



Finance and Resources

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Report for:	Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Title of report:	Transformation Strategies – People Digital Communications
Date:	1 November 2022
Report on behalf of:	Councillor Graeme Elliot
Part:	I
If Part II, reason:	N/A
Appendices:	N/A
Background papers:	Digital Strategy document Communications Strategy document People Strategy document
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	

Report Author / Responsible Officer

Aidan Wilkie (Strategic Director – People & Transformation)

Matt Rawdon, Assistant Director (People)

Kelvin Soley, Head of Communications



Matt.Rawdon@dacorum.gov.uk / 01442 228513 (ext. 2513)

Kelvin.Soley@dacorum.gov.uk / 01442 228504 (ext. 2504)

Corporate Priorities	
	A clean, safe and enjoyable environment Building strong and vibrant communities Ensuring economic growth and prosperity Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery Climate and ecological emergency

Wards affected	All wards
Purpose of the report:	1. To introduce our 3 core strategies which form part of our transformation programme, Future Dacorum.
Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s):	1. That Members note the report
Period for post policy/project review:	N/A

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Over the summer, the Dacorum transformation programme, 'Future Dacorum', has focussed on building the foundations for successful delivery. The main pillars of this are 3 new strategies which seek to drive how we reform our approach to people, communications and technology. These strategies are attached for your consideration.
- 1.2. Each of these will play an integral part in transforming how we operate as a Council – ensuring we meet the needs of our residents, businesses and visitors effectively while operating in the most efficient way possible.
- 1.3. In turn, these strategies will become the basis for wider reform such as the delivery of our customer strategy, and live transformation projects in areas such as housing and waste. It is key that these services do not simply behave as corporate functions but play an integral and proactive role in enabling our best delivery, across all parts of the Council.

2. Digital

- 2.1. This strategy sets out our vision for technology at Dacorum Borough Council for 2022-2025, looking at how the Digital Service can understand and support the needs of the Council, its customers, members and staff, as they develop. It provides a set of constant technology design principles intended to guide the Council's future decisions. The strategy highlights specific technologies that we expect to play a major role in transformation and provides indicative timelines for actions and projects based on the strategic approach.
- 2.2. The Digital Service at Dacorum, is responsive and primarily focused on maintaining operational services. It is a small team but members are dedicated and knowledgeable, often with many years of service at Dacorum. The Council's infrastructure provides a secure and resilient environment, assured through third party testing and compliance, and both system and website availability are consistently excellent.
- 2.3. Previous strategic decisions, focusing on remote working, enabled the service rapidly and successfully to transition an essentially on-site workforce into a remote workforce, at short notice and with limited impacts to services, at the beginning of the Covid-19 Pandemic.
- 2.4. The Council has invested in customer facing technology, especially the development of MyDacorum, the portal for residents, but there are opportunities to do more. We have also deployed transformational technologies from collaborative tools, such as Microsoft Teams, to business process improvement software, such as Robotic Process Automation.
- 2.5. However, the Council has a complex and fragmented set of systems at a range of ages, with some approaching end of life support from vendors. Data is distributed across these systems in various formats

and with variable levels of integrity. This presents substantial business problems with officers often needing to access multiple systems to deal with customer queries and data still manually transferred between applications in some cases. It makes using the Council's extensive datasets for reporting and business intelligence purposes more difficult and increases the effort required to improve online transactions for our customers.

- 2.6. We need to move to a more strategic space. This will enable us to benefit from the opportunities created by a rapidly developing environment. Our fundamentals mean we are well placed to do this and our strategy sets out the 'what' and the 'how' of the next 3 years.

3. People

- 3.1. Our People Strategy sets out how we will enable our workforce to have the greatest impact on our corporate objectives. It seeks to recognise and respond to the significant challenges which we face in this area, such as recruitment and retention, wellbeing and skills development.
- 3.2. In particular, it recognises the broader organisational transformation going on, particularly in terms of service development and commercialisation and the significant workforce implications of those changes. Without this strategy and supporting workplan, there will be significant delivery risks attached to those programmes of work.
- 3.3. Leadership and organisational culture feature heavily in the strategy. There is ample evidence that these themes are critical to delivering a highly-functioning organisation. We are already progressing well in these areas with a live leadership development programme and a new set of corporate values. We will continue to prioritise this work.
- 3.4. Equally, external factors such as the cost of living crisis and the jobs market mean that recruitment and retention remains a live and significant issue for all public bodies. We are no different. Ensuring we are doing everything we can to compete effectively in the market (particularly for more specialist roles) while also providing a working environment within which our talent wants to stay and progress.

4. Communications

- 4.1. Our Communications Strategy sets out how we will inform, engage and listen to our residents, partners and businesses. Again, the focus of the strategy is effectively delivering our corporate objectives and supporting service delivery and development.
- 4.2. Again, we are building on strong foundations but we now need to move into a more pro-active communications space and help lead the Council's communication activity as the way our residents behave and engage changes.
- 4.3. Digital mediums are becoming increasingly critical and, hence, feature heavily within the strategy. We are well-placed to deliver on these ambitions as we are already performing well in this space. However, this is a fast moving space and we will need to stay current as well as developing ways of harvesting resident sentiment within digital channels. Of course, it is critical that we recognise and respond to the fact that not all residents are digitally enabled – we need to make sure we speak and listen to these residents too. One size will not fit all.
- 4.4. The strategy also encompasses our wider work on events and filming which have now been brought into our communications team. This organisational restructure and the shared principles in the strategy will help us to develop our work in both those areas.