

Meeting of:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	Thursday, 06 February 2025
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Corporate Performance and Resources
Report Title:	Reshaping: Digital Service Structure
Purpose of Report:	To seek Cabinet's agreement to changes to the structure of the Digital team as it relates to technology and business improvement activities.
Report Owner:	Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Performance & Resources
Responsible Officer:	Head of Digital
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	Senior Leadership Team have been consulted on the draft proposals and further consultation with Council staff will be undertaken as described in the body of the report.
Policy Framework:	This is a matter for Executive decision by Cabinet.
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This report (and the associated Part II report on this agenda) sets out the rationale and proposals for restructuring the Digital Service, including current ICT and Business Improvement Teams. • This work will contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan, delivery of the Digital Strategy and supports key aspects of the Council's Reshaping Programme. • The Council adopted a new Digital Strategy and recruited a Head of Digital in 2023. To deliver these ambitions, and contribute to the Council's medium-term financial strategy, a series of changes to the structure are proposed. • This report seeks Cabinet approval to restructure the service around two divisions: Perform and Transform. • Consultation with affected colleagues and Trade Unions is an important part of the Council's approach to managing change and the report sets out how this will be done to support colleagues. 	

Recommendations

1. That Cabinet considers and approves a change to the structure of the teams in Digital as set out in this report and the associated Part II report on this agenda.
2. That Cabinet receive an update on the work of the Digital Service as part of future reports on the Reshaping Programme.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. To ensure that the Digital team is sufficiently resilient to meet current and future service needs.
2. To provide Cabinet with an update on this area of the Council's activity in due course.

1. Background

- 1.1 The current IT team was restructured in 2018 and Business Improvement team was created in 2013. There are 48 roles in the combined teams.
- 1.2 Digital is one of the five themes of the Reshaping Programme and in 2023 the Council recruited a new post of Head of Digital to progress this area of the Council's work. In the same year, a new [Digital Strategy](#) was approved by Cabinet setting the direction for the Council around four digital themes:
 - Community and Involvement
 - Organisation and Processes
 - People and Skills
 - Data and Insight
- 1.3 This report seeks to set out arrangements to ensure that the Digital service is well placed to meet the demands and challenges of the next few years and deliver on the commitments in the Digital Strategy, Reshaping Programme and Corporate Plan.
- 1.4 This report is focused on the organisational design of the new service, however the structure has been designed to support a new Target Operating Model which has considered people, processes, technology and data and how these will work together to deliver the Council's digital ambitions.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1 We have significant ambition for Digital as a Council. We know as an organisation that by using technology effectively, we change the experience of our residents and their interactions with us. We also empower our colleagues to focus on bringing their humanity to their job by spending less time on administration.

- 2.2 We need to change how we deliver technology. We need to increase our focus on delivering value to the organisation and reduce the time supporting legacy infrastructure and applications. Success involves working more closely with our colleagues across the organisation, understanding how digital tools support service re-design and creating the right solutions. Focus needs to be put on creating data services that not only allow us to reflect on what has happened but use the inputs we own to forecast and model more effectively, so that we can design services for the medium to long term based on data. These are key aspects of the Reshaping Programme contributing not only to the digital workstream but also being a fundamental part of the Target Operating Model workstream.
- 2.3 The ambition is for the Digital Service to work more closely with Directorates to embed technology in the right way. In doing so, the service will assist in identifying opportunities to reduce external spend, align systems and create clear paths for data across the organisation. By doing this, we will deliver the capabilities and experiences for our residents that meet their current and future needs.
- 2.4 This type of whole scale transformative activity requires focus to enable us to drive the organisation and its capabilities forward. It is imperative that colleagues in the Digital team have committed time to design and implement our future state.
- 2.5 Whilst transformation is a key part of our planning, we must ensure that our current infrastructure, customer and colleague experiences remain safe and reliable.
- 2.6 Since the last restructure of the service, there has been an increased threat to the Council's cyber security as recognised in the Corporate Risk Register. Simultaneously, the breadth of digital solutions and devices that we wish to support have increased. Cybersecurity is a Corporate Risk that, whilst we work diligently to mitigate, is increasing due to advancements in Artificial Intelligence and global political issues and the proposals for the new service consider how to respond to this effectively.
- 2.7 Our current infrastructure is based on legacy technology both in terms of our servers and networking environment. We acknowledge that the design of the target state is a significant undertaking and that the transition from our current on-premise environment to a cloud solution will require focus.
- 2.8 The organisation recognises the opportunities provided through automation and the integration of systems to design and develop solutions that increase resident satisfaction as well as reduce administrative duties for our colleagues. To deliver this, it is imperative that we understand, explore, challenge and define service design utilising emerging technologies using a Business Partnership model to ensure that technical solutions not only maximise our investments but ensure positive outcomes for our colleagues and residents.

- 2.9 Technology is an intrinsic element of our colleagues' toolkit and it is therefore essential that the devices, applications and network remains stable, safe and fit for purpose.
- 2.10 The above issues require Digital to be agile and responsive to the changing environment, and drive meaningful transformation, therefore the department has taken the opportunity to review and realign roles and responsibilities.
- 2.11 This model is different from our current structure and a new structure is proposed with two separate teams.
- i) Digital Transform: to focus on the development of transformational activities
 - ii) Digital Perform: to ensure that our environments deliver the day-to-day needs of our customers and employees.
- 2.12 In the design of a new Target Operating Model, an assessment was carried out to understand the workflow, processes, technology and data that our teams were using. Consultation happened with each team manager to understand their current responsibilities and to identify opportunities to remove silos and align customer outcomes.
- 2.13 The details of the re-structure will affect employees directly. As such, Cabinet are recommended to consider this report alongside the associated Part II report on this agenda.
- 2.14 A comprehensive and supportive consultation process is proposed with all potentially impacted colleagues as described in the latter sections of this report and Part II report. A copy of both Part I and Part II reports will be provided to the relevant staff and Trade Unions as part of the consultation process.
- 2.15 In addition to the required consultations with unions and team members, we intend to offer support throughout the consultation period in the form of training. We acknowledge that a number of the staff involved have not been in a position where they have had to undertake interviews for a number of years. We will therefore provide interview preparation training as well as ensuring that the wellbeing of our colleagues has an increased level of oversight.

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

- 3.1 The proposed restructure of the Digital service aligns closely with the principles of the Well-being of Future Generations Act, which seeks to ensure sustainable decision-making. By modernising the team structure, the Council will be better placed to deliver effective digital services that support the well-being goals set out in the Act, such as creating a prosperous, resilient, and globally responsible Wales.
- 3.2 The restructure will enhance digital innovation improving outcomes for residents and aligning with the Act's commitment to a more equal county by addressing digital exclusion and ensuring everyone can access vital services.

- 3.3 Furthermore, the restructure reflects the Act's five ways of working, particularly long-term thinking and prevention. By investing in an agile digital team with transformation at its core, the Council is proactively preparing for future challenges, including technological advancements and evolving citizen needs. The integration and collaboration fostered through this approach will enhance service delivery across departments, ensuring the Council meets its statutory obligations under the Act while building a sustainable digital foundation for future generations.
- 3.4 The work of the Digital Service will contribute to the (currently being finalised for approval) Council's Corporate Plan 2025-2030, notably Wellbeing Objective Five: Being the best Council we can be.

4. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 4.1 The work of the Digital Service contributes to the Council's climate change programme, Project Zero. The teams are responsible for services with direct carbon emissions and the proposals to progress to further cloud based environments will make a contribution to lowering energy consumption.

5. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 5.1 The proposals set out in this report will contribute to the Digital Service savings target contained in the Council's 2025/26 revenue budget which is currently being consulted upon. The final saving is as such subject to the outcome of the consultation process with affected staff, and the timing of assimilation into new roles.

Employment

- 5.2 These proposals will affect staff within the existing scope of the service – ICT and Business Improvement. The full detail of the proposals is set out in the Part II report.
- 5.3 A thorough consultation process will be conducted with all potentially affected staff members in line with the Council's Avoiding Redundancy procedure. This process includes:
- Informing staff about the proposed changes and the reasons behind them.
 - Providing opportunities for staff to ask questions and provide feedback.
 - Considering all feedback and making adjustments to the proposal where appropriate.
- 5.4 It is recommended that Cabinet delegate authority to the Head of Digital, in consultation with the Leader, Director of Corporate Resources and Head of HR to

implement the proposal as set out in this report and in line with the Council's HR policies and procedures.

- 5.5 Council staff affected by these proposals and the Trade Unions will be fully briefed on the proposals and consultation process. It is proposed that a 30-day consultation process will be undertaken to enable staff to contribute their views. Following this, the Head of Digital will consult with the Leader and Director of Corporate Resources to finalise the proposals and work with the Head of HR to deliver the new structure.

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 5.6 Under the Employment Rights Act 1996 the Council is required to ensure that all employees' rights are protected during the restructure
- 5.7 Under the Equality Act 2010 the Council is required to ensure that the restructure does not discriminate against any employees based on any protected characteristics.
- 5.8 While not a specific requirement under the Act, conducting equality impact assessments is considered good practice and has been completed. These assessments help identify and address potential discrimination or adverse impacts on protected groups during the restructuring process.
- 5.9 All information related to the restructure will be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018. Confidentiality must be maintained to protect the privacy of all employees involved.

6. Background Papers

Vale of Glamorgan Council Digital Strategy 2023-2028