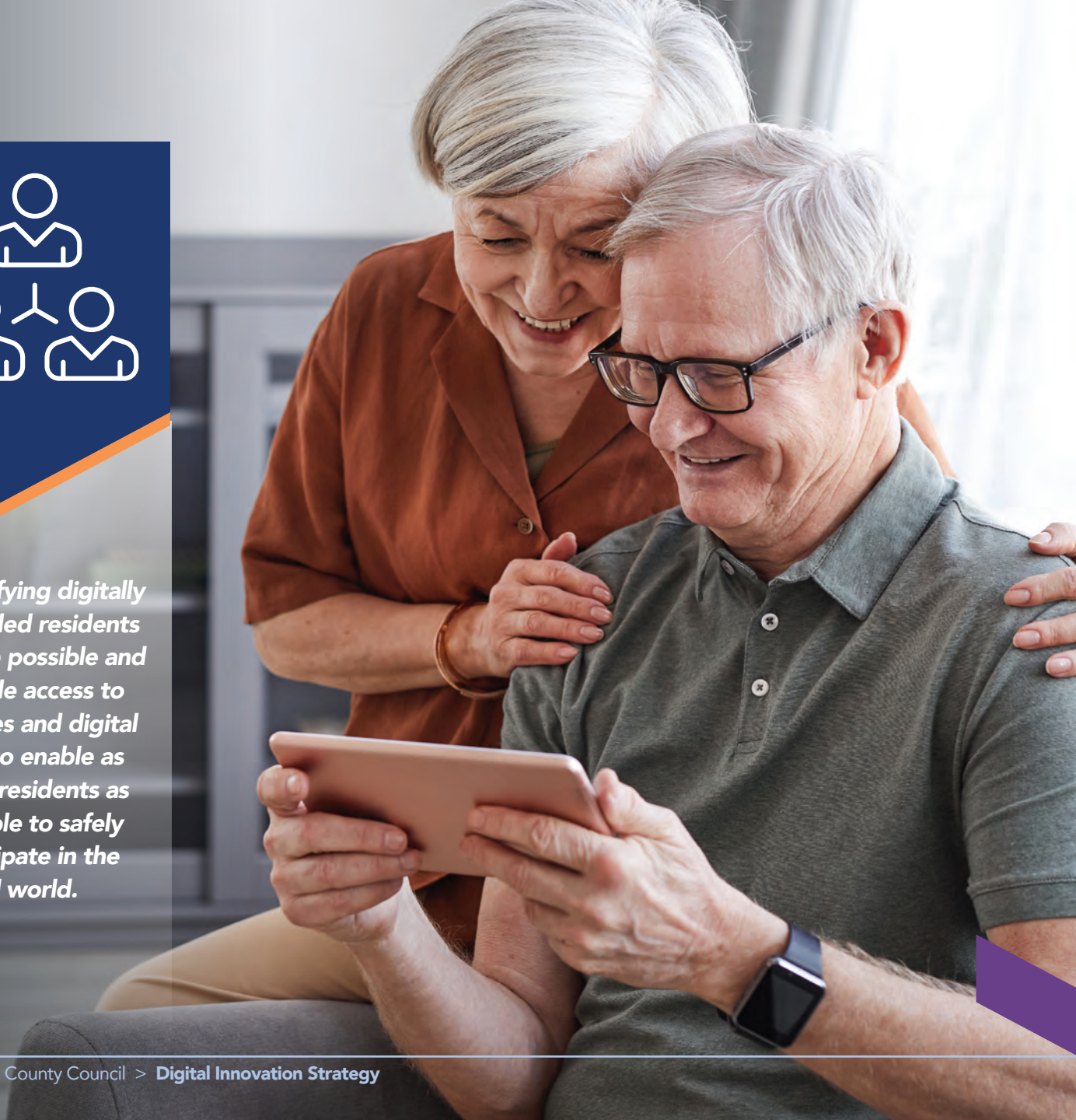
Collaborative Partnerships: We'll partner with community, businesses, and educational entities to tackle digital inclusion challenges together, ensuring alignment with our Communities Strategy.

Accessible Technology: We'll advocate for accessible devices and tech development to ensure inclusivity across Staffordshire.

Inclusive Design: We'll promote inclusive design principles to make technology usable for everyone, ensuring the whole organisation is committed to exploring digital inclusion.

We will:
- Assess the community's digital landscape and seek feedback so we can tailor programmes to meet diverse needs.
- Introduce improvements to make digital support services more accessible and effective.
- Regularly review and identify groups at risk of digital exclusion and work with community groups and partner organisations to meet evolving needs.

Success Indicators:
- Clear, evidence-based plans that address inclusivity challenges.
- High-quality and accessible digital support services that cater to the diverse needs and preferences of most residents.
- Effective strategies to identify and support groups at risk of digital exclusion, ensuring we're adapting to their evolving needs.

Digital Data

5

Using data to make robust, timely and informed decisions to deliver efficient and effective services that ultimately improve outcomes for our communities.

Data Led Organisation: We'll use data and analytics to make decisions, improve processes, and commission the right products and services.

Continuous Improvement and Innovation: We'll utilise digital and data experts to collaboratively apply best practices and explore new technologies.

Ensure Robust Data Management & Governance: We'll ensure effective, secure, and ethical use of data.

We will…
- Develop the Staffordshire Centre of Data Analytics, including the development of data forecasting techniques.
- Define best practices for data and analytics, develop a shared vision, and embed data-driven decision-making to improve services.
- Explore ways to store, manage, and use data system-wide to tackle important issues.
- Establish a Community of Practice to shape the future direction and share valuable learning.

Success Indicators
- Effective use of public data to improve services and commissioning decisions.
- A clear vision and actionable roadmap for data and analytics that aligns with the Strategic Plan.
- Successful use of data to improve system-wide decision making.
- A thriving Community of Practice that actively contributes to shaping the organisation's future direction.

Digital Pipeline
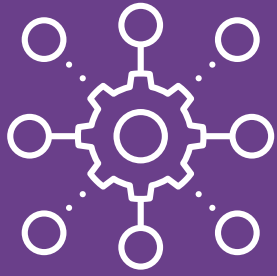
6

Rationalise and support delivery of the organisation's dynamic digital delivery plan.

Collaborative Development: We'll promote collaboration among cross-functional teams to support our dynamic delivery plan.

Strategic Alignment: We'll ensure the digital pipeline aligns with our Strategic Plan, Digital Innovation Strategy and other key strategies and plans that exist across the organisation.

Performance Monitoring: We'll implement robust monitoring and reporting to track the performance and impact of our digital initiatives.

We will…
- Create and maintain efficient digital project frameworks and workflows for better use of resources and to support successful delivery.
- Build a culture of experimentation and continuous learning to improve digital projects.
- Establish transparent channels to share information and insights about the digital innovation pipeline, encouraging clarity and collaboration.

Success Indicators:
- Clear workflows and criteria to guide projects from idea stage to execution, fostering innovation and collaboration.
- The digital pipeline is optimised for efficient resource allocation and successful project delivery.
- A culture of learning and transparent communication that improves digital projects and information sharing.

Shaping The Future

The publication of this **Digital Innovation Strategy** is only the start of the digital journey for Staffordshire. Our vision for the future is that the whole organisation will drive digital excellence to enhance our services, creating an environment that embraces a **digital innovation** mindset and starts to push the boundaries of what is possible within the public sector.

To achieve this we will:

Introduce a new Strategic Digital Programme Board: This will ensure a systematic approach to digital innovation is adopted, providing clear direction and leadership to prioritise the innovations with the biggest impact across the organisation.

Implement a new Digital Team structure: This will provide the organisation with the capacity and skillset required to develop and evolve digital innovation across the organisation.

Collaborate with service leads and frontline staff: We'll work in partnership to explore, design and implement a range of exciting digital innovations.

Keep an outward-looking perspective: We'll maintain a continuous outward looking view of Digital Innovation across the private and public sectors, bringing best practice ideas back to the organisation.

Develop a digital innovation pipeline: We'll prioritise digital innovations that can benefit the organisation.

Strengthen strategic partnerships: We recognise that sometimes others are better suited to achieve what we aim for, so we'll continue to develop partnerships in the digital sector.

Ensure a Digital Innovation Focus: When developing new and future strategies and initiatives across the organisation, we'll always consider digital innovation.

Plan On A Page

OUR VISION:

Driving digital excellence to enhance our services, fostering inclusivity to build a smarter more connected future for our communities and workforce.

ACHIEVED THROUGH SIX STRATEGIC PILLARS:

1 DIGITAL CHAMPIONS

2 DIGITAL COUNCIL

3 DIGITAL PLACE

4 DIGITAL INCLUSION

5 DIGITAL DATA

6 DIGITAL PIPELINE

DELIVERING:

A thriving Digital Champions Network supporting continuous learning.

Ongoing website improvements, integration of automation technology.

Accelerated implementation of gigabit- capable technology across the county.

Enhanced digital inclusion efforts and digital support to improve accessibility for residents.

Robust, timely and informed decisions using data to provide efficient and effective services.

A prioritised and rationalised pipeline of digital opportunities.

GUIDED BY OUR DIGITAL PRINCIPLES:

Data-driven decision making.

Inclusive design.

Governance and compliance.

Iterative development.

Transparency and accountability.

Adaptability and scalability.

Leverage emerging technologies.

TO BECOME A DIGITAL COUNCIL:

Forward thinking digital authority.

Confidently utilising automation and AI technology.

Simple tasks digitised.

Data driven and customer centred.

Engaging and interacting with the customer virtually.

Meeting rising demand via channel shift.

Staffordshire County Council

For further information please contact:

Lynsey Bissell
Assistant Director For Strategy and Transformation
lynsey.bissell1@staffordshire.gov.uk

Alex Thorogood
Head of Change and Digital
alexander.thorogood@staffordshire.gov.uk