



South Tyneside Council

Digital and ICT Strategy 2026–2029

People and Organisational Change Committee

South Tyneside Council • Digitally empowering our people and communities





Why now – and our vision

What is driving this strategy

- Rising demand and ongoing financial pressure
- Residents expect simple, mobile-friendly, joined-up services
- Legacy technology increases cost, risk and complexity
- Cyber threats across local government keep growing
- Rapid advances in technology, including AI

OUR VISION

To digitally empower and connect our people and communities – enabling inclusive, innovative and efficient access to services that improves outcomes for residents, supports our workforce, and strengthens the Council's long-term resilience.



Our starting point: the scale we manage

Formed in 2018 and now responsible for the reliability, security and digital change that keep the Council running.

37,000+

IT issues & requests handled every year

50+

critical digital projects delivered a year

27

public websites · 8.7m views in 12 months

4,000+

laptops, tablets & smartphones managed

65+

business systems hosted & maintained

90

Council & community sites supported

Full-fibre coverage across the borough has grown from 19% to 80% since 2024.



Five strategic priorities

01

Great digital services for everyday needs

Simple, joined-up online journeys that reduce repeat contact and build trust.

02

Digital access for all

Targeted support, connectivity, skills and devices so no one is left behind.

03

Empowering our workforce

Skills, tools, data and AI so staff and Members work efficiently and safely.

04

Building strong digital foundations

Reliable devices, systems and cloud services that keep the Council running.

05

Protecting trust and security

Cyber resilience and information security embedded in everything we do.



What this means for our people

Staff and Elected Members

- Modern, reliable tools – less time on systems, more time supporting residents
- Better information and insight for faster, informed decisions
- Targeted digital skills, including safe use of data and AI
- Clear guidance and governance for responsible use of technology

Residents and businesses

- Simpler, clearer online services that work well on mobile
- Better updates and progress – less chasing and repeat contact
- Choice and support: always a route to speak to a person
- Improved connectivity, devices and skills support in communities
- Safer online experiences through stronger cyber resilience



Empowering our workforce

Modern tools and skills so staff and Members can work smarter, and safer.

Skills framework

A digital skills framework for staff and Members – covering data, AI and cyber – with clear learning pathways.

Practical learning

Expanded, targeted support: digital clinics, bite-size and role-based learning that builds everyday confidence.

Data & AI

Phased projects with clear value and human oversight – including Copilot, social care transcription and a Families First data platform.

Trusted governance

Policies, guidance and forums that keep use of data and AI transparent, accountable and safe.



A phased roadmap

2026

Strengthen foundations

- Redesign priority online services and modernise contact
- Early, safe AI use cases with human oversight
- Refresh devices and build a controlled cloud plan
- Advance cyber resilience through the CAF roadmap

2027–2028

Scale and modernise

- Scale redesigned journeys across more services
- Move towards a joined-up customer account
- Embed data and AI with consistent governance
- Progress cloud migration and system modernisation

2029

Embed and optimise

- Consistent, accessible digital service standards
- Optimise platforms and processes using data
- Continue planned resilience investment
- Review and refresh for the next planning period



Measuring success and governance

How we will measure progress

- Customer experience – completion rates, avoidable contact, satisfaction
- Digital Inclusion – uptake of assisted support, devices issued to residents needing support
- Workforce capability – learning completed, tools adopted, time saved
- Technology & cyber resilience – refresh completion, service availability, CAF milestones
- Value for money – cashable and non-cashable benefits realised

How we will govern delivery

- Reporting to the Transformation Board and Cabinet
- An annual planning cycle to confirm each year's delivery plan
- Clear programme controls, named owners and benefits tracking
- Data and AI governance, with secure-by-design throughout
- Alignment with regional partners (North East MSA)



What happens next: our 2026 priorities

Services

Contact Centre services moved to modern platform, An AI “front door” for contact centres and a redesign of priority services, starting with Waste.

Access

An assistive technology strategy, device re-use and connectivity work with partners.

Workforce

Develop a council digital skills framework and scale AI projects and early phase Data projects.

Foundations

Refresh around 800 PCs as part of multi-year plan and build a cloud migration roadmap.

Security

Develop and deliver first phase of the multi-year Cyber Assessment Framework (CAF) roadmap.

Delivered in a planned, phased way – reducing risk while making improvements residents and our workforce will notice.