

Executive Summary

Forewords

Cllr Spencer Flower, Leader of Dorset Council

Data is one of our most valuable assets as a council and helps to inform how we best deliver our services to meet the needs of our communities.

Over the next five years we want to make even better use of data and insight as we continue to deliver our ambitious Council Plan and ten council commitments. We will proactively seek data and business intelligence that can help with decision making and ensure we continue to be transparent in how we use, keep and store data.

This strategy puts down the foundations for a data-first approach across the council and our future data and information aspirations.

It will ensure data is embedded in everything we do to improve the outcomes for people in Dorset.

Matt Prosser, Chief Executive

This strategy sets out our approach to become a data-led organisation over the next five years. It recognises that data and business intelligence needs to be at the core of our decision making, using good quality, relevant and timely information to inform and improve the services we provide to our residents.

It recognises the need to remove barriers where we can, making data accessible to all those that need it while aiding better collaboration across the council. It will become part of the council's DNA and day-to-day practices so we can all work more effectively and efficiently.

Equally, it highlights how we will work with our public sector partners to ensure we share evidence and insight to improve, plan and ultimately shape the services we provide.

The strategy puts us on a firm footing for data and business intelligence in the council now and in the future. It also emphasises the benefits and value data and business intelligence can bring.

Introduction

The Data and Business Intelligence (BI) Strategy outlines the council's ambition to place data and intelligence at the core of decision-making and policy development.

Our vision is to become a data driven, intelligent council that uses intelligence and insight to successfully deliver the Council Plan and improve outcomes for the people of Dorset.

The strategy outlines the foundations needed to enhance our forecasting, reporting and analysis of data with the aim of improving, planning and ultimately shaping the services we provide.

While this is a five-year strategy, it recognises the need to adapt and evolve as new technology and innovative ways of using, keeping and storing data are introduced.

This strategy has been shaped following a series of workshops which were completed with colleagues from across the council, our partners in the Integrated Care Service (ICS), and our members through a joint Overview Committee.

Key missions

The workshops identified eight key missions for the strategy:

- **Mission 1: Data culture and mindset – valuing data as a key asset**

We aspire to become a data-driven organisation with a strong ‘data culture’, seeing our data as an asset and valuing its potential to help us make good, intelligence-led decisions.

There will be a shift in the way we understand and use our data, ensuring that data is at the core of decision making across the council.

We will also embed a data culture that will embrace continual learning opportunities, where new knowledge, skills and learning will be fundamental in building our data capabilities.

- **Mission 2: Improving data quality**

Data should always be of suitable quality to enable us to make the right decisions. It must also be drawn from a range of sources and systems including partner organisations.

We will improve the accuracy and quality of our data by combining datasets. This will increase our levels of confidence in the data we hold.

By driving a ‘right first time’ data approach, we will see improvements such as the speed and accuracy of our statutory reporting which will reduce the need for amendments and corrections.

- **Mission 3: Ensure we have appropriate technology & infrastructure**

Having an appropriate technological infrastructure is key for making best use of our data.

While the council uses the Microsoft platform that supports our data driven ambitions, we need to establish a single version of the truth and reduce data duplication.

We will use a hosting solution to store our data and use new technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning to provide other efficiencies.

Effective data management is vital in underpinning these technologies, harnessing business intelligence, predictive analytics, or adopting intelligent

automation and the Internet of Things (IoT). Data and reporting requirements will be considered as part of system procurement processes, including how data can be extracted from source systems.

The approaches will enable us to provide timely and regular data feeds to meet business need, including real-time data.

We will be able to free up capacity from cleaning data to developing insights and understanding from our data. We will have a technical infrastructure which supports our data management processes and use them across the organisation.

We will also look to make use of our investment in Microsoft products, developing and procuring systems which can integrate with existing systems.

- **Mission 4: Develop and invest in business intelligence and data science**

We will continue to invest in business intelligence and data science, focusing on proactive insight and predictive analytics that can inform policy and decisions and better ways of working.

Better business intelligence and data will enhance our understanding of our customers' needs and requirements. Our data visualisation will also be accessible, user friendly and appropriate to the audience and we will share and join-up data with our public sector partners.

- **Mission 5: Develop our people's data skills**

The appropriate skills, knowledge and behaviours will underpin our ability to deliver this strategy.

Data and business intelligence will be at the core of the council, with every employee or partner collecting, working with, or analysing data to assist them with decisions.

To support, we will introduce mandatory training to ensure all employees have a basic level of data literacy. There will be clear and consistent understanding of data role and responsibilities and where high-level, specialist data skills are needed, we will provide clear data, analytics, and data science career paths.

We will increase confidence and competence in using data, sharing best practice across the council and developing data practices. We will also increase adoption of data analytics.

- **Mission 6: Establish clear governance to manage, utilise and care for our data**

We recognise the danger of insufficiently robust data governance and a key consideration is providing clarity over where and how data should be stored and for how long, by both the council and our partners.

A new Strategic IG Board will be instrumental in defining governance processes, ensuring that employees have appropriate access to the data needed to undertake their role. We will also have clear frameworks in place to manage, utilise and care for our data - following appropriate data governance will be everyone's responsibility.

We will have robust and transparent processes for how we manage and utilise data, and where Information Asset Owners are accountable and responsible for their information assets. We will also have clearly defined access management for our data and be able to share data safely with our partners.

- **Mission 7: Protect the organisation's data assets (security)**

We will ensure data security is fit for purpose and protects the organisation's data assets.

As we begin to make better, more advanced use of our data we will explore our security requirements to focus not just on the systems we use and the physical or software protection we put in place, but how we behave around data.

All employees will understand their data security responsibilities, evidenced through the completion of mandatory training, and will be able to access and share the data they need securely.

We will maintain a safe and trusted data secure environment that represents best value for money and fulfils or exceeds our minimum data security requirements.

- **Mission 8: We will use data ethically**

As we make increased use of our data and apply increasingly complex techniques to its analysis, we will ensure that we use our data appropriately to ensure we maintain the trust of our residents, partners, colleagues, and other stakeholders.

Data used or collected within the organisation will be in accordance with our data ethics principles. Our employees will have improved knowledge of data ethics and how it relates to their job.

Data ethics is everyone's responsibility in the council so a standard data ethics framework will be used across the organisation. As we make use of advanced data techniques, including data science and AI, these will also be governed by appropriate data ethics considerations.

What comes next

The strategy has identified what we would like to achieve in relation to becoming a data-driven, intelligent council.

We will build on these eight missions by developing an action plan that provides more detail on how we will meet these aspirations.

An initial high-level action plan has been established to sit alongside this strategy, and further work is now required to establish a delivery plan.