

# Delivering a digital strategy for Southampton City Council



 Customer: Southampton City Council

 Department: Council-wide

In November 2023, we started working with Southampton City Council (SCC) to provide them with an independent and expert view of their current digital landscape.

With a backdrop of recent financial challenge and widespread changes, we helped to shape the organisation's digital goals and refresh the council's digital strategy.

The 12-week project involved discovery work across the council's departments and subsequently became aligned to the council's wider transformation programme.

## The biggest

## *challenge*

The challenges were common to this type of project, including internal stakeholders balancing business as usual (BaU) with project requirements.

However, some of the key recommendations of this project sought to overcome some of the current challenges around siloed working, and a lack of joined up governance.

“

“The team's flexibility and ability to work effectively remotely ensured seamless collaboration between Socitm Advisory colleagues and our council staff. Any changes in project team composition did not impact outcomes, showcasing Socitm Advisory's expertise and professionalism.”

Gavin Muncaster,  
Director of Digital, SCC



### Our brief and project goals

- To assess the council's digital maturity by engaging with stakeholders council-wide
- To foster a collaborative, impactful approach to digital transformation
- To have a positive impact on the council's wider transformation programme whilst focusing primarily on the strategy development

### • To develop:

- A digital strategy, to identify areas needing focus and provide evidence-based recommendations for improvement
- A Target Operating Model to shape which capabilities and functions need to be prioritised to help deliver improvements
- A transformation roadmap to outline in detail the activity needed to deliver the improvement

#casestudy



## Our approach

We began by understanding the council's digital maturity and associated capabilities, which we did through a range of activities including; digital maturity assessments, capability workshops, and reviews of governance, cost modelling, technology landscape, and architecture.

This discovery work enabled us to determine the council's drivers for change, their guiding digital principles, and the prevalent themes or areas that needed focus. Then we were able to prioritise areas of improvements and associate benefits, all of which we used as the basis to develop the digital strategy for the council.

We presented the final strategy to the council's leadership team along with a roadmap of all the activity that we would recommend that they undertake, and a prioritisation matrix of that work, visualised as 'Now, Next, Later'. This was aligned to the council's digital strategy priorities, looking at the first 12 - 18 months, then 2-year and 4-year marks, ahead of the final couple of years.



*"In summary, we delivered the discovery report, then built the strategy and supporting target operating model, finally we developed the detailed transformation roadmap, then the final report," says our Principal Consultant, Katherine Wright.*

With such a large amount of findings, we also shared clear recommendations of the quick wins, that the council should focus on in the immediate term.

The project was delivered within the ambitious 12-week timescale and this was achieved due to agreement of a set of clear deliverables from the outset, along with our collaborative approach and our ability to leverage our technical knowledge and local authority expertise that enabled us to work at pace with the council.



*"Consultants at Socitm Advisory have a true understanding of both the technology and sector. Their comprehensive understanding of the local gov sector meant we didn't have to explain the nuances and challenges of a local authority, together we just hit the ground running."*

**Gavin Muncaster**, Director of Digital, SCC



## Outcomes and benefits

- We delivered a revised digital strategy and roadmap aligned with the council's digital priorities, providing the council with a clear direction for their digital transformation
- Once the strategy is implemented the council will have a more joined up approach to digital and their users will have a better experience because they have been engaged
- Our discovery work gave the council evidence-based recommendations on:
  - Areas for additional focus, such as digital maturity, capability assessment, service design, an It business partnering function, and re-establishing a digital champion network
  - Future areas of focus, such as licensing costs and benchmarking to further enhance strategy implementation
- We provided valuable background and discovery work, to support the council with their evidence-based decision-making
- We reviewed and recommended improvements to their target operating model around digital; how to best align their functions, their structure and capabilities to deliver the strategy and digital transformation
- If recommendations are implemented, the council will realise benefits including streamlined processes, improved user experiences, maximising the council's IT investments and improving core capabilities
- Our understanding of both technology and the local government sector proved beneficial in breaking down communication barriers and engaging council staff with the project
- Our track record of delivering similar projects with other councils allowed us to provide the council with some really clear, concise templates and reports for them to use going forwards

**Gavin comments, "This project demonstrated the value of external expertise in navigating complex organisation challenges."**



[www.socitmadvorsory.co.uk](http://www.socitmadvorsory.co.uk)



@socitmadvorsory



[hello@socitmadvorsory.co.uk](mailto:hello@socitmadvorsory.co.uk)



Socitm Advisory