



# IT & DIGITAL STRATEGY

2023-2026

## Contents

1. Executive Summary.....	3
Purpose and Goals .....	3
2. Introduction .....	4
2.1 Background of the IT & Digital Service .....	4
2.2 Context within the UK and at Breckland Council.....	4
2.3 Alignment with Organisational Goals .....	4
3. Our Team Purpose .....	5
3.1 Mission Statement .....	5
3.2 Core Values .....	6
3.3 Strategic Alignment with Themes.....	6
3.4 Our Commitment .....	6
4. Strategic Themes.....	7
4.1 Theme 1 – Informed .....	7
4.2 Theme 2 – Supported .....	7
4.3 Theme 3 – Empowered.....	8
5. Technology Roadmap .....	8
5.1 Current Technology Landscape.....	8
5.2 Future Technology Trends and Opportunities.....	8
5.3 Implementation Plan .....	9
6. Governance and Compliance .....	10
6.1 Policies and Regulations .....	10
6.2 Risk Management .....	10
6.3 Security and Privacy.....	11
7. Performance Metrics .....	11
7.1 Key Metrics .....	11
7.2 Monitoring and Evaluation .....	11
7.3 Continuous Improvement.....	11
8. Stakeholder Engagement.....	12
8.1 Internal Collaboration .....	12
8.2 Community and Constituent Engagement .....	12
8.3 Partnerships and Collaboration .....	13
9. Conclusion.....	13
9.1 Summary .....	13
9.2 Next Steps .....	13

	<b>Last Modified</b>	<b>Last Modified By</b>	<b>Document Changes</b>
1.0	23/08/2023	Ben Meen	First draft
1.1	31/08/23	Ben Meen	Version control added

## 1. Executive Summary

In an era marked by technological advancement and digital transformation, this strategy sets forth a clear and cohesive vision for leveraging technology to enhance the lives of our residents and improve the efficiency of our operations.

The strategy is built upon a series of interrelated themes that reflect the core values and aspirations of our IT & Digital service. From enabling informed decision-making through robust data analysis to embracing innovation and collaboration with our community partners, this strategy seeks to position Breckland District Council at the forefront of digital innovation, enabling us to deliver the best and most cost-effective service possible.

The key pillars of our strategy include:

- **Informed Decision-Making:** Utilising technology to provide residents with seamless access to information and services and empowering our people to make timely and data-driven decisions.
- **Digital Inclusion:** Ensuring that all members of our community have the tools and skills necessary to participate in the digital world.
- **Sustainability:** Committing to environmentally responsible practices in our IT operations.
- **Innovation & Collaboration:** Fostering a culture of creativity and partnership to drive technological advancement.
- **Agility & Resilience:** Building a flexible and robust IT infrastructure that can adapt to emerging trends and challenges.

### Purpose and Goals

Our purpose is to enable Breckland to work smarter and more efficiently, using technology as a catalyst for positive change. We strive to provide high-quality, reliable, and user-friendly digital solutions that empower colleagues, members and residents to achieve their goals.

The overarching goals of this strategy are to:

- Enhance the quality of life for our residents through improved digital services.
- Support the Council's broader objectives by providing innovative and cost-effective technology solutions.
- Foster a culture of continuous improvement, learning, and adaptation within our IT & Digital service, making data-led decisions and optimising output.

The following sections will delve into the details of our strategic themes, technology roadmap, governance structures, performance metrics, and stakeholder engagement, providing a comprehensive view of our path forward.

## 2. Introduction

### 2.1 Background of the IT & Digital Service

In an increasingly connected world, the role of Information Technology and Digital Services within Breckland Council has evolved to become a cornerstone of our operations. Our IT & Digital service is more than a support function; it is a strategic partner, driving innovation and ensuring that technology is embedded seamlessly into the daily work of the Council.

From enhancing accessibility to delivering efficient digital solutions, our service plays a pivotal role in ensuring that Breckland remains at the leading edge of technological advancement, responsive to the needs of our residents, and prepared for the challenges of the future.

The IT & Digital Strategy 2023-26 is not merely a roadmap; it is a statement of our purpose and a reflection of our identity. It underscores our resolve to be leaders in digital innovation, acting as catalysts for change and ensuring that Breckland continues to be a place where people are Informed, Supported, and Empowered.

### 2.2 Context within the UK and at Breckland Council

The importance of IT & Digital's role is highlighted in the government's 2022-25 Roadmap for Digital and Data with its 5 challenges for public sector transformation. Challenges that this strategy seeks to address in particular are:

- Transformed public services that achieve the right outcomes
- Better data to power decision making
- Efficient, secure and sustainable technology
- Digital skills at scale
- A system that unlocks digital transformation

Breckland Council's mission to provide exceptional service to our community requires a robust and agile technological framework.

As part of our commitment to excellence, transparency, and community engagement, this strategy aligns with overarching Council objectives, such as improving service delivery, enhancing communication, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement and innovation.

### 2.3 Alignment with Organisational Goals

The themes of being Informed, Supported, and Empowered resonate not only within our IT & Digital service but also across the entire organisation in line with the Working Smarter theme from the Corporate Plan. The principles of Informed, Supported and Empowered are core to this strategy and have been aligned with the following strategic priorities within the Corporate Plan:

- **Informed**
  - We will develop a 'smarter working' organisation (strengthening our existing organisational intelligence), using data to shape and inform decisions.
  - We will transform our website, providing a frictionless user experience.
  
- **Supported**
  - We will rationalise our IT estate to improve service and reduce costs.
  - We will provide an exceptional customer service for residents, businesses, and partners by providing a simple user experience no matter how they choose to engage with us.
  - We will have a financially sustainable balanced budget in the short, medium, and long term that supports diversification of our investments.
  
- **Empowered**
  - We will maximise external funding income.
  - We will support and empower our people to be the best they can be through wellbeing support, development, and training.
  - We will promote our council to protect and enhance its reputation, helping us to attract and retain high-calibre staff, and making sure we are seen to be a partner of choice to work with others across the district and beyond.

## 3. Our Team Purpose

### 3.1 Mission Statement

We enable Breckland to work smarter and more efficiently, while also finding innovative ways to deliver services that meet the needs of our communities. Through the use of technology, we strive to empower our people with the tools and resources they need to achieve their goals, improve outcomes, and enhance quality of life. Our service is dedicated to providing high-quality, reliable, and user-friendly digital solutions that enable everyone to thrive in the digital age.

## 3.2 Core Values

Our core values shape the way we approach our work and guide our interactions with colleagues, members, residents, and partners. They reflect our commitment to excellence and our desire to create a positive impact through technology:

- **Integrity:** Upholding the highest ethical standards and transparency in all our actions.
- **Innovation:** Embracing new ideas and technologies to drive continuous improvement.
- **Inclusivity:** Ensuring that our digital services are accessible and meaningful to all members of our community.
- **Collaboration:** Working together with various stakeholders to achieve shared goals and maximise the value of technology.
- **Responsiveness:** Adapting quickly to emerging needs, challenges, and opportunities.

## 3.3 Strategic Alignment with Themes

Our mission and values are directly aligned with the overarching themes of this strategy:

- **Informed:** By providing accessible information and leveraging data, we facilitate informed decisions across the Council and the community.
- **Supported:** Our commitment to collaboration, innovation, and responsiveness ensures that technology serves as a robust support mechanism for all organisational functions.
- **Empowered:** Through inclusivity and empowerment, we foster a culture where technology is a tool for personal and professional growth, enabling individuals to achieve their aspirations.

## 3.4 Our Commitment

Our service is committed to demonstrating our values every day, translating them into tangible actions and outcomes. We recognise the transformative potential of technology and are dedicated to harnessing it to create a positive impact on the lives of our residents and the effectiveness of our operations.

Despite being a relatively small team, we believe that through effective prioritisation and focussing on projects that deliver results, we can help drive Breckland Council forward.

We firmly believe that our innovation and agile delivery of projects is a strategic strength, and having operated under a shared and outsourced model previously, we

believe that delivering projects as part of an effective and responsive internal team provides the best possible outcomes for the Council.

## 4. Strategic Themes

As part of the renewed IT & Digital Strategy, we have arranged our roadmap around the three themes of Informed, Supported and Empowered. Each of these themes is supported by a series of activities that in turn form the roadmap.

### 4.1 Theme 1 – Informed

“We ensure that residents are able to access the information and services as easily as possible and use data to help us make the right decisions at the right time.”

- **Website Development:** Building a new, responsive, up-to-date and mobile-first website to make information easily accessible for residents.
- **Structured Data:** Implementing a structured approach to data, including data warehousing, and incorporating business intelligence across the authority.
- **Actionable Reporting:** Developing data analysis skills to design role-based dashboards for effective performance monitoring and decision-making.
- **Cyber Security:** Staying abreast of the latest threats and technologies to ensure that our infrastructure is resilient and fit for purpose.

### 4.2 Theme 2 – Supported

“We acknowledge the core role of technology within the organisation and our role in supporting our people to incorporate technology into their workstreams.”

- **Search Engine Optimisation (SEO):** Utilising search engine optimisation and web analytics to market revenue-generating services and track marketing campaign effectiveness.
- **Embedding IT & Digital:** Ensuring IT&D consideration and involvement in procurement stages for digital products and infrastructure-dependent solutions.
- **Business Analyst Skills:** Developing Business Analyst skills within the service to support solution development and procurement.
- **Support Channel Rationalisation:** Building a knowledge base to facilitate user self-service and more accurate tracking and prioritisation of support queries.
- **Efficient Use of Development Resources:** Using project management tools to ensure the IT & Digital service is better able to estimate work, deliver against priorities and transparently communicate current workloads.



### 4.3 Theme 3 – Empowered

“We use technology and training to enable our users (both internal and external) to solve their issues and achieve their goals, regardless of technical or physical ability, time of day, or physical location.”

- **Accessibility as a Service:** Leveraging our top-performing accessibility position to offer affordable remediation services to other local authorities.
- **Innovation:** Upskilling users and changing processes to maximise existing technologies and implement emerging technologies like AI.
- **IT as a Core Competency:** Collaborating with HR to ensure IT competency is factored into recruitment processes.
- **More Effective Training:** Delivering effective, bite-sized training on mobile devices to encourage uptake of cybersecurity and digital skills initiatives.
- **Empowered Users:** Using digital tools to encourage innovation, giving our people mechanisms to share ideas, and ensuring those ideas are reviewed and responded to.

## 5. Technology Roadmap

### 5.1 Current Technology Landscape

Understanding our existing technological infrastructure is vital to shaping our future strategy. Our current landscape encompasses:

- **Infrastructure & Networking:** Robust network systems that facilitate secure and efficient communication.
- **Applications & Services:** A suite of applications tailored to support various Council functions and services.
- **Data Management:** Comprehensive data warehousing and analytics capabilities that enable data-driven decision-making.
- **Security & Compliance:** Established protocols and measures to safeguard our digital assets and ensure regulatory compliance.
- **Accessibility & User Experience:** Commitment to user-centred design, ensuring digital platforms are accessible to all users.

### 5.2 Future Technology Trends and Opportunities

As we look to the future, several key trends and opportunities emerge that align with our strategic themes of being Informed, Supported, and Empowered:

- **Artificial Intelligence (AI) & Machine Learning:** Leveraging AI to enhance predictive analytics, automate routine tasks, and drive innovation.
- **Cloud Computing:** Continuing to deploy cloud-based solutions for scalability, flexibility, and collaboration.
- **Internet of Things (IoT):** Integrating IoT devices to improve service delivery, operational efficiency, and community engagement.
- **Mobile & Remote Technologies:** Enhancing remote working capabilities and mobile service delivery to increase accessibility and convenience.
- **Sustainability & Green IT:** Adopting environmentally responsible practices within our IT operations.

### 5.3 Implementation Plan

Our Technology Roadmap translates strategic vision into actionable steps, aligning with our themes and objectives:

- **Short-Term (1-2 Years):**
  - Implement a new responsive website.
  - Enhance data analytics and reporting capabilities across the organisation by building core data capabilities and pursuing a few 'quick win' opportunities.
  - Strengthen Disaster Recovery procedures and build upon previous development work.
  - Expand training and development initiatives to upskill our people on available tools and how to use them.
  - Integrate generative AI tools in an ethical and secure way into processes.
  - Strengthen project processes within Digital to ensure effective requirement gathering, solution design and project delivery.
  - Develop products and services within the Digital service that exploit our strengths and can be traded externally (accessibility etc.).
  - Establish a strong presence in sustainability and green IT practices.
  - Continue to maintain Public Services Network (PSN) compliance to ensure we maintain the highest possible security standards.
  - Maintain a fit-for-purpose ICT Information Security policy that is reviewed annually.
  - Continually evaluate and adapt to emerging technologies and trends.
- **Medium-Term (2-4 Years):**
  - Have a majority of services delivered via the cloud.
  - Introduce a single sign on system whereby all council services and the status of requests can be viewed through an optional user account.
  - Integrate data analysis best practice across the organisation at all levels.
- **Long-Term (4+ Years):**
  - Integrate IoT into service delivery and operations.

Our Technology Roadmap serves as a blueprint for the IT & Digital journey ahead, defining the path from our current state to a future where technology is a driving force behind Breckland Council's success. By aligning with our strategic themes and adapting to future trends, we are positioning ourselves to be proactive, innovative, and responsive to the needs of our community.

This roadmap is not static; it will be revisited and refined as we progress and as new technologies emerge, ensuring that we remain agile and aligned with our

commitment to making Breckland a place where everyone is Informed, Supported, and Empowered through technology.

## 6. Governance and Compliance

Governance and compliance are core to our IT & Digital Strategy, reflecting our commitment to responsible technology management, transparency, and accountability. By embedding these principles into our strategic planning and daily operations, we foster a culture of integrity that aligns with our core themes of being Informed, Supported, and Empowered.

Our ongoing efforts to mitigate risks, uphold security, and adhere to legal and ethical standards not only protect our technology assets, but reinforce the confidence of our residents, members, officers, and partners in Breckland Council's digital leadership.

### 6.1 Policies and Regulations

A robust governance framework is essential to ensure that our technology initiatives align with legal, ethical, and organisational standards. Key aspects include:

- **ICT Information Security Policy:** Guidelines for the appropriate use of technology within the Council, including devices, applications, and data access.
- **Data Protection Policy:** Measures to safeguard personal and sensitive data, in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and other relevant laws.
- **Accessibility Standards:** Commitment to adhering to accessibility guidelines, ensuring that digital platforms are inclusive and user-friendly and aligned to the latest WCAG standards.

### 6.2 Risk Management

Effective risk management is integral to our technology strategy, encompassing:

- **Risk Assessment:** Regular evaluation of potential risks and vulnerabilities within our technology environment, including cybersecurity threats, data breaches, and system failures.
- **Mitigation Strategies:** Implementation of measures to minimise risks, such as firewalls, encryption, multi-factor authentication, and regular security updates.
- **Disaster Recovery Planning:** Comprehensive plans to ensure continuity of services and data integrity in the event of unexpected disruptions or system failures.
- **Monitoring and Reporting:** Ongoing monitoring of risk factors, with clear reporting mechanisms to escalate and address issues promptly.

### 6.3 Security and Privacy

Security and privacy are paramount to maintaining trust and integrity in our digital initiatives:

- **Security Protocols:** Implementation of robust security measures to protect against unauthorised access, malware, phishing, and other threats.
- **Privacy by Design:** Integration of privacy considerations into the development and design of digital solutions, ensuring that personal information is handled with the utmost care and confidentiality.
- **Compliance Audits:** Regular Public Services Network (PSN) and other audits to assess compliance with security standards, regulatory requirements, and internal policies, identifying areas for improvement.

## 7. Performance Metrics

### 7.1 Key Metrics

To assess the success of our strategic initiatives and ensure alignment with our core themes of being Informed, Supported, and Empowered, the following KPIs have been identified and incorporated into the Council's Performance Framework:

- **User Engagement & Satisfaction:** Tracking user interaction with digital platforms and measuring satisfaction levels through surveys, feedback, and usability testing.
- **System Availability & Performance:** Monitoring uptime, response times, and overall performance of critical IT systems and applications.
- **Cybersecurity Compliance:** Regular assessments of security protocols, incident response times, and adherence to cybersecurity standards.
- **Accessibility Compliance:** Evaluating adherence to accessibility standards and guidelines to ensure inclusivity across digital platforms.
- **Project Delivery & Efficiency:** Measuring project timelines, budget adherence, and delivery efficiency for technology initiatives.

### 7.2 Monitoring and Evaluation

An effective monitoring and evaluation framework will be implemented to regularly assess progress against our performance metrics:

- **Regular Reporting:** Monthly and quarterly reports will be generated to provide insights into performance metrics, enabling timely decision-making.
- **Dashboard Visualisation:** Development of interactive dashboards to provide real-time insights into KPIs, facilitating a more dynamic understanding of performance.
- **Stakeholder Reviews:** Regular reviews with key stakeholders, including Council members, Breckland officers, and community representatives, to gather feedback and assess alignment with strategic objectives.

### 7.3 Continuous Improvement

Our approach to performance measurement is rooted in a commitment to continuous improvement:

- **Adaptive Planning:** Regularly revisiting our metrics and strategies in response to changing needs, trends, and insights gleaned from performance data.
- **Lessons Learned:** Capturing and analysing lessons learned from projects and initiatives to inform future efforts and enhance efficiency and effectiveness.
- **Innovation & Experimentation:** Encouraging a culture of experimentation and innovation to explore new ways to enhance performance and meet strategic objectives.

Performance Metrics are essential to ensuring that our IT & Digital Strategy translates into tangible results and positive impacts for Breckland Council and its community. Through careful monitoring, evaluation, and a commitment to continuous improvement, we create a culture of accountability and excellence that resonates with our mission to be Informed, Supported, and Empowered.

By aligning our performance measurement with our strategic themes, we foster a data-driven approach that enables us to adapt, innovate, and continually strive to enhance the value and effectiveness of our technology initiatives.

## 8. Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder Engagement is a key element of our IT & Digital Strategy, reflecting our commitment to a collaborative, inclusive, and community-centred approach. By actively engaging with internal teams, our community, and external partners, we foster a sense of shared ownership and alignment that enhances the impact and success of our technology initiatives.

Through open dialogue, continuous feedback, and strategic collaboration, we ensure that our technology solutions are responsive, relevant, and aligned with the needs and aspirations of all stakeholders. This collaborative ethos resonates with our overarching themes of being Informed, Supported, and Empowered, guiding our efforts to make Breckland a place where technology truly serves the community.

### 8.1 Internal Collaboration

Effective collaboration within the Council is vital to align technology initiatives with organisational goals and ensure seamless integration into daily operations.

- **Cross-Service Coordination:** Regular dialogue and collaboration with various services to understand specific needs, align technology solutions, and support integration.
- **Leadership Alignment:** Engaging with Council leadership to ensure strategic alignment, secure necessary support and resources, and foster a culture of technological innovation.
- **IT Service Development:** Ongoing training, skill development, and collaborative planning within the IT & Digital service to enhance capabilities and promote a cohesive approach.

### 8.2 Community and Constituent Engagement

Our residents and the broader community are at the heart of our strategy. Their needs, preferences, and feedback guide our technology decisions.

- **Community Outreach & Consultation:** Engaging with our community to gather input on digital services, accessibility, and technology preferences.
- **Accessibility & Inclusion:** Ensuring that all community members, regardless of technical or physical ability, can access and benefit from our digital platforms.
- **Transparency & Communication:** Providing regular updates and transparent communication about technology initiatives, progress, and opportunities for community involvement.

### 8.3 Partnerships and Collaboration

Building relationships with external partners, including local businesses, educational institutions, technology providers, and other councils, can enhance our technological capabilities and innovation.

- **Strategic Partnerships:** Exploring collaboration with technology companies, universities, and industry experts to leverage expertise, resources, and innovation.
- **Local Business Engagement:** Working with local businesses and development colleagues to understand their technology needs and explore opportunities for collaboration and support.
- **Inter-Council Collaboration:** Engaging with other authorities to share best practices, insights, and collaborate on shared technology challenges and opportunities.

## 9. Conclusion

### 9.1 Summary

The IT & Digital Strategy for Breckland Council (2023-26) represents a comprehensive and forward-looking approach to leveraging technology for the benefit of our residents, members, officers, and the broader community. Guided by our core themes of being Informed, Supported, and Empowered, this strategy encapsulates our vision for a digitally innovative and responsive Council.

Through strategic themes, a technology roadmap, governance structures, performance metrics, and stakeholder engagement, we have outlined a clear path to transform how technology serves Breckland. Our focus on accessibility, innovation, collaboration, and continuous improvement underscores our commitment to excellence and alignment with the values and goals of our Council.

### 9.2 Next Steps

As we embark on this exciting journey, the following next steps will be crucial to turning our strategic vision into reality:

- **Implementation Planning:** Developing detailed project plans, timelines, and resource allocations for each initiative within the strategy.
- **Stakeholder Communication:** Communicating the strategy to all stakeholders, ensuring awareness, understanding, and opportunities for engagement.
- **Monitoring & Evaluation Framework:** Establishing the processes and tools for ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and reporting on progress.

- **Continuous Engagement & Feedback:** Maintaining open channels of communication and feedback with all stakeholders to ensure alignment, responsiveness, and continuous improvement.
- **Resourcing:** Review whether existing resource levels and skills are sufficient to support the delivery of both this strategy and the wider ambitions of the Council.