# Policy and Sustainability Committee

## 10.00am, Tuesday 26 November 2019

## Developing the Council's Approach to Smart Cities

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| **Item number** | **7.13** |
| **Executive/routine** | **Executive** |
| **Wards** | **All** |
| **Council Commitments** | |

## 1. Recommendations

1.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

1.2 Endorses the proposal to develop a Smart City Strategy for Edinburgh, in collaboration with relevant partner organisations.

1.3 Approves the Deputy Leader of the Council attending the Smart Cities Development Conference on 5 February 2020 to inform this work being developed.

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# Report

# Developing the Council's Approach to Smart Cities

## 2. Executive Summary

2.1 The City of Edinburgh Council has historically operated an approach to the use of data, information and communications technology and the digitisation of services which has focussed upon the Council as a single organisation and, primarily, the provision of Council services. Whilst this approach remains important for the future of the Council, the need to utilise data and digital approaches needs to be reframed in the context of the City as a whole, working in greater collaboration with other organisations to deliver better outcomes for the people that live, work, learn in or visit the City. This report therefore proposes that the Council commences work to develop a Smart City Strategy for Edinburgh.

## 3. Background

3.1 The origins of Smart Cities are widely attributed to the Smart Growth movement of the late 1990s, which advocated new policies for urban planning. The phrase was subsequently adopted by a number of technology companies to describe the application of complex information systems to integrate and operate urban infrastructure and services such as buildings, transportation, electrical and water distribution, and public safety. It has evolved to mean almost any form of technology-based innovation in the planning, development and operation of Cities.

3.2 More recently, the concept of Smart Cities has shifted to focus on achieving improvements in sustainability and resilience by:

- Engaging society;

- Applying collaborative leadership methods;

- Working across disciplines and city systems; and

- Using data and integrated technologies to provide better services and quality of life to those in and involved with the city.

3.3 Given the strategic alignment between a Smart Cities approach and the Council's own Change Strategy and associated programmes of work, this provides an opportunity to bring greater coherence to a range of activities within the Council,

across a number of service areas, as well as with the Data Driven Innovation Programme.

## 4.  Main report

4.1  The City of Edinburgh Council's previous strategy for ICT and Digital, known as "Empowering Edinburgh" was approved in 2013/14. This strategy was to be underpinned by more detailed implementation plans in 3 waves, through to 2015/16, which culminated in the procurement process to award our current partnership arrangements to CGI UK Limited.  Whilst this strategy and the intent behind it maintains some relevance, following the initial 3 years of our partnership with CGI, this is now due for a fundamental refresh and refocus.  In seeking to redefine the Council's own technology strategy, the digital context in which we operate continues to evolve.  Aligning our technology ambitions and the broader development of a Smart City Strategy for Edinburgh, connected to the City Region Deal and the Data Driven Innovation Programme, will be critical.  It is therefore timely for the Council to take forward the refresh of its technology strategy and to provide leadership and support for a Smart City Strategy to be developed.

4.2  Based upon reports produced by the Scottish Cities Alliance and other organisations, a smart city can be defined as the integration of data and digital technologies into a strategic approach to sustainability, citizen wellbeing and economic development.  In addition, this enables a more integrated approach to infrastructure and low carbon.  Smart city initiatives have also sought to address the issues that often arise from digital service delivery in respect of inclusion, by focussing upon the needs and preferences of citizens and residents, rather than the capabilities of connected infrastructure, in isolation from their users.  The latest generation of smart cities uses a complementary blend of data, digital technology and people-centred design to promote decision-making, not only by public services, but also by residents, businesses and other key city stakeholders.  Smart city initiatives that shift from being technology centric to citizen-centric put engagement and inclusion at the centre of a smart city approach.  Such approaches, in the context of Edinburgh, are therefore deemed essential for the future development for the use of data, technology and the design of services for the City.

4.3  Developing a Smart City Strategy for Edinburgh will require research, learning from the experience of other such approaches and collaboration across a range of partner organisations, both within the City and beyond.  It is therefore proposed that an initial phase of development and discussion be undertaken to prepare a draft strategy for Committee consideration during 2020.

## 5. Next Steps

5.1 To facilitate and support the development of a Smart City Strategy for Edinburgh and recognising the importance of political leadership for such as strategy, it is proposed that the Deputy Leader of the Council leads the development of this work, supported by the Executive Director of Resources, as the lead officer co-ordinating this activity with other members of the Corporate Leadership Team. In furtherance of this, Committee approval is sought for the Deputy Leader of the Council to attend the "Building Smart Cities Conference" on 5 February 2020, in Oxford. This one day conference will enable the experience and knowledge of the approach taken to Smart City Strategy in other UK and European Cities to be considered as part of developing Edinburgh's future Smart City strategy. Subject to approval, following attendance at the Conference, a feedback report will be provided to the Committee.

5.2 The Council is working with its existing technology partner, CGI UK Ltd, to progress opportunities to enhance the Council's internal arrangements and the development of our next phase technology strategy for our own operations, including the potential for a Smart City Operations Centre. This activity, which forms part of the Council's Change Strategy, will also need to be more aligned with the development of a Smart City Strategy for Edinburgh, not just within the context of the Council. Given that this work is being operationally led by the Head of Customer and Digital Services, reporting to the Executive Director of Resources, then the opportunity to bring these two activities together as this work progresses is well placed. The role of CGI as our technology partner and their contribution to our future Smart Cities strategy, drawing upon their global expertise and experience, will be a key consideration for a Smart City Strategy for Edinburgh.

5.3 Finally, given the alignment between this proposed strategy and the City and South East of Scotland City Region Deal has, particularly in respect of Data Driven Innovation (DDI), the Committee is advised that early discussions have been held by the Executive Director of Resources and the Executive Director of Place to explore opportunities to supplement the DDI programme management arrangements to support a Smart City strategy for Edinburgh. These discussions will continue as part of the development of a Smart City Strategy.

## 6. Stakeholder/Community Impact

6.1 As outlined, the development of a Smart City Strategy will need to carefully consider and be informed by a range of key stakeholders. This will also require formal consultation and impact assessment activities to be undertaken.

## 7. Background reading/external references

7.1 None.

## 8. Appendices

8.1 None.