

Gloucester City Council

Meeting:	Cabinet	Date:	6 February 2019
Subject:	Digital Strategy for Gloucester City		
Report Of:	Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economy		
Wards Affected:	All		
Key Decision:	No	Budget/Policy Framework:	No
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Appendices:	1. Marketing Gloucester Ltd's "Future City of 2050 by 2025"		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 To identify a digital strategy for Gloucester City and the Council.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Cabinet is asked to **RESOLVE** that:

- (1) Marketing Gloucester Ltd's vision document (Appendix 1) be welcomed as a starting point upon which to develop a comprehensive digital strategy for Gloucester and the Council;
- (2) the priorities for a digital strategy for Gloucester, as set out in paragraph 3.9 be agreed; and
- (3) Officers are asked to work up a more detailed draft Digital Strategy (including a supporting action plan), with colleagues from Marketing Gloucester Ltd, Gloucestershire County Council and elsewhere, for consideration by Cabinet.

3.0 Background and Key Issues

3.1 The UK Government published a [national digital strategy](#) in March 2017, setting out how the country should develop a world-leading digital economy that works for everyone. It contained seven strands:

- **Connectivity** - building world-class digital infrastructure for the UK
- **Skills and inclusion** - giving everyone access to the digital skills they need
- **The digital sectors** - making the UK the best place to start and grow a digital business
- **The wider economy** - helping every British business become a digital business

- **Cyberspace** - making the UK the safest place in the world to live and work online
- **Digital government** - maintaining the UK government as a world leader in serving its citizens online
- **The data economy** - unlocking the power of data in the UK economy and improving public confidence in its use.

3.2 Shortly after this, Marketing Gloucester Ltd (MGL) drafted an initial vision statement “Future City of 2050 by 2025: A Digital Strategy for Gloucester” (Appendix 1). This looked at the place of Gloucester in the context of a fast-changing technological world, the threats and opportunities that this posed, and set out a vision for Gloucester to become a digital pathfinder ‘testbed’ for future city technologies and solutions.

3.3 MGL’s 2017 report identified that Gloucester was already taking steps to position itself as an innovator and leader in piloting new technologies, including:

- In 2015 it was the first city in the UK to implement a 3 in 1 solution with BT, with CCTV, free WIFI and 4G combined. This innovation won the prestigious Gordon McLanaghan Security Innovation Award and has since been adopted by Cardiff, Glasgow, Nottingham, Leicester, Newcastle and others.
- Gloucester became the first place in the UK, and the second in the world, to partner with Google’s Niantic Labs on the FieldTrip™ app, which allows virtual, location-based tourism information through cell phone, tablet or Google Glass.
- Gloucester was the first city to implement the Rewarding Visits technology, funded through Innovate UK.
- Gloucester had both the highest number of, and highest density of, next generation footfall sensors in the UK in a project run by the Local Data Company in collaboration with UCL and the Consumer Data Research Centre.
- The City had over 250 i Beacons installed.

3.4 Further, the report asserted that Gloucester is ideally suited to testing new technologies: it is a relatively compact city, with a young but representative demographic and good digital infrastructure. A Centre for Cities report identified that the City ranked highly for patent innovation. And there is a significant team of partners, including the University, local authorities and the private sector, willing to collaborate with technology developers to trial initiatives here.

3.5 Since MGL’s report, things have moved on in Gloucester and, technologically, across the globe. 4G is more widely established across the country and 5G technology testbeds are in place with wider rollout about to commence. Locally, a Science and Innovation Audit was recently commissioned by BEIS on behalf of the Gloucestershire/Worcestershire and Swindon/Wiltshire LEPs, focussing on cyber resilience, and it is likely that future government investment in this area will need to be linked back to that strategy. The Government has identified Cheltenham (as host of GCHQ), as the home of the national cyber security centre for the UK. In 2018 it awarded £22m through the Local Enterprise Partnership to support the development of a cyber park between Gloucester and Cheltenham, which is anticipated to create up to 7,000 jobs and 1,200 new homes, as well as attracting hundreds of millions of pounds for Gloucestershire’s economy. At the same time, the Local Enterprise Partnership awarded £400,000 to MGL to open up a new

national centre for digital retail innovation, which will shortly open on the first floor of Eastgate Shopping Centre.

- 3.6 So Gloucester has made an excellent start in establishing itself as a digital leader and pathfinder city, and is very well positioned to build on this. At the time of writing this report, the city was listed as 12th on the national digital influence index of towns and cities (as published by www.wdyt.org.uk), punching well above its weight in population terms. But there is much more to be done to maintain and grow this good start, to turn the successful opportunism of the past into a more directed and purposeful strategy for the future, and to prevent the city from slipping back as other places seek to catch up and overtake.
- 3.7 For the City Council, there is a similar story of some good progress to date, but there remains much more work to be done to become a digital leading council. Whilst customers are able to conduct some transactions and communications with the council electronically, in many respects it remains behind the curve compared to comparator organisations, and many customers are frustrated with how the council's digital presence lags behind many other aspects of their everyday lives. The Council has already committed to significant investment through the Together Gloucester transformation programme, accelerating the technological infrastructure of the council and enabling the expansion of online service options for the customer.
- 3.8 So a strategy that encompasses a digital vision for Gloucester City and the City Council is needed to bring these aspirations together into plans and reality, and which becomes the guide that all partners subscribe to and work towards. As well as a vision, the strategy needs to be supported by clear priorities and detailed actions (including costings, where known) which will deliver those priorities. And those actions and priorities will need to accord to the Council's wider ambitions around improving people's health, tourism, transport, heritage, culture, community safety and regeneration, etc. The City's strategy should also seek to critically analyse the impact of its earlier investment noted above, to understand their impact and how they can be used as foundations for future success.
- 3.9 Looking at the seven strands of the UK Government's Digital Strategy as well as the MGL report, the following are proposed as the five strategic digital priorities for Gloucester:
1. **Developing our infrastructure** – making sure that Gloucester maintains the very best digital infrastructure for technology providers, businesses and residents, across the whole Council area.
 2. **Promoting skills, access and inclusion** – making sure that no-one in Gloucester is discriminated against, nor gets left behind the digital revolution, including all residents and SMEs.
 3. **Supporting business and economic growth** – making Gloucester a great place to start and grow a digital business.
 4. **Transforming Council service delivery** – becoming a leading modern digital council.
 5. **Maximising opportunities for open data** – ensuring that council information and data is freely accessible and used to best effect for the benefit of our residents and businesses, whilst providing absolute protection of individual private data.

4.0 Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) Considerations

4.1 Not yet quantified.

5.0 Alternative Options Considered

5.1 To not develop a digital strategy for Gloucester City. This is not recommended.

6.0 Reasons for Recommendations

6.1 To develop and deliver a digital strategy for Gloucester will help the Council achieve its overarching aspiration of 'A City that works for everyone'. The Strategy will support the Council's ambitions to make the City vibrant and prosperous, safe and attractive, inclusive and resilient and will help the Council deliver great services to its customers.

7.0 Future Work and Conclusions

7.1 If the recommendations in this report are supported, then Officers will work up a more detailed draft Digital Strategy (including a supporting action plan), with colleagues from Marketing Gloucester Ltd, Gloucestershire County Council and elsewhere, for consideration at a future Cabinet meeting.

8.0 Financial Implications

8.1 Not yet quantified.

(Financial Services have been consulted in the preparation this report.)

9.0 Legal Implications

9.1 Not yet quantified.

(One Legal have been consulted in the preparation this report.)

10.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

10.1 MGL's 2017 report contains an initial SWOT analysis for Gloucester. This will need revisiting as part of the future work.

11.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA) and Safeguarding:

11.1 As this report merely identifies an initial strategic direction, and notes that further work is required to flesh out the strategy, it is too early to conduct a PIA screening assessment.

12.0 Other Corporate Implications

Community Safety

- 12.1 A digital strategy is needed to show, among other things, how technology is needed to support the Council's community safety aims for the City.

Sustainability

- 12.2 Not yet quantified.

Staffing & Trade Union

- 12.3 Not yet quantified.

Background Documents: [UK Digital Strategy](#)