HTA Board meeting, 27ᵗʰ June 2024

Agenda item	4.2 HTA's Digital & IT Strategy 2024-27
For information or decision?	Information
Decision making to date?	Agreed by SMT on 13 June May 2024
Recommendation	The Board is asked to note the update on the Digital & IT (DIT) Strategy and the priorities for the next three year. These priorities have been identified to enable the ongoing resilience of HTA systems and the strengthening of digital capability and capacity.
Which strategic risks are relevant?	Risk 5: Failure to make use of available data, digital and technology to ensure systems are kept up to date and support the delivery of business activities
Strategic objective	Use of Information
Core operations / Change activity	Change activity
Business Plan item	Review and implement our Data and Technology strategy that sets the direction for future innovations across all our work
Committee oversight?	Not applicable to the DIT Strategy. ARAC provide oversight to Cyber Security which is a component part of the DIT Strategy. Accountability for the delivery will be managed through the annual business plans (2024-27)
Finance and resource implications	Commitment of resource and investment required across the duration of the DIT strategy
Timescales	Strategy covers the period 2024-2027
Communication(s) (internal/external stakeholders)	The Digital & IT Strategy has been informed by national priorities and industry developments
Identified legislative implications	N/A

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Update on the HTA's Digital & IT Strategy 2024-2027

Background

1. Over the last six months, the Data, Technology & Development Directorate has been undertaking a review of the HTA's systems, licensing arrangements and the delivery against the previous Digital, Data & Technology (DDaT)Strategy. The previous strategy set out an ambition over the following three years that aimed to strengthen the HTA's use of data, invest in technology and develop a system architecture that supports the better management of the information we collect and generate.

2. Since 2021, the Board has received a number of updates on the proposals and planned developments in IT. In 2022, these priorities and the resources attached to them were revised. This has meant that the focus over the last 18 months has been on exploring the viability of a shared service model for IT support and service delivery and maintaining a business as usual service in tandem. In August 2023, following engagement across other ALBs, the development of a service catalogue of business requirements and a high level due diligence exercise, the executive concluded that the pursuit of a shared service model for IT was not financially viable for the HTA at this time via a bilateral delivery model. We remain open to explore other possibilities.

3. Despite a revision to the priorities in the previous strategy and the resource constraints, there are a number of achievements to note from the last three years. Most notable are:

   - Completion of a discovery phase to explore the financial viability of an IT Shared Service model with another ALB.
   - Maintenance of a resilient BAU IT function
   - Adoption and embedding of MS 365 and supporting applications such as Teams, Power BI
   - Consistent benchmarked performance in system resilience as supported by Data Protection Security Toolkit (DSPT) assessment and MDE reporting
   - Opportunities for automation, digital and data developments

4. The appointment of the Head of IT in November 2023, has provided the opportunity to take stock of current operational systems and the vision and ambition set out in the DDaT Strategy. The findings of the review alongside increasing requirements in data and cyber security have helped to inform and set

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the priorities of the Digital & IT (DIT) Strategy for the next three years. These priorities are set out below.

5. The Head of IT has led the engagement on the DIT Strategy internally and secured in principle agreement to the identified priorities and projects. Based on lessons learned from the previous strategy, successful delivery and implementation of the DIT Strategy is dependent on an organisation wide commitment to the strategy and the protection of the required investment.

6. The DIT strategy is accompanied by an indicative financial investment plan of approximately £710,000 and implementation roadmap over the next three years. This investment will support the delivery of a prioritised programme of projects to support delivery of the digital and IT strategic vision and mission.

   DIT Strategic Mission
   Create an IT service that pushes forward through investment an innovative and automated culture to maximise our human resources output.

   DIT Strategic Vision
   Deliver a technological focussed culture that embraces the benefits of AI to improve productivity and reduce the reliance on manual processing in the next three years.

7. Details of the individual projects will form part of the annual business plan and provide the mechanism through which the executive can be held to account on delivery. At the time of writing this paper, discussions relating to funding options remain ongoing and will be agreed through individual business cases.

8. In 2024/25, a total of four projects have been identified on the business plan for delivery and are dependent on additional funding, internal support and external resources being secured. These projects cover:

   a) CRM Update (phase 2)
   b) Review and possible retender of the IT support contract
   c) Commissioned development of the Regulatory Insight Model and Index (RIMI) based on the work completed in Q4 of 23/24 on the requirements scoping exercise and agreement of risk indicators
   d) Replacement of the HTA's finance system

9. Work will commence on the 2024/25 projects once the required resourcing is confirmed.

The revised Digital & IT Strategy

10. The new Digital & IT Strategy has been developed to take account of current and future business requirements, external drivers such as the increased risk and assurance associated with cyber security and developments, such as, Artificial Intelligence (AI).

11. The strategy has not been developed in isolation. The priorities and ambitions whilst tailored to the HTA are reflective of the direction of travel and vision shared across the wider ALB network and government departments.

12. The DIT strategy is underpinned by **four strategic priorities and themes** summarised below.

    Priority 1: Protection through Prevention
    To deliver an IT system that is preventing the inevitable attack and proactively monitoring to give early warning around potential risks and vulnerabilities. Changes within the world of Cyber are constant and thus the HTA must invest in suitable solutions to assist in preventing the issue before becoming a risk. New applications and Services must be implemented with Security at the forefront and not overlooked or under invested.

    Our ambition:
    - We aim to be forward thinking and adopt the latest tools and technologies to support the journey towards a more secure future.
    - We aim to ensure that our IT perimeter infrastructure is well maintained and updated to reduce the risk of any cyber-attacks. Ensuring that our primary applications and systems are secure and meeting minimum security standards.
    - We aim to improve access into HTA systems, by implementing Multi-Factor Authentication and reducing the number of locally based user accounts in operation, by implementing Single Sign-On (SSO) and/or Security Assertion Markup Language (SAML) across applications.
    - We aim to ensure that all staff are fully trained and compliant within the world of Cyber Security and Information Governance and regular phishing exercises are performed to test the understanding of our users.

    Priority 2: Availability through Reliability
    To ensure that our IT Systems and Applications are properly maintained, supported under a mainstream support contract and are fit for purpose. Systems that are running legacy applications that are no longer supported carry high risk to organisations and thus increase the likelihood of a potential outage.

    Our ambition:

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- We aim to deliver a highly available and resilient infrastructure to reduce the risk of significant outages whilst building knowledge and information through automation and system monitoring.
- We aim to reduce the number of systems that are out of support and deliver a programme to ensure that no systems are operating out of a minimum vendor support contract.
- We aim to drive forward with Business Continuity native systems that are designed with automated failover and business continuity technologies, reducing the likelihood of a major incident.
- We aim to retain the excellent Microsoft Secure Score and Exposure Scores achieved to support the delivery of more reliable and available IT systems.

Priority 3: Transformation through Automation

To adopt and support a culture of continuous improvement through committed investment to transform and develop our IT systems. Transforming the interoperability of our IT systems to improve performance will reduce the number of manual processes and increase productivity across the HTA.

Our ambition:
- We aim to improve the end user technologies used during inspections, to provide a standardise approach to simplify the collection of data during the inspection process.
- We aim to reduce the manual processing of data and implement systems that can produce reporting without the need for human intervention.
- We aim to remove any obstacles and limitations that cause productivity issues and implement systems that drive performance.
- We aim to overhaul our data management processes and introduce strict retention policies to ensure compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Priority 4: Innovation through Collaboration

To drive forward innovative ways of working through partnerships and team building to better influence decision making and adoption of IT services. Working as an organisation that can be fully remote, IT continues to play a pivotal role with how our colleagues collaborate and support each other. Our IT systems, therefore, must evolve and adapt to continual supporting these ways of working. Collaborating outside of the organisation with third-parties and other IT leaders to gauge and respond to changes in technology to evaluate opportunities to bring into the business.

Our ambition:

- We aim to allow our colleagues and stakeholders to work seamlessly across their own individual teams and sectors, whilst providing the ability to collaborate and communicate effectively with each other.
- We aim to ensure that our IT systems are supported and protected through available updates and patching to allow for innovative ways of improving already embedded and integrated systems.
- We aim to provide opportunities within our technology infrastructure to allow for innovative ideas and concepts, with a drive and dedicated focus on ensuring that our technology remains cutting edge and is regularly reviewed to keep up with trends.
- We aim to ensure that our IT platforms are secure, adopt a positive approach to future trends and allow for continuous growth. Regularly reviewing our systems to look at opportunities to improve the systems to provide more informative data for better decision-making.

Our Delivery Roadmap

13. The DIT Strategy is supported by a delivery plan that spans the next three years. The roadmap for realising the ambitions set out in the strategy is based on securing a number of foundations including up to date and supported systems, a robust change control process and actions that continue to build resilience in our systems. These foundations sit alongside the requirements for investment (people and financial resources) and a corporate commitment to the vision.

14. Progress against the strategy will be tracked through a series of actions aligned to achieving the ambitions outlined under each of the priorities and corresponding measures of success. Reporting of these measures will commence once some of the core foundations are in place at the end of 2024/25.

Next steps

15. Following SMT agreement to the DIT Strategy, the next steps will be focused on the development and agreement of business cases to secure funding to start the 2024/25 prioritised projects. The first project to agree based on dependencies and sequencing is the updating of CRM.

Recommendation

16. The HTA Board is asked to note this update summarising the priorities and the projects identified for 2024/25 as enablers in the delivery of this strategy.

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