



Nottingham
City Council

Digital, Data and Customer Access Strategy

2025 to 2028

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Foreword

Foreword Councillor Ethan Radford

In today's rapidly evolving digital landscape, having a clear and purposeful approach to technology is essential. Our council faces both significant challenges and exciting opportunities. This strategy sets out how we will use data, digital tools, and artificial intelligence (AI) to continually improve the services we provide to our residents.

We are committed to modernising our technology. We recognise that the pace of change is fast, and we must adapt to ensure our services remain effective, efficient, and accessible. This strategy outlines our vision to become a modern, responsive, and resilient digital council.

Although we hold a wealth of information, we have not yet fully harnessed its potential to enhance services, inform decision-making, reduce risk, or improve performance. By using accurate and timely data, we can design better services, work more efficiently, and collaborate more effectively. Our ambition is to become a data-driven organisation where data underpins continuous improvement.

The strategy also sets out how we will invest in digital services, automation, and AI to streamline processes, reduce costs, and enhance service delivery and accessibility. We are committed to ensuring that our digital services are inclusive and easy to use for all residents, including those who may find technology challenging. By designing services around the needs of our residents, we will place them at the heart of our digital transformation and promote digital inclusion.

Understanding and responding to the needs of our residents is central to this strategy. By using feedback and data, we will deliver solutions that are relevant and effective. Our goal is to foster a culture of excellent customer service and continuous improvement.

This strategy represents a bold and ambitious plan for the future. It provides a clear roadmap for transforming our services, making better use of data, and improving access for all. By embracing digital innovation, we will ensure our council is well-equipped to meet future challenges and deliver outstanding services to our communities.

Purpose

The purpose of this strategy is to ensure we are an organisation that has a culture of continuous improvement and innovation. It will address the challenges and opportunities our council faces in enhancing its use of data, transforming services through technology, and improving customer access. By developing a comprehensive Data, Digital, AI, Technology, and Customer Access and Insight Strategy, we aim to create a deliverable roadmap that will guide our efforts in modernising our services and operations.

This strategy will help us leverage the wealth of data we possess to improve services, inform decision-making, reduce risks, and drive performance and transformation. It will also address the fragmented and siloed approach to data management, ensuring that we have consistent data standards and policies in place. By improving data quality and governance, we can enhance service design and delivery, increase efficiencies, and foster greater collaboration across the council.

In terms of technology, the strategy will focus on modernising our IT infrastructure, as well as investing in digital tools, automation, and AI capabilities, this will help us streamline processes, reduce operational costs, and transform service delivery, creating a digitally enabled council that is responsive, innovative, and resilient.

Ensuring that all residents, including those who are digitally excluded, have access to and can effectively use our digital services. By designing services that are easy to use and meet the needs of residents, we will put them at the heart of our strategy.

To ensure we deliver against this strategy we will establish a clear delivery plan based on our themes for improvement.



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How this strategy supports the Our Council Plan and our Improvement Journey

The Strategy will support key themes of the Council Plan:

- Fostering Governance Transparency and Innovation.
- Adopting a 'One Council' approach

Support the delivery of our Improvement Plan:

- A Council that delivers for Nottingham with clear direction and purpose
- A Council that is well-run with effective people, processes and systems

Future Council: Operating Principles

- Design things around the customer
- Be efficient and productive, and make the best use of our assets
- Prevention through early intervention
- Work collaboratively and transparently
- Be focussed on performance, risk and improvement
- Be led by intelligence, insight and data

Our Workforce Strategy:

- A Talented and High Performing Workforce
- For excellence in Organisational and Leadership Culture

Governance and Oversight

The Digital and Data Enabling Board plays a central role in driving the councils Transformation agenda. It provides strategic oversight, governance, and leadership to ensure that digital initiatives, data use, and workforce enablement are aligned with our organisational goals and deliver real value to staff and service users. The board will oversee the implementation of this strategy, ensuring that outcomes are prioritised, monitor progress and any associated risks are managed.

The Board brings together senior leaders, digital experts, data analysts, operational leads, and workforce representatives to create a joined-up approach to digital development. It ensures that digital tools and data are used effectively to improve outcomes, support decision-making, and enhance the experience of staff and the people we serve.

The Board also champions a culture of continuous improvement and innovation. It supports the development of digital skills across the workforce, promotes data literacy, and ensures that staff have access to the tools and training they need to thrive in a digital environment.



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The Themes of our Strategy



A customer-focused council,
dedicated to understanding and
meeting residents' needs.



Our use and approach to
Artificial Intelligence



A Digital council



A digitally enabled workforce



A Data & Evidence Driven
council



Fit For Purpose Technology &
Systems



Themes

Theme 1: A customer-focused council, dedicated to understanding and meeting residents' needs

Principle: By understanding the needs of our customers, we will enhance and improve the services we offer to our residents.

Aims: Use customer insight to help design services that can be accessed and are accessible to all. Design and provide services around our customers needed, providing easy ways to access our services.

Theme 2: Use and approach to Artificial Intelligence

Principle: We will leverage AI ethically to enhance efficiency, streamline processes, reduce costs, and improve services for residents and colleagues.

Aims: Govern how we use AI to ensure the council adopts an ethical approach to improve our services, streamline processes, and reduce costs. Through the responsible use of AI, we can ensure that our council works smarter and more efficiently, delivering higher quality services to our workforce and residents.

Theme 3: A digital council

Principle: We will use technology to support and make services better for everyone, making things run more smoothly, save money, and improve how we deliver services.

Aims: To become a modern council by encouraging a culture of innovation and experimentation with new technologies and ideas. We will make sure our digital services are safe and protect people's information, designing them to be easy for everyone to use, including those who find technology difficult to use.



Themes

Theme 4: A digitally enabled workforce

Principle: Invest in training and technology to support and empower staff, streamline tasks, and foster a culture of continuous learning and innovation.

Aims: Help our staff learn new skills by giving them the right tools to do their jobs well. Use digital tools to make work easier, cutting down on repetitive tasks, and allowing our staff to focus on what really matters.

Foster a culture where learning and innovation are encouraged, so our workforce can keep improving and providing the best services to our residents

Theme 5: A data & evidence driven council

Principle: We will use accurate, accessible, and insightful data to drive our decision-making processes, enhance our services, and foster a culture of continuous improvement.

Aims: Use high-quality data to inform and improve our strategic and operational decisions, ensuring that our actions are evidence-based and aligned with our goals.
Provide data and resources to our staff, enabling them to effectively interpret and understand data to enhance and improve service delivery.



Themes

Theme 6: Fit for purpose technology and systems

Principle: We are committed to modernising our technology infrastructure to enhance service delivery, ensure data security, and provide reliable and robust systems for all.

Aims: Transition our services to the cloud to improve accessibility, scalability, and efficiency, ensuring that our systems are always up-to-date and responsive to user needs.

Implement stringent security measures to protect customer data, while maintaining reliable and robust systems that support our operations and service delivery.

Theme 7: Continuous improvement

Principle: We will become a learning organisation that has a culture of continuous improvement and innovation.

Aims: Implement feedback loops and regular assessments to continuously improve digital solutions and processes.

Review the way we deliver services through collaboration and best practice.



Theme 1: A Customer-focused council, dedicated to understanding and meeting residents' needs

We're improving services through our **Customer Access and Insight Strategy**, which sets clear standards for high-quality, consistent service.

By using data and feedback, we shape services around what residents need. We're also committed to **digital inclusion**, making sure everyone can access our services.

Technology helps us simplify processes, track interactions, and design easy-to-use digital services—driving ongoing improvement.

What we're Going to Do

- **Listen to residents** – Gather feedback through complaints, surveys, and conversations to keep improving our services.
- **Support our staff** – Make sure staff have the skills and tools to help residents and make good decisions.
- **Set clear standards** – Agree and share realistic service standards so residents know what to expect.
- **Make access easier** – Offer different ways to contact us and help people use our services more easily.
- **Keep residents informed** – Respond to enquiries, give updates, and signpost to other organisations when needed.
- **Solve issues quickly** – Aim to sort things out first time, so we can focus on helping those who need us most.
- **Learn and improve** – Review how we work, compare with other councils, and learn from what works well.
- **Use data wisely** – Spot problems early, plan-ahead, and improve how we deliver services.



Theme 2: Artificial Intelligence

AI is helping us improve how the council works and delivers services. Over the past year, we've introduced an AI contact centre, tools to support staff, and voice transcription to help social workers with referrals.

This strategy builds on that progress. We'll continue using AI responsibly—with clear rules and human oversight—to support staff, improve services, and encourage innovation.

What we're Going to Do

- **Set up an AI Centre of Excellence** – Lead and support how we use AI across the council.
- **Test new ideas** – Work with suppliers and our teams to trial and assess AI solutions.
- **Use AI to help residents** – Make it easier to access services through phone and online tools.
- **Follow ethical standards** – Create an AI ethics board and follow clear rules to make sure AI is fair and responsible.
- **Protect the environment** – Use energy-efficient AI that supports our climate goals.
- **Involve residents and partners** – Keep people involved in how we design and use AI.
- **Encourage innovation** – Learn from others, try new things, and share what works.
- **Build smart tools** – Develop AI agents to support both staff and residents.
- **Train our staff** – Offer training and apprenticeships to build skills and support change.
- **Follow national guidance** – Use the UK Government's AI Playbook to guide our work.



Theme 3: A Digital Council

We will **build on our recent successes** by making even greater use of data, digital tools, artificial intelligence (AI), and modern technology. These tools will help us improve how residents access our services, making them quicker, easier, and more convenient.

By using technology in smarter ways, we aim to **reduce costs, save money**, and deliver **better outcomes for our residents**. This means more efficient services that are also more responsive to people's needs.

We are committed to making sure that **all customers can access our services** through simple, user-friendly, and accessible digital solutions. These services will be designed to meet people's expectations and make their experience as smooth as possible.

At the same time, we will continue to **innovate how the council operates**, using technology to improve the way we work. We'll make sure our staff have the right digital tools and support to do their jobs well, helping them focus on what matters most—delivering great service to our residents.

What we're going to do

- **Go digital-first** – Automate and digitise processes to reduce printing, postage, and paperwork.
- **Build on success** – Expand our use of digital tools and robotic automation to make services faster and more efficient.
- **Support staff** – Give colleagues the right tools to reduce admin tasks and focus on helping residents.
- **Improve the website** – Regularly update it based on feedback to make it easier to use and more accessible.
- **Design around users** – Make digital services simple, clear, and easy for everyone to use.
- **Keep customers informed** – Provide updates and feedback through digital services to reduce unnecessary contact.



Theme 4: A Digitally Enabled Workforce

We want to ensure that our workforce is confident, capable, and able to work in a digital-first environment. We will support our colleagues to embrace digital tools, embedding digital skills into everyday practice and fostering a culture of curiosity and innovation, we will empower staff to grow and adapt.

This approach ensures that all employees are equipped with the tools, knowledge, and confidence to thrive in a digitally supported workplace.

What we're going to do

- **Support all staff** – Make sure everyone has the digital skills and confidence to work well and deliver great services.
 - **Attract and keep talent** – Bring in and retain skilled digital and data professionals to support a digital-first council.
 - **Celebrate innovation** – Run Digital Showcase events to share success stories and inspire others.
 - **Check skills regularly** – Assess digital skills often so we can offer the right support where it's needed most.
 - **Empower leaders** – Encourage leaders to lead by example, support learning, and promote digital ways of working.
- **Embed digital learning** – Include digital development in performance reviews and use feedback and data to keep improving.
 - **Promote peer learning** – Support mentoring, knowledge sharing, and learning through groups like the Change Community.
 - **Grow talent from within** – Build on successful programmes like apprenticeships and work shadowing to develop digital skills internally.
 - **Make learning inclusive** – Ensure digital training is accessible to all staff, whatever their role or ability.



Theme 5: – Become a Data Driven council

Nottingham - and local government - is at a pivotal moment. Now, more than ever, data must be recognised as a valuable strategic asset, not merely a by-product of service delivery. To meet the complex demands of today and the challenges ahead, we must reflect on our legacy state and move decisively from fragmented, reactive data use to a culture where intelligence drives decisions, strengthens accountability, and informs the design and delivery of our internal and external services.

What we're going to do

- **Improve data quality** – Set clear standards, responsibilities, and checks to make sure our data is accurate, up to date, and reliable.
- **Join up our data** – Bring different datasets together to get a full picture of residents and communities, helping us act earlier and make better decisions.
- **Use data responsibly** – Follow strong rules for data use, security, and privacy to keep public trust.
- **Share data safely** – Use common standards and secure systems so teams and partners can share data easily and work better together.
- **Build data skills** – Offer training, tools, and support so staff feel confident using data in their roles.
- **Modernise our systems** – Improve our data platforms and follow FAIR principles (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable) to make data more useful.
- **Create a data-driven culture** – Encourage everyone to use data to make decisions and challenge poor-quality information.
- **Work smarter with data** – Cut out duplication, automate where possible, and make data processes more efficient to save time and resources.



Theme 6: Technology

We will improve our approach to technology by establishing an IT strategy on how we manage systems and services going forward. A new Technical Design Authority will ensure all tech solutions match our strategy and security standards. We will also use cloud platforms for flexible access, strengthening cybersecurity to protect data and build trust.

What we're going to do

- **Create an IT Strategy** – Set a clear plan for how we manage our IT services now and in the future.
 - **Support continuous learning** – Offer online training to help staff stay up to date with new skills and technologies.
 - **Provide responsive IT support** – Make sure our IT service is helpful and focused on staff needs.
 - **Use a product lifecycle approach** – Manage software and systems in a way that supports long-term value and performance.
 - **Boost digital inclusion** – Use technology to help staff improve digital skills and work together more easily.
- **Review our IT tools** – Check that the devices and systems we use are fit for purpose and support staff effectively.
 - **Set up a Technical Design Authority (TDA)** – Make sure all technical solutions follow our IT strategy and meet cybersecurity standards.
 - **Use cloud services** – Adopt cloud-based tools where useful, so staff can access what they need anytime, anywhere.
 - **Strengthen cybersecurity** – Improve security to protect sensitive data, follow regulations, and maintain trust in our digital systems.



Theme 7: Continuous Improvement

In our evolving digital landscape, continuous improvement is not just a goal; it's a mindset that will drive our success. By embracing a **culture of constant learning and adaptation**, we ensure that our strategy remains agile, innovative, and responsive to the needs of our users.

What we're going to do

- **Make improvement a mindset** – We see continuous improvement not just as a goal, but as a way of working every day.
 - **Stay flexible and innovative** – We keep our strategy agile so we can quickly adapt to changing needs and new ideas.
 - **Use feedback and data** – We listen to users, analyse data, and use insights to make smart decisions and improve services.
 - **Encourage collaboration** – We create space for staff to share ideas, try new things, and learn from each other.
- **Promote open communication** – We value honest conversations that help us grow and improve together.
 - **Aim for excellence** – We want to go beyond expectations, delivering high-quality services that truly meet people's needs.
 - **Support innovation** – We build an environment where new ideas are welcomed and tested, helping us stay ahead.

Digital Inclusion

Digital inclusion means making sure everyone has fair and meaningful access to digital technologies like the internet, computers, and mobile devices, as well as the skills and knowledge to use them effectively. In today's connected world, digital inclusion is crucial to ensure that all customers can access our services. However, many people still face significant barriers to accessing and using digital technologies.

While the benefits of digital technology for delivering, experiencing, and improving the quality of services are well known, these benefits can't be fully realised by everyone unless services are inclusive, designed for change, and meet the expectations of both staff and the public.

Digital inclusion is more than just providing access to technology; it's about empowering individuals and communities to fully participate in the digital age. Embracing digital inclusion can lead to better access to information and services, improved communication and collaboration, and increased economic opportunities. It also allows marginalised and underrepresented groups to voice their concerns, take part in decision-making processes, and advocate for their rights.

We will continue to provide our customers with support to help those that are not digitally literate through our libraries, providing access to computers and training.

The newly formed **Citizen Panel** will support our goal of creating a culture of digital inclusion, ensuring that our websites and web-based systems and services are accessible to all customers. This group will work together to understand the needs of our community and staff, and to identify gaps not covered by existing initiatives or plans.

We will work with Digital Notts to support digital inclusion. This collaboration will help ensure our approach reflects the needs of our communities by engaging with partners and residents. We aim to raise awareness of digital inclusion, embed it across our services, and make it a shared responsibility across the council.



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