



Digital Strategy

2026 – 2030

A people-centred approach to digital transformation



Foreword

Shropshire stands at a pivotal moment. As demand for services rise, financial pressures intensify, and public expectations continue to evolve, the council must transform how it works, how it delivers services, and how it uses data, technology and human expertise to make better decisions and better outcomes possible.

This Digital Strategy sets out a bold, practical and people-centred vision for the future of public services in Shropshire. Built on the principle of People-Powered, Technology-Driven, it recognises that digital transformation is not about technology alone, but about improving lives, strengthening communities and creating a council capable of sustainable, modern service delivery.

At its heart, this strategy is about:

- Designing services around people's real needs
- Removing complexity and improving access
- Strengthening digital skills across the workforce
- Modernising the legacy systems that hold us back
- Using automation, AI and data responsibly
- Building secure, resilient foundations
- Working in partnership across health, care, voluntary and community sectors
- Creating long-term financial sustainability

By 2030, Shropshire Council will be a more modern, connected, and confident organisation, providing efficient, straightforward, secure, and integrated services that leverage data and technology to prevent escalation and improve outcomes. Staff will be equipped with the necessary skills, tools, systems, and organisational culture needed to succeed. Communities will benefit from improved access, easier interactions, and a council that is more responsive and transparent.

This strategy is a commitment to change and a promise to our residents and staff that Shropshire will meet the challenges ahead, invest wisely, and build a digital future that works for everyone.

Introduction

Shropshire Council is at a critical point. Communities demand on services is increasing, the cost of delivering public services continues to rise, and expectations of digital access are evolving rapidly. At the same time, the pressures on local government finance require new approaches that are more efficient, more preventative, and more joined up across services.

Digital transformation is central to the council's long-term future. However, this strategy makes clear that digital transformation is not a technology project, it is a people centred transformation of how we work. It is about designing services that work better for residents, supporting staff to succeed, modernising our systems, using data ethically, and ensuring we meet the challenges of financial recovery with confidence and ambition. This includes recognising the risks technology can pose for vulnerable residents and ensuring services are safe by design.

This document sets out our digital vision for 2026–2030 and the priorities that will help us build a council that is future ready, sustainable and trusted.



Sam Williams
Service Director Enabling



David Baker
Head of Service – Automation and
Technology

What Makes This Strategy Different

This is not a technology strategy. It is a delivery strategy for how Shropshire Council will reduce cost, manage demand and improve outcomes through disciplined use of digital, data and automation.

It is built on a simple principle, digital transformation must deliver measurable impact, not activity.

This approach moves the council from technology projects to sustained organisational change.

What makes this approach distinctive is:

- A single, integrated digital portfolio bringing together service redesign, technology, data, AI, and automation under one governance model
- A clear prioritisation framework ensuring investment is focused on statutory risk, financial sustainability, and demand reduction
- Benefits-led delivery, every initiative must define, track and evidence measurable value
- Design authority and standards ensuring consistency, reuse and reduced fragmentation
- A strong focus on prevention using data and insight to intervene earlier and reduce long-term demand
- Digital is embedded in service accountability, transformation is owned by services, not delivered to them

Our Vision:

People-Powered, Technology-Driven

Our vision is simple:

“Shropshire will be a place where people flourish. Supported by services that are straightforward, joined up, and tailored to their needs, powered by our people and enabled by secure, innovative technology.”

The council will embrace a 'digital by choice, human when it matters' approach, delivering more efficient, secure, and predictive services that use data wisely and cost less to provide. This transformation will not only improve outcomes for residents and enhance staff experience but also achieve significant recurring savings by the financial year 2029/30.

People-Powered means:

Placing our residents, communities, and staff at the heart of every digital initiative. We are committed to co-designing services with those who use them, ensuring their voices shape the solutions we create. This involves engaging regularly with a diverse cross-section of our community, seeking feedback, and acting on it to continually improve our services.

We strive to break down barriers to digital inclusion, making sure that our services are accessible to everyone. Our approach values empathy and understanding, focusing on the actual lived experiences of residents rather than relying on assumptions. By empowering staff through ongoing training and support, we foster a culture where everyone can contribute ideas and feel ownership of the transformation journey.

Ultimately, our people-powered approach builds trust and strengthens relationships between the council and the communities we serve, ensuring that digital change benefits all and leaves no one behind.

Technology-Driven means:

Being technology-driven means more than simply adopting the latest digital tools. It is about embedding secure, modern, and interoperable platforms at the foundation of our services. This approach ensures that our systems can communicate seamlessly and adapt to changing needs over time. We are committed to scaling automation and artificial intelligence in a responsible way, streamlining routine tasks so staff can focus on work that requires human insight and empathy.

It is about providing our staff with the right tools to work efficiently and collaboratively, wherever they are based. By investing in resilient and sustainable digital infrastructure, we build the capacity to withstand future challenges and support long-term growth. This means prioritising the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of our data and systems, ensuring that both our staff and the communities we serve can have confidence in our digital services.

Together, these principles create a digital future that is both human and high-performing. This vision is not just about adopting new technology; it's about reshaping the council and our partners to be more efficient, inclusive, and forward-thinking. It's about creating a council that doesn't just respond to needs but anticipates them, breaking down barriers and building a society where every individual can thrive.

Why We Must Change

Our LGA Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC), Improvement Plan, and the administration's new direction for the council all indicate one clear conclusion, we cannot continue with our current approach.

Financial Pressures

Like all councils across the country, Shropshire is currently facing considerable financial challenges, with increasing demands on services and tightening budgets. We need to ensure we can remain resilient in the face of economic challenges, adapt to changing circumstances, and continue to support our communities in the years ahead.



Rising Demand and Complexity

Shropshire's population is ageing, with many residents living in rural and geographically dispersed areas. This creates increasing pressure on health, care, and support services, which are already struggling to keep up with the growing and complex needs of the community. At the same time, resources are becoming ever more constrained, making it challenging to deliver high-quality, accessible services to everyone who needs them.



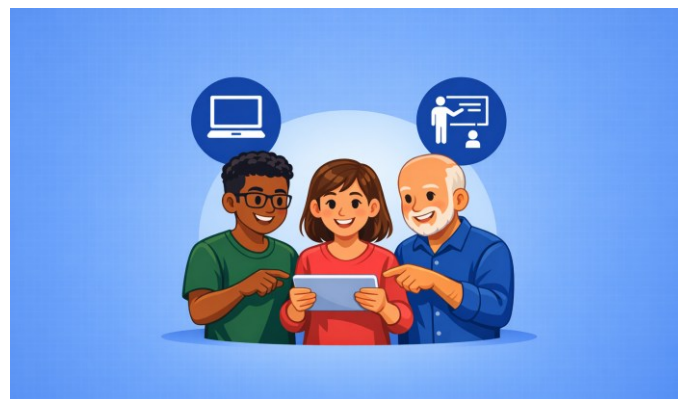
Expectations for Modern Services

Residents expect simple, accessible, digital-first interactions like those they experience in banking and retail.



Need for a Skilled, Confident Workforce

Staff need modern tools, training, and ways of working to deliver the council's priorities effectively.



The Cyber and Resilience Imperative

The United Kingdom is in a state of heightened security. Establishing a robust and secure digital infrastructure is essential to ensuring the confidentiality, integrity and availability of our data and systems.

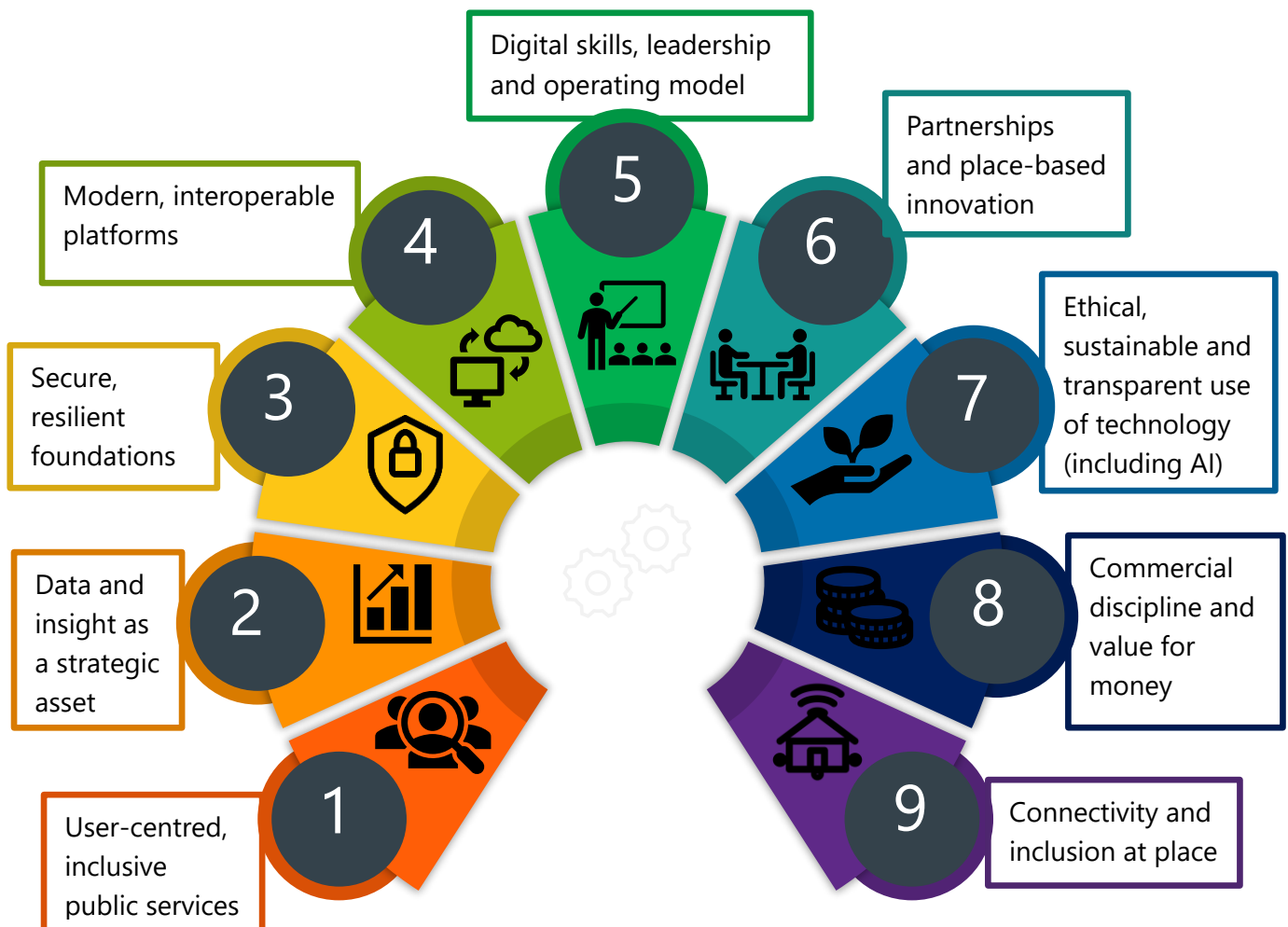


Guiding Principles

Our approach follows 9 principles. These principles reflect national strategies, including the Central Digital and Data Office (CDDO), the Department for Science Innovation and Technology (DSIT), and the Local Government Association (LGA). They Focus on outcomes, “Better services, lower costs, stronger security.”

These principles will be actively enforced through standards, design assurance, and governance. All digital activity must align to them.

They are not optional and will be applied consistently across all services, programmes and technology decisions to ensure coherence, reuse and value for money.





1) User-centred, inclusive public services

Plain message: “We design services around real people, making them simple to use, accessible to all, and focused on resolving needs at the earliest opportunity. Services will be designed with safeguarding in mind, including risks of technology-facilitated abuse and coercive control.”

Why it matters: Residents, staff and Members rely on council services at important and often complex moments. Poorly designed services increase demand, create avoidable contact and make it harder for people to get the support they need. Designing services around user needs improves access, reduces failure demand and supports better outcomes while lowering cost-to-serve.

Link to policy:

This principle aligns directly with the Government Design Principles, particularly “Start with user needs”, “This is for everyone” and “Design with data”, which establish that public services must be based on real user needs, inclusive by default and continuously improved through insight.

It also reflects the Technology Code of Practice requirement to “make things accessible and inclusive” and “define user needs”, ensuring that technology and services are designed to meet the needs of all users from the outset.

At a sector level, this supports the Local Government Association’s principle of “user-centric and inclusive services”, which emphasises designing services around residents rather than organisational structures.

Together, these frameworks establish a clear national expectation that public services should be user-centred, inclusive and designed to deliver better outcomes, not just digital access.

User-centred design will be treated as a mandatory standard for all service transformation, not an optional design approach.



2) Data and insight as a strategic asset

Plain message: “We use data to inform decisions, anticipate need and act earlier, not just to report on what has already happened.”

Why it matters: Many council services currently rely on reactive models, responding to demand at the point of escalation. Without effective use of data, opportunities for early intervention are missed, driving higher demand, increased cost and poorer outcomes. Using data to support proactive decision-making enables earlier action, more targeted services and improved value for money.

Link to policy:

This principle aligns with the Government Design Principle “Design with data”, which emphasises using real-world data and continuous insight to inform service design and decision-making.

It also reflects the Technology Code of Practice requirement to “make better use of data” and “define user needs”, ensuring that data is used actively to shape services and improve outcomes rather than simply for reporting.

At a sector level, this supports the Local Government Association’s digitalisation framework, which identifies data and analytics as a core enabler for improving service delivery, decision-making and community outcomes.

This approach is consistent with national direction, including MHCLG’s Local Digital agenda, which emphasises the need to unlock the value of data to support preventative, integrated and more efficient public services.

Together, these frameworks establish a clear expectation that councils move from retrospective reporting to proactive, insight-led decision-making.

Data will be treated as a strategic asset, with clear ownership, governance and accountability for how it is managed and used across the organisation.



3) Secure, resilient foundations

Plain message: “We build security, resilience and recovery into services and technology from the outset, protecting residents’ data and ensuring services remain available when they are needed.”

Why it matters: Council services rely heavily on digital systems to support critical activities, including care, safeguarding, finance and customer services. Without secure and resilient foundations, cyber incidents can disrupt services, delay support and impact vulnerable residents. Embedding security and resilience from the start reduces risk, protects public trust and ensures services can continue operating safely even in the face of disruption.

Link to policy:

This principle aligns with the Cyber Assessment Framework (CAF), which sets out a structured, outcome-based approach to managing cyber risk and protecting essential services. In particular, it reflects CAF Objectives A (Managing security risk), B (Protecting against cyber attack) and D (Minimising the impact of cyber incidents), ensuring that governance, protection, detection and recovery are embedded into service design and operation.

It also supports the UK Government Cyber Security Strategy 2022–2030, which positions cyber resilience as essential to maintaining public services and trust, and emphasises security being built into systems “by design” rather than applied retrospectively.

At a sector level, this aligns with the Local Government Association’s principle of “cyber-resilient services”, ensuring councils can withstand and recover from cyber threats while maintaining continuity of essential functions.

Together, these frameworks establish a clear expectation that cyber security and resilience are integral to service delivery, not optional technical controls.

Cyber resilience will be treated as a critical organisational capability, with clear accountability and assurance at all levels of the council.



4) Modern, interoperable platforms – ‘fix the plumbing’

Plain message: “We replace fragmented, outdated systems with modern, interoperable platforms so services can work together seamlessly.”

Why it matters: Many council services rely on disconnected systems that do not share data effectively, creating duplication, delays and fragmented user experiences. This increases cost, limits insight and makes it harder for services to work together. Without modern, interoperable platforms, digital transformation is constrained and services cannot operate efficiently or in a joined-up way. Addressing this improves service integration, reduces complexity and supports better outcomes for residents.

Link to policy:

This principle aligns directly with the Local Digital Declaration commitment to “fix our plumbing”, reducing reliance on inflexible legacy systems and adopting modular, standards-based technology that enables integration and reuse.

It is also supported by the Technology Code of Practice, particularly the requirements to “make use of open standards”, “integrate and adapt technology”, and “share, reuse and collaborate”, which promote interoperability, flexibility and reduced supplier lock-in.

This reflects national learning from the MHCLG Local Digital programme, which highlights that lack of interoperability between systems is a key barrier to effective data use, service integration and transformation across local government.

Together, these frameworks establish a clear expectation that councils move away from siloed systems towards open, connected platforms that enable integrated services and better use of data.

Interoperability and open standards will be treated as mandatory requirements for all system design and procurement.



5) Digital skills, leadership and operating model

Plain message: “We build digital, data and technology capability across the organisation, with leaders accountable for outcomes and services supported by multidisciplinary teams.”

Why it matters: Digital transformation cannot be delivered by technology teams alone. Without strong leadership, clear accountability and the right capability across services, transformation becomes fragmented, slow and dependent on specialist teams. This limits impact, increases delivery risk and prevents the council from realising financial and service benefits. Building capability and accountability across the organisation ensures that transformation is owned by services, embedded in day-to-day delivery and sustainable over time.

Link to policy:

This principle aligns with the Local Digital Declaration commitment to “demonstrate digital leadership” and create the conditions for genuine organisational transformation, including embedding digital ways of working across the workforce.

It also reflects the Technology Code of Practice requirement to “define user needs” and “share, reuse and collaborate”, supporting multidisciplinary teams and service-led ownership of delivery rather than siloed approaches.

At a national level, it supports the Central Digital and Data Office (CDDO) mission to build “digital skills at scale” and the expectation set out in the DSIT Blueprint for modern digital government that digital leadership should be embedded at executive level across organisations.

This is reinforced by the Local Government Association’s digitalisation framework, which identifies leadership, organisational capability and collaboration as core enablers for successful digital transformation.

Together, these frameworks establish a clear expectation that digital capability, leadership and accountability must be embedded across the organisation, not contained within specialist teams.

Digital transformation will be delivered through services, not to services.



6) Partnerships and place-based innovation

Plain message: “We work with partners across health, care, voluntary and community sectors to deliver joined-up services, share insight and improve outcomes for residents.”

Why it matters: Residents often interact with multiple organisations to meet their needs, particularly in areas such as health, care and community support. Without effective partnership working, services can become fragmented, duplicated and harder to access, leading to inefficiency, increased demand and poorer outcomes. Working in a coordinated, place-based way enables earlier intervention, more effective use of resources and better support for individuals and communities.

Link to policy:

This principle aligns with the Local Digital Declaration commitment to redesign services around user needs and “design safe, secure and useful ways of sharing information” to support vulnerable residents and improve outcomes through collaboration.

It also reflects the Technology Code of Practice requirement to “share, reuse and collaborate” and “integrate and adapt technology”, supporting joined-up delivery across organisational boundaries.

At a national level, this supports the DSIT Blueprint for modern digital government, which emphasises the need for joined-up public services and shared digital and data infrastructure across organisations.

This is reinforced by the Local Government Association’s digitalisation framework, which identifies partnership, collaboration and connectivity as essential enablers for improving services and delivering better outcomes at place level.

Together, these frameworks establish a clear expectation that councils work collaboratively across organisational boundaries, using shared data, platforms and approaches to deliver integrated, citizen-focused services.

Partnership working will be treated as a core delivery model, not an optional enhancement, with shared objectives, data and accountability across organisations.



7) Ethical, sustainable and transparent use of technology (including AI)

Plain message: “We use technology, data and AI responsibly, ensuring decisions are fair, transparent, secure and sustainable.”

Why it matters: The use of technology, data and AI in public services carries significant responsibility. Without clear governance and oversight, there is a risk of unintended bias, reduced transparency and loss of public trust. Ensuring that technology is used ethically and sustainably protects residents, supports fair decision-making and maintains confidence in how services are delivered.

Link to policy:

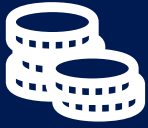
This principle aligns with the Technology Code of Practice, particularly the requirements to “make things secure”, “make privacy integral” and “make your technology sustainable”, ensuring that ethical, secure and environmentally responsible practices are built into all technology decisions.

It also reflects the Local Government Association’s digitalisation framework principles of “ethical”, “sustainable” and “transparent use of technology and data”, supporting fair, accountable and responsible innovation.

At a national level, this supports the DSIT Blueprint for modern digital government, which emphasises harnessing AI for public good while ensuring transparency, accountability and responsible use.

Together, these frameworks establish a clear expectation that emerging technologies, including AI, are used in a way that is fair, explainable, proportionate and aligned to public sector values.

All use of AI and advanced technology will be subject to clear governance, oversight and accountability, with decisions explainable and open to scrutiny.



8) Commercial discipline and value for money

Plain message: “We manage technology and suppliers strategically, avoiding lock-in, reducing long-term cost and ensuring value for money for residents.”

Why it matters: Technology and supplier decisions have long-term financial and operational consequences. Poor procurement, inflexible contracts and dependence on single suppliers can increase cost, limit flexibility and constrain the council’s ability to transform services. Taking a disciplined, outcome-focused approach ensures that investment delivers value, reduces risk and supports sustainable service delivery.

Link to policy:

This principle aligns with the Digital, Data and Technology Playbook, which promotes outcome-based procurement, effective supplier management and reducing dependency on legacy systems through structured remediation and commercial strategy.

It also reflects the Technology Code of Practice requirements to “define your purchasing strategy”, “be open and use open source”, and “make use of open standards”, ensuring systems are flexible, interoperable and not dependent on single suppliers.

At a sector level, this supports the Local Digital Declaration commitment to “fix our plumbing” and move away from expensive, inflexible technology towards modular, reusable solutions that provide better value for the public sector.

Together, these frameworks establish a clear expectation that councils take a strategic, whole-life view of technology investment, balancing cost, risk, flexibility and long-term value.

Technology investment will be managed on a whole-life basis, with clear accountability for value, risk and outcomes.



9) Connectivity and inclusion at place scale

Plain message: “We ensure residents and communities have access to reliable, affordable connectivity, enabling them to access services, participate fully in society and benefit from digital opportunities.”

Why it matters: Access to reliable connectivity is now essential for accessing public services, education, employment and community support. Without it, residents’ risk being excluded from digital services and opportunities, widening inequality and limiting economic growth. Improving connectivity supports inclusion, enables service transformation and ensures that digital change benefits all communities across Shropshire.

Link to policy:

This principle aligns with the Local Government Association’s digitalisation framework, which identifies “connectivity” and “economic productivity and growth” as key enablers for thriving communities and digitally enabled places.

It also reflects national direction from the DSIT Blueprint for modern digital government, which emphasises the importance of strong digital infrastructure to support inclusive, connected public services and economic development.

This is reinforced by the Local Digital Declaration, which highlights the need to create the conditions for modern, connected public services through shared infrastructure, data and collaboration across organisations.

Together, these frameworks establish a clear expectation that connectivity is a foundational enabler of digital inclusion, service access and place-based economic growth.

Connectivity will be treated as a core enabler of service delivery, inclusion and economic growth, particularly in rural and hard-to-reach communities.

Strategic Priorities

Priority 1: Connected, Preventative and User-Centred Public Services

Residents experience council services as simple, joined up and accessible, with support provided early to prevent escalation and reduce avoidable demand.

Shropshire Council delivers services that people rely on at important moments in their lives, including housing, care, safeguarding and community support. However, many services remain fragmented, process-heavy and reactive, requiring residents to navigate multiple systems, repeat information and engage at points of crisis rather than earlier intervention. Without transformation, this model will continue to drive avoidable demand, increase cost-to-serve and place additional pressure on already constrained services.

This priority shifts the council from fragmented, reactive service delivery to a model where services are designed end-to-end around user needs, supported by digital, data and automation to intervene earlier, reduce failure demand and improve outcomes. Digital is not an add on, it's how we redesign services to work differently.

What we will do

- Redesign priority services end-to-end based on user need, removing unnecessary complexity and duplication
- Create joined-up digital journeys that span organisational boundaries and reduce hand-offs between services
- Shift from reactive transactions to earlier intervention and prevention using digital access, triage and communication
- Reduce avoidable contact and failure demand through clearer processes, automation and improved service design
- Ensure consistent digital standards across services, aligned to Government Design Principles
- Provide clear, accessible and inclusive digital routes, while maintaining strong non-digital support where needed
- Ensure digital services are designed to be safe to use in contexts of domestic abuse, including appropriate controls for visibility, notifications, shared access and safeguarding escalation
- Use real-time data and insight to improve responsiveness, track service performance and continuously improve user experience

Priority 2: Secure, Standardised and Resilient Technology Foundations

A modern, secure and resilient technology foundation that reduces organisational risk, supports reliable public services and enables sustainable digital transformation.

The Council is increasingly dependent on digital systems to deliver critical services, including care, safeguarding, finance and customer operations. However, legacy systems, fragmented architecture and inconsistent standards increase complexity, cost and exposure to service disruption. Without a clear shift to modern, standardised platforms, this technical debt will continue to constrain transformation, increase cyber risk and undermine service reliability.

This priority establishes technology foundations as a core organisational capability, not a back-office concern. It ensures that security, resilience, interoperability and scalability are designed in from the outset, enabling the council to modernise services safely and at pace. Technology foundations will be treated as critical infrastructure for the council, requiring the same level of discipline, investment and assurance as any other essential service.

This priority is underpinned by the council's Cyber Strategy 2026–2030, ensuring that security and resilience are integral to all technology and digital change. The two strategies operate together, with Digital setting direction for transformation and Cyber ensuring that transformation is delivered safely, resiliently and with confidence.

What we will do

- Replace legacy systems with modern, secure and interoperable platforms, reducing complexity and technical debt
- Standardise core technology components including infrastructure, networks, identity and access management
- Embed secure-by-design principles across all technology, architecture and change activity
- Adopt consistent architectural standards to ensure systems integrate effectively and data flows across services
- Strengthen cyber resilience in line with the Cyber Assessment Framework (CAF), ensuring protection, detection and recovery capabilities are in place
- Build scalable, cloud-based platforms that support automation, AI and data-driven services
- Improve business continuity and disaster recovery arrangements, ensuring critical services can be restored quickly and safely

Priority 3: Data-Driven, Preventative and Insight-Led Services

Data is used as a strategic asset to anticipate need, support earlier intervention and improve outcomes, reducing long-term demand on services.

In key service areas such as health, care and safeguarding, early intervention has a significant impact on outcomes. However, much of the current operating model remains reactive, relying on service contact at the point of escalation rather than insight-led prevention. Without a step-change in how data is used, the council will continue to face rising demand, increasing cost and reduced capacity to intervene early and effectively.

This priority moves the organisation from retrospective reporting to real-time insight and forward-looking decision-making. Data will be used to identify risk earlier, target support more effectively and enable services to act before issues escalate. This is not about producing more data, it is about using data to fundamentally change how services operate. Prevention through data will be a primary driver of financial sustainability, enabling the council to reduce cost while improving outcomes.

This priority is underpinned by the council's Data Quality Strategy, which sets out a structured, organisation-wide approach to data governance, quality improvement and accountability. This includes defined ownership of critical data sets, a formal governance model, and a continuous improvement approach to data quality aligned to the Government Data Quality Framework. Together, these strategies ensure that data is trusted, consistent and usable across services, enabling predictive insight, integrated service delivery and evidence-led decision-making.

What we will do

- Establish clear data governance, ownership and accountability to ensure data is trusted, accessible and used consistently
- Develop a unified data architecture that enables integration, sharing and reuse of data across services
- Strengthen analytics capability to provide actionable insight, not just reporting
- Use predictive insight to identify and support individuals and communities earlier, particularly in high-demand services
- Enable secure, appropriate data sharing with partners across health, care and community services to support joined-up delivery
- Embed data into operational decision-making, performance management and service design
- Ensure transparency, ethical use and clear oversight of data, maintaining public trust and confidence

Priority 4: Digitally Confident Leadership, Staff and Ways of Working

Digital capability is embedded across the organisation, with leaders accountable for outcomes and staff supported to work effectively in a modern, data and technology enabled environment.

Delivering sustainable, high-quality services depends on more than technology. It requires confident leadership, clear accountability and a workforce equipped to operate in increasingly digital, data-driven and automated service models. Without this shift, digital transformation will remain fragmented, dependent on specialist teams and limited in its ability to deliver meaningful service improvement or financial sustainability.

This priority ensures digital as a core organisational capability. Leaders will be accountable for transformation within their services, supported by multidisciplinary teams and modern ways of working. Staff will be enabled to use digital tools, data and automation as part of everyday practice, not as additional or optional activity.

Staff success is central to digital success. Digital transformation will be delivered through services, not to services.

What we will do

- Establish clear accountability for digital outcomes within services, with leaders responsible for adoption, performance and benefits
- Develop digital, data and technology capability across the workforce, aligned to role and responsibility
- Embed multidisciplinary, cross-functional teams combining service, digital, data and technology expertise
- Support leaders to understand and actively lead digital transformation, including data, technology and automation opportunities
- Provide modern tools, platforms and working environments that enable efficient, flexible and collaborative working
- Foster a culture of continuous improvement, experimentation and learning, supporting safe innovation and evidence-led change
- Ensure digital and data skills development is targeted, practical and aligned to service outcomes rather than generic training

Priority 5: Responsible, Scalable Innovation, AI and Automation

Automation and artificial intelligence are used at scale to improve service efficiency, reduce cost-to-serve and support better, more consistent decision-making.

Increasing demand, financial pressure and workforce constraints mean traditional approaches to service delivery are no longer sufficient. Automation and AI offer significant opportunities to improve productivity, reduce manual effort and enhance service quality. However, without a structured and disciplined approach, innovation risks becoming fragmented, low-impact and poorly governed.

This priority establishes automation and AI as core organisational capabilities, focused on delivering measurable outcomes rather than isolated pilots. Innovation will be targeted at high-impact use cases, aligned to service priorities and delivered in a controlled, ethical and transparent way. Innovation will be treated as a disciplined capability, not an experimental activity. AI and automation will be used to augment staff capability, not replace professional judgement. Automation and AI will be critical to maintaining sustainable services in the context of rising demand and constrained workforce capacity.

Where appropriate, Shropshire Council will contribute learning and best practice to the wider local government sector, helping to shape how AI and automation are applied responsibly in public services.

What we will do

- Deploy automation at scale to reduce manual, repetitive tasks, improving efficiency, consistency and service speed
- Apply AI to support decision-making, triage and demand management, particularly in high-volume and high-pressure services
- Prioritise use cases that deliver measurable impact, including cost reduction, demand reduction and improved service outcomes
- Move from isolated pilots to reusable, scalable components that can be applied across multiple services
- Establish clear governance, oversight and ethical frameworks for the use of AI and automation, ensuring transparency and accountability
- Embed innovation within the digital portfolio, ensuring it is prioritised, governed and aligned to organisational objectives
- Pilot and test new approaches safely, with clear evaluation criteria before wider adoption

Priority 6: Digital Inclusion, Equity and Fair Access

All residents can access, understand and benefit from digital services, ensuring that digital transformation reduces inequality rather than reinforcing it.

Shropshire Council serves diverse communities, including rural populations, older residents and individuals with varying levels of digital access and confidence. As services become more digital, there is a risk that some residents may be excluded or disadvantaged if appropriate support is not in place.

Without a structured and targeted approach to digital inclusion, the council risks widening inequality, reducing access to essential services and undermining the benefits of digital transformation.

This priority ensures that inclusion is designed into services from the outset. Digital access, confidence and fairness will be addressed alongside service redesign, ensuring that all residents can engage with services in ways that meet their needs. Digital inclusion will be treated as a core requirement of service design, not a separate initiative.

What we will do

- Ensure services are designed to be accessible, inclusive and easy to use, aligned to recognised accessibility standards
- Provide targeted digital support for residents who need it, including access to assistance, training and community-based support
- Maintain strong non-digital routes for services where digital access is not appropriate
- Use data and insight to identify communities at risk of exclusion and target support effectively
- Work with partners, including libraries, schools and voluntary organisations, to extend reach and impact
- Support improvements in connectivity and access across the county, particularly in rural areas
- Ensure that the use of digital tools, data and AI is fair, transparent and does not disadvantage any group

Delivery Plan, Governance, and Benefits Realisation

How we will deliver

We will operate a single, council-wide Digital Portfolio, structured around services rather than systems. This integrates service redesign, infrastructure, applications, integration, development, data, cyber and automation into a coherent delivery model.

Each service area will have clear ownership of outcomes, supported by multidisciplinary teams combining service, digital, data and technology skills. Delivery will be iterative, evidence-led and focused on measurable improvements in outcomes, cost and experience.

Operating model

Improvement Board - The Improvement Board is the Council's top-level, external scrutiny and assurance body for improvement. It checks progress, challenges the organisation, ensures accountability, and provides confidence to Members, residents, partners, and Government that the Council's Improvement Plan is being delivered with urgency, rigour, and transparency.

Leadership Board - The Leadership Board is the senior-most officer leadership group in Shropshire Council. It sets the organisation's direction, makes or shapes key decisions, oversees major risks and programmes, and ensures all services are aligned to the Council's long-term plan

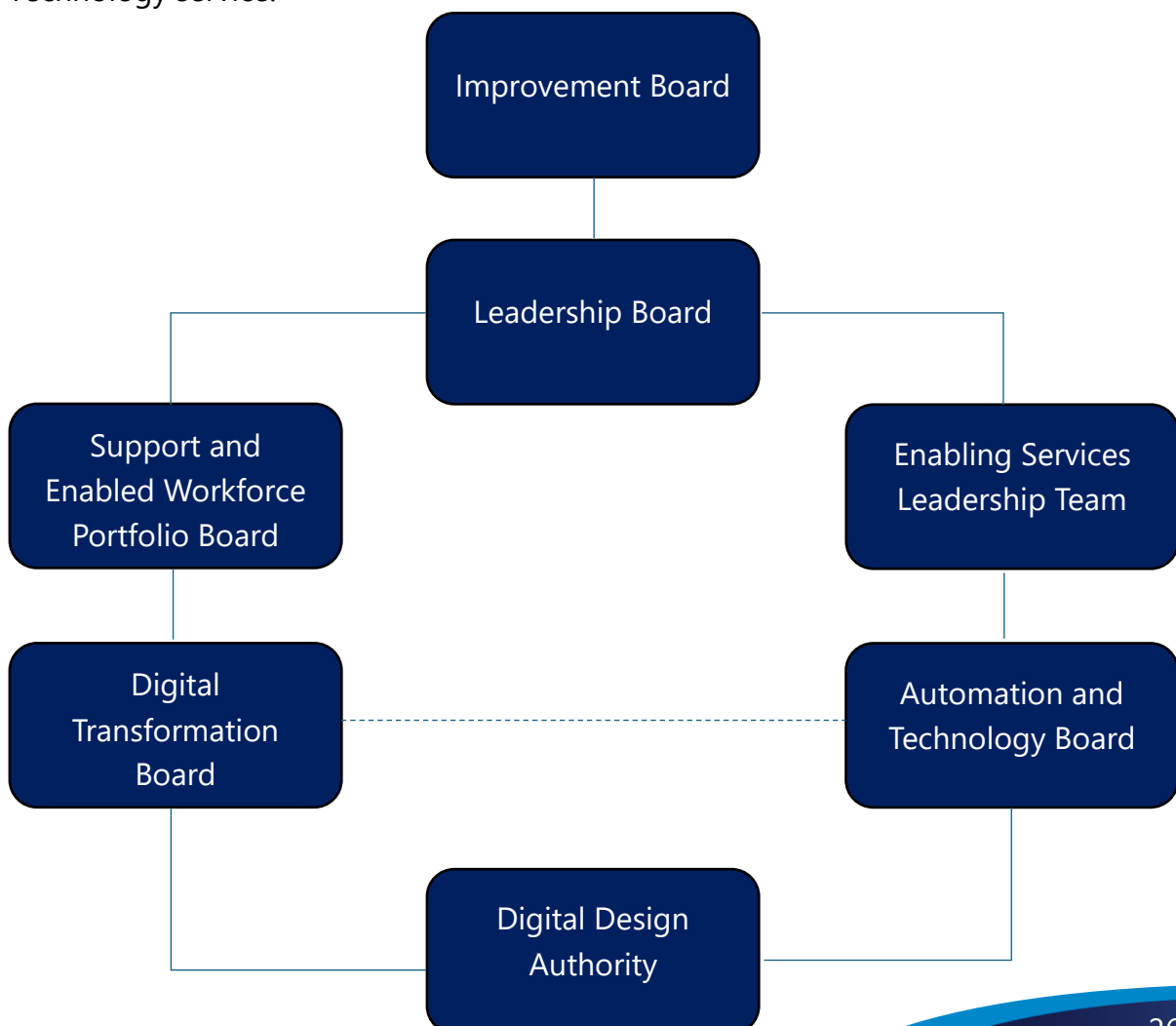
Support and Enabled Workforce Portfolio Board – Govern's the execution, risk and dependencies of all programmes and projects within its specific portfolio, ensuring effective governance, risk resolution, and benefit realisation at the executive level. The board will meet every 4 weeks.

Digital Transformation Board (DTB) – The DTB provides strategic oversight, governance, and assurance for all digital transformation activities within the council. The DTB will meet monthly, with additional meetings as required.

Digital Design Authority (DDA) - The DDA is responsible for the technical and architectural oversight of all digital programmes and projects. Its purpose is to own and maintain the overarching programme design and design principles. Evaluate and make decisions on technical and digital design matters. Ensure all design activities align with strategic objectives, comply with standards, and deliver quality and consistency. Provide assurance that design decisions support operational service delivery and council priorities. The DDA will meet weekly, or as required based on the volume and urgency of design decisions.

Enabling Services Leadership Team (ESLT) – The Enabling Services Leadership Team (ESLT) is the senior leadership group for Enabling Services within Shropshire Council. It is chaired by the Service Director – Enabling Services and brings together the Heads of Service and senior managers from all Enabling Services functions to coordinate delivery, provide updates, share risks and issues, and align activity with the Council’s strategic direction.

Automation and Technology Board - The Automation and Technology Board is the central leadership and governance forum for all ICT functions within Shropshire Council. It coordinates service performance, programmes, digital transformation, risks, staffing, and technology decisions across the whole Automation and Technology service.



RACI (Summary)

Responsible	Service Director Enabling, Head of Service – Automation & Technology, Business Process Owners.
Accountable	Chief Executive (Portfolio outcomes), s151 Officer (financial benefits).
Consulted	Service Directors, Unions, Information Governance, Procurement.
Informed	Members, staff, partners, residents.

Prioritisation approach

We will rank initiatives using a transparent scoring model across six dimensions, which will be reviewed by the boards each quarter:

- Statutory / legal risk
- Financial impact
- Demand reduction potential
- Deliverability (team capacity, complexity, dependencies)
- Dependency risk (does it unblock other initiatives)
- Political and reputational sensitivity

Benefits realisation

Our benefits realisation approach ensures every digital investment delivers measurable value by agreeing expected financial and non-financial benefits up-front in individual business cases. All progress will be tracked through standardised benefits profiles, with the delivery and financials validated and reviewed via the operating model. Only verified benefits will be recorded giving clear, transparent sight of savings, service improvements, and productivity gains. This ensures digital investment is controlled, measurable and demonstrably delivering financial and service outcomes.

How We Will Measure Success

We will track delivery of this strategy against a small, clear set of outcome measures reported regularly to leadership and Members:

- Reduction in cost-to-serve across key services
- Reduction in avoidable demand through earlier intervention
- Increased digital uptake across priority services
- Reduction in service processing times and backlogs
- Improved user satisfaction (residents and staff)
- Reduction in legacy systems and technology risk
- Increased automation of routine transactional activity
- Improved cyber maturity (CAF) and resilience metrics

Each programme will define its contribution to these outcomes, with benefits baselined and tracked through the portfolio.

Change & adoption

Successful digital transformation depends on people, not just technology. To ensure new systems, processes and ways of working are fully embedded, we will take a focused and practical approach to change and adoption across all programmes. This means preparing services for change early, engaging staff and Members in a clear and timely way and providing the right support so teams can confidently adopt new tools and ways of working. Adoption will be monitored through real usage, feedback and measurable behavioural change, ensuring that improvements become part of everyday practice and that the benefits of digital investment are fully realised across the organisation.

Information Governance Framework

A key foundation of our digital transformation is the Shropshire Information Governance Framework, which ensures that all data is managed securely, ethically, and in accordance with statutory and local requirements. This framework underpins our initiatives, driving transparent practices and safeguarding confidential information across every system and service. By following the principles and protocols set out in the Shropshire framework, we sustain trust among residents, staff, partners, and stakeholders, while guaranteeing that each digital investment aligns with both regulatory standards and the organisational values of Shropshire.

Moving Forward

Shropshire Council will actively share learning and good practice with the wider local government sector, contributing to collective improvement and raising standards across the sector.

In the next 12 months we will:

- Establish the full operating model and governance with clear accountability and transparency
- Deliver a modern, user-centred website and intranet improving access and staff productivity
- Scale automation to reduce cost-to-serve and improve service responsiveness.
- Replace the legacy contact centre platform to enable consistent, multi-channel customer experience
- Baseline and improve our cyber maturity using the CAF framework
- Continue to replace outdated systems with modern, connected platforms so services work together, embracing Automation, Artificial Intelligence and Integration.

These actions will prioritise measurable improvements in service experience, cost and resilience. Success will be measured not only in savings but in better services and better outcomes for residents, staff and communities.

This is a strategy of ambition, responsibility and long-term transformation. It centres on people, strengthened by technology, and is driven by a commitment to deliver a more efficient, sustainable, inclusive and resilient council for the people of Shropshire.