

North Tyneside Council

Digital Strategy

2023-2027

Version: 1



**North Tyneside
Council**

1. Overview

We live in a digital first borough and almost everything that takes place in North Tyneside involves data and technology. Since the 1970s, public services have been increasingly automated and over the last decade the pace of change has been rapid. Technology plays an important role in sustaining and transforming the way Council services are delivered; it is a key enabler for change and improvement both within the Council and the North Tyneside borough. However we also must be mindful that technology improvements can leave some feeling left behind and we must be mindful of supporting these individuals within the Digital Strategy and through initiatives such as the Council's Equally Well Plan.

The document sets out principles for how the Council's technology services should be identified, designed, sourced and delivered over the next five years. It describes how these principles are linked to the Our North Tyneside Plan and the overarching Council values of we listen, we care, we are ambitious and we are good value for money.

The Digital Strategy for North Tyneside is both inward and outward looking, it does not just describe technology or IT but describes the broader sense of "Applying the culture, processes, business models and technologies of the internet era to respond to people's raised expectations." as described by Tom Loosemore in the UK's first Government Digital Strategy in 2012. It looks at how we can use technology to benefit our residents, businesses and communities and how it can be a driver for positive change for the Council and our partners.

To make the principles as simple as possible the strategy is broken down into five themes: Data; Customers; Team; Infrastructure and Borough.

This Strategy is not developed solely by North Tyneside Council but takes into consideration the direction of the wider public sector and global technology landscape including:

- Loti Digital strategy research
- Local Government Digital Office
- National Cyber Security Centre
- Public Sector Cyber Resilience Framework
- Industry and sectoral best practice.

The Strategy has been developed collaboratively with a wide range of departments within the Council as well as a range of Councillors and partner organisations. The Strategy takes a lead from the Equally Well Strategy for North Tyneside in defining many of the digital inclusion objectives.

Digital Strategy

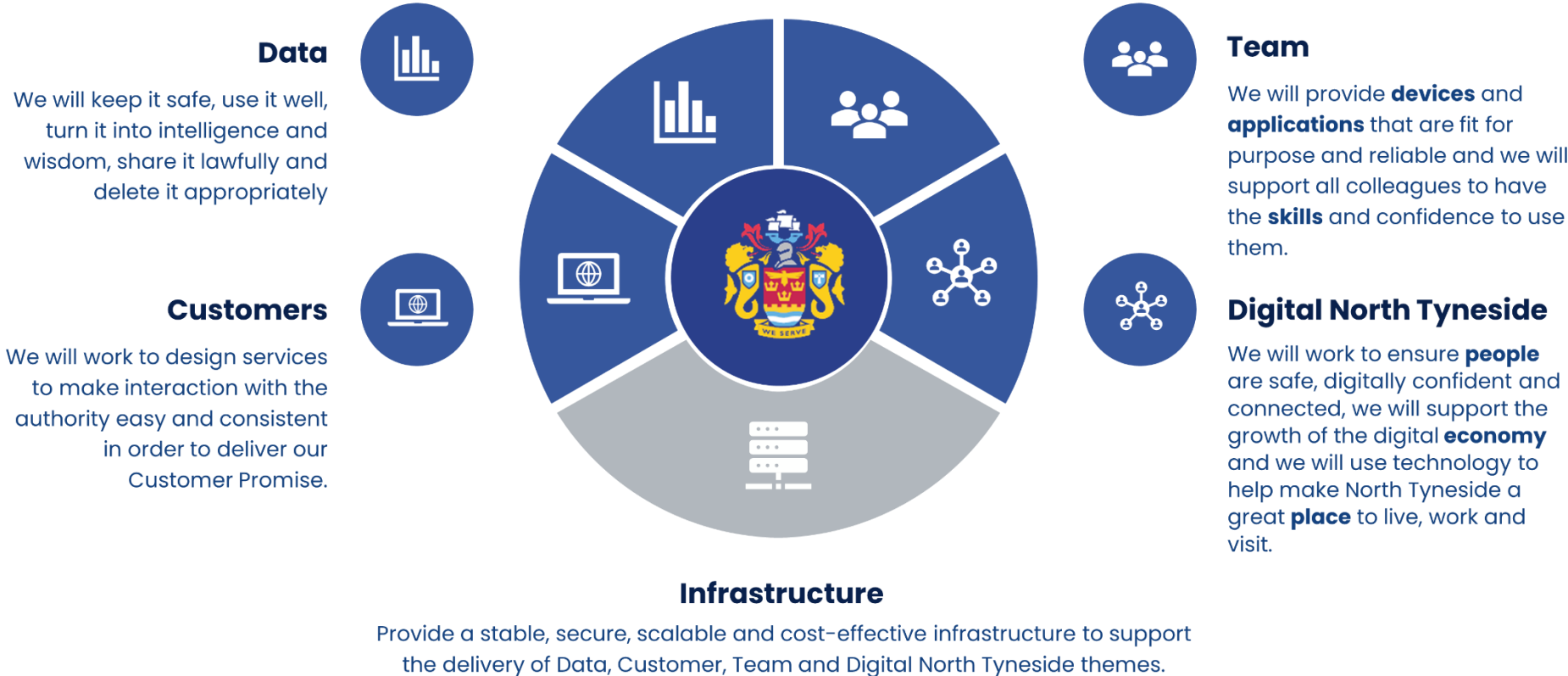


Figure 1.1

2. Measuring the impact

It is important that we regularly measure our progress in delivering the digital strategy and identify new opportunities to deliver projects to meet the strategic aims. To do this, we will set levels of digital maturity and score this across the Council. This process will be documented in a digital maturity framework which will set out the detail of how we monitor and track progress of all themes with additional monitoring put in place to specifically monitor each goal within the Digital North Tyneside Theme.

The digital maturity framework will provide an objective metric to measure the Council's digital maturity and progress against the strategic themes identified in the Council's Digital Strategy. The framework will be used to both assess the present digital maturity, to provide a baseline, and to create a future aspiration and ambition of how the service could operate in the future, enabled by greater connectivity and technical ability.

The framework will be used to identify specific change activity within each service area to improve digital maturity and thus meet the goals of the Digital Strategy. This change activity will be reviewed across the Council, grouped into common IT capabilities and converted into formalised delivery plans. These plans and the wider digital maturity progress will be managed by the IT Board.

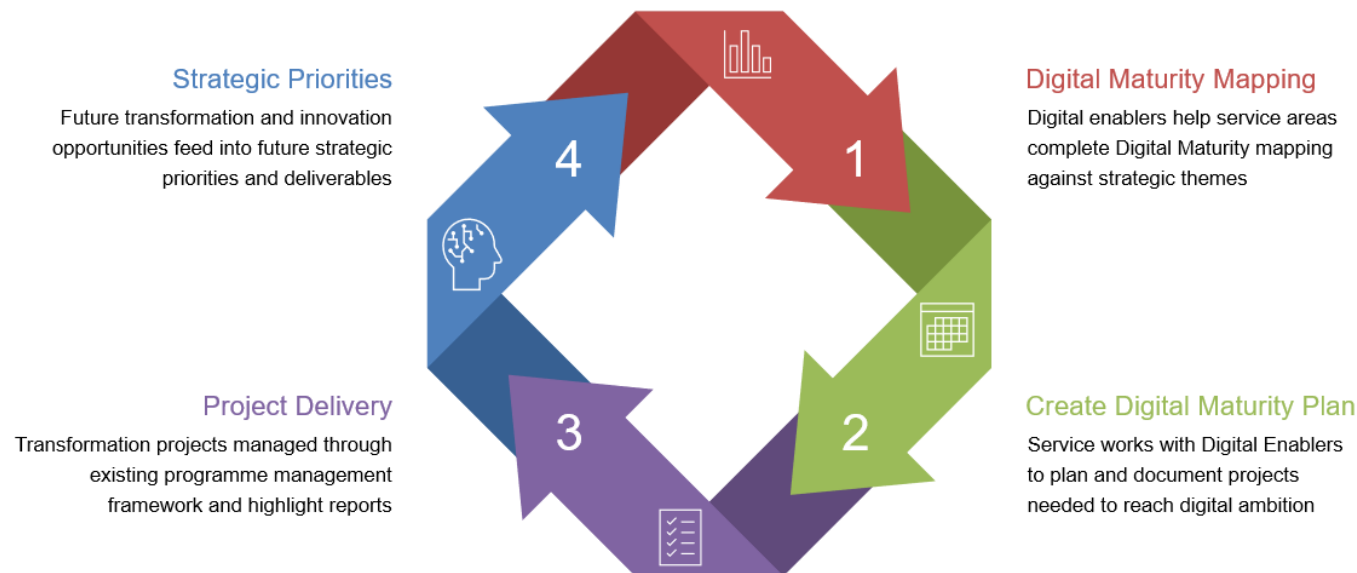


Figure 2.1

3. Data

We will keep it safe, use it well, turn it into intelligence and wisdom, share it lawfully and delete it appropriately.

Data will be turned into intelligence and used to improve the quality of our services, reduce costs and target resource where it will have the biggest impact, informing our policy decisions and service design. We will embrace advancements in data analytics and explore the use of machine learning and artificial intelligence to look at how our customers, residents and services are using technology through trends and patterns allowing opportunities for predictive and proactive interventions. In line with the National Data Strategy, we will share appropriately and work with local and national partners to deliver better outcomes for North Tyneside. We will use data for the benefit of our:

Residents – to produce customer focussed intelligence, deepening our understanding of the communities of North Tyneside, their needs and what they will need from the Council in the future. We will use this understanding to design customer centric services and put them at the heart of everything we do.

Businesses – To unlock the value of data for the local economy, helping the businesses of North Tyneside to thrive.

Council – To improve public services, having the information we need to make wise choices in the way that we run our services and budgets now and in the future.

No	Goal
D1	Data is consistently collected across all services. Once collected it is stored, maintained, used and then disposed of in line with agreed policies and data protection legislation.
D2	Data is used to improve the quality of our services, reduce costs and target resource where it is needed, informing our policy decisions and future service design
D3	Data is shared where relevant with our local partners, residents and businesses
D4	Data from partners and external sources is used where relevant to supplement internal data and provide greater understanding

4. Customers

We will work to design services to make interaction with the authority easy and consistent in order to deliver our Customer Promise.

We will use the evidence gathered from colleagues, customers and partners to offer consistent customer service standards across all services to contribute to an improved customer experience. Our team members will be trained in customer service standards detailed in the Customer Promise and we will publicise them so everyone knows what level of service they can expect to receive.

- We listen
- We care

This work will tie in with the customer service programme which aims to promote and encourage excellent customer service across the council. A large part of how the Council will do this going forward will be via digital media making digital services an important aspect of each service area. Having the customer at the heart of the conversation will pay dividends for the customer.

Customer Interactions will be Digital by choice to ensure we support all our residents, businesses and visitors. In some instances, an analogue version of the interaction will be put in place but in most cases a service to support customers using the interaction will be more appropriate.

No	Goal
C1	Utilise digital services to support the Council's Customer Promise
C2	Our digital services will make interacting with the Council as easy as possible
C3	Our digital services will make it easy for residents, businesses, and visitors to find out information about Council services.
C4	We will use digital services to listen to feedback from customers and enable any resulting practice change
C5	Our digital services will be accessible, easy to access and will look to include and enable all our residents, business and visitors.

5. Team

We will provide **devices** and **applications** that are fit for purpose and reliable and we will support all colleagues to have the **skills** and confidence to use them.

In order to fully describe the aim of this theme it can be considered in three areas; that our team has the **devices, applications** and **skills** to enable digital transformation and innovation.

Devices

We will have the devices we need to provide services and enable us to deliver the customer promise. These devices will be cost effective, connected and maintained, underpinned by a robust technical strategy which will deliver a stable and reliable infrastructure providing a foundation which services can innovate from. Rather than limiting what is possible, our devices should spark imagination, showing how technology can enable new, connected services to be delivered, including advancing the use of assistive technologies and smart devices. Devices should allow our Teams to complete their job at point of delivery rather than having to move to technology to carry out their roles. We will source and operate all our devices and infrastructure with sustainability in mind, ensuring that wherever possible our device choices actively contribute to our ambition of being a carbon net-zero Borough by 2030.

Applications

Software applications are key to the day to day running of most Council services, and to the capture of data and information for analysis and planning. Applications that are intuitive, integrated and fit for purpose can: enable continuous business improvement, enhance the customer experience and deliver timely information at the point of need. Data captured by business applications can provide valuable customer insights and feed analytics to inform strategic planning. As support for customers through technology develops, applications linked to assistive technology and smart devices can provide increasingly powerful insights into 'what works for individuals and at the strategic level.

Applications will utilise leading technologies and platforms, but our focus will always be on outcomes, with technology in a supporting role. The strategy for applications will have direct links to the customer and data themes so that development is driven by business ambitions rather than supplier priorities. Applications must be responsive to changing business needs, both large-scale business transformation and enabling smaller improvements, so that change is not hampered by software capability. Access to applications will be scalable and cost-effective and key applications will be securely available anytime, anywhere and on any supported device.

High quality applications will make it easy for customers and partners to interact with the Council across all business processes and will be integrated, allowing Council systems to behave as a single 'information system'. Colleagues and customers will be supported to get the best possible use of applications through good quality support, guidance and training.

Application will be delivered using a capability-based model by selecting applications which can be used by multiple departments focusing on the applications functions not the specificity to any individual department. This approach will reduce the overall number of applications and reduce the overall overhead of IT provision.

Skills

The term 'digital skills' covers a wide array of ability, knowledge and skills in order to maximise the use of technology such as the Internet, computers, tablets, smartphones, automation, artificial intelligence, video and a host of other things. The use of technology is ever changing, and it is crucial that colleagues are able to change and adapt. Service baseline and aspirational measures within this theme are aligned to and will inform the Council's workforce digital skills delivery plan.

No	Goal
T1	Colleagues will have the devices needed to provide services and enable them to deliver the Customer Promise. Devices will enable innovation, contribute to our climate change ambitions and be cost effective.
T2	Colleagues will be connected when and where they need it and have the tools to work effectively in a hybrid environment in line with the needs of their department.
T3	Devices will be renewed before they reach end of life in a refresh cycle that balances value for money and reliability of equipment.
T4	Colleagues will have the skills needed to provide services, enable them to deliver the customer promise and the confidence to identify opportunities for innovation.
T5	Colleagues will have the skills needed to help keep themselves and the Council safe from cyber security threats.

6. Digital North Tyneside

We will work to ensure **people** are safe, digitally confident and connected, we will support the growth of the digital **economy** and we will use technology to help make North Tyneside a great **place** to live, work and visit.

The council plan has been used to help identify the objectives of the Digital North Tyneside theme. The Digital Strategy will go beyond the timeframe of the current North Tyneside Plan however by building on the Council plan the two documents will become interlinked going forward. The Council plan has 25 key objectives across five themes, the Digital North Tyneside strategy can contribute to each of these themes both directly and indirectly. The table in figure 1 describes how the two plans are interlinked.




	People 	Economy 	Place 
Thriving	X	X	X
Secure	X		X
Family-Friendly	X		
Caring	X		
Green	X	X	X

Figure 6.1

The Digital North Tyneside theme will be underpinned by the Digital North Tyneside steering group. This group will report into the IT Board to create and manage an annual plan with detailed interventions being made to reach the goals set out in this document.

Digital North Tyneside



Digital People

We will work with our partners to help our residents be digital included through access to the skills, equipment and support needed to use technology safely and prepare the future workforce for the digital economy. We will work with connectivity suppliers to help deliver high quality affordable connectivity to all in the Borough.



Digital Economy

We will support the growth of the North Tyneside economy using digital and support the digital economy by creating and supporting initiatives to improve infrastructure, support cyber resilience and promoting innovation.



Digital Place

We will use technology to help make North Tyneside a great place to live, work and visit through maximising the use of technology and connectivity to support cultural, leisure and public spaces.

Figure 6.2



6.1. Digital North Tyneside – Digital People

We will work with our partners to help our residents be digital included through access to the skills, equipment and support needed to use technology safely. We will work with the market to help deliver high quality affordable connectivity to corners of the Borough.

No	Goal
P1	People have access to IT equipment to support them to access education, employment and social opportunities.
P2	People have the opportunity to access the basic skills to enable them to participate in using digital services.
P3	People have access to advice, training and guidance to help them start a digital career.
P4	People have access to online safety advice and guidance to help keep them and their families safe online.
P5	All homes in North Tyneside will be able to access high quality affordable connectivity.
P6	People understand how the internet can help them connect, learn or access opportunities. People understand the social, health and financial benefits to being online.



6.2. Digital North Tyneside – Digital Economy

We will support the growth of the North Tyneside digital economy by creating and supporting initiatives to improve infrastructure, support Cyber resilience, promote innovation and helping to prepare the future workforce for the digital economy.

No	Goal
E1	All businesses in North Tyneside will be able to access high quality affordable connectivity.
E2	Businesses are able to access support to help them grow their business using digital technology.
E3	Businesses are aware of cyber security and digital resilience risks and are able to take steps to reduce this risk.
E4	Businesses are able to access a digital workforce to help grow and sustain their business.
E5	North Tyneside is an attractive place for businesses to digitally innovate.
E6	Businesses are able to share digital innovation and digital products with the Council.



6.3. Digital North Tyneside – Digital Place

We will use technology to help make North Tyneside a great place to live, work and visit through maximising the use of technology and connectivity to support cultural, leisure and public spaces.

No	Goal
L1	Our public buildings will be spaces for people to access free connectivity.
L2	We will work alongside regeneration to deliver connected places to support digital inclusion and business growth
L3	Our schools will have access to high quality connectivity to support young people's learning.
L4	Schools will have access to high quality advice on IT curriculum with insights from industry.
L5	North Tyneside will be a place for digital culture through offers such as digital art spaces, Esports, performance spaces.
L6	Digital technology will be used to support the Climate change programme.

7. Infrastructure

Provide a stable, secure, scalable and cost-effective infrastructure to support the delivery of Data, Customer, Team and Digital North Tyneside themes.

All elements of the Digital Strategy are underpinned by a robust IT infrastructure which is an essential part of the day-to-day operations of the Council. This infrastructure will be carefully designed and maintained to ensure a reliable and robust service. The infrastructure provided will use a capability-based approach wherever possible, meaning infrastructure will be delivered to provide a capability that can be used across the whole Council rather than creating duplication through departmental specific systems. This approach is more cost effective, easier to support and is a greater catalyst for innovation.

An annual capital investment plan will be produced to deliver this objective following the principles set out below wherever possible:

1. Reduce duplication
2. Reduce support burden
3. Reduce climate impact and contributes to Net-Zero ambitions.
4. Improve security
5. Improve resilience
6. Reduce cost
7. Increase performance
8. Prepare for the future
9. Contributes to the delivery of the Data, Customer, Team and Borough themes
10. Improve Interoperability and access to data

A separate technical strategy will be maintained which will be reviewed annually and approved by the Council's IT Board. The technical strategy will set out the detail of what technology the Council will be using in the future and what will be replaced or changed.

8. Governance

The delivery of the North Tyneside Council Digital Strategy will be monitored by the Council's IT Board who will direct the capital programme and project schedule. This group consists of Members and Senior Officers from areas across the Council and the IT Board reports into the Council's Senior Leadership Team. The IT Board is supported by the IT Steering Group which manages more operational level decision making and smaller projects as directed by the IT board. The Steering Group consists of senior IT colleagues and from across the Council which have a significant impact on IT operations. This structure, alongside the wider relationship with other groups, is described in figure X.

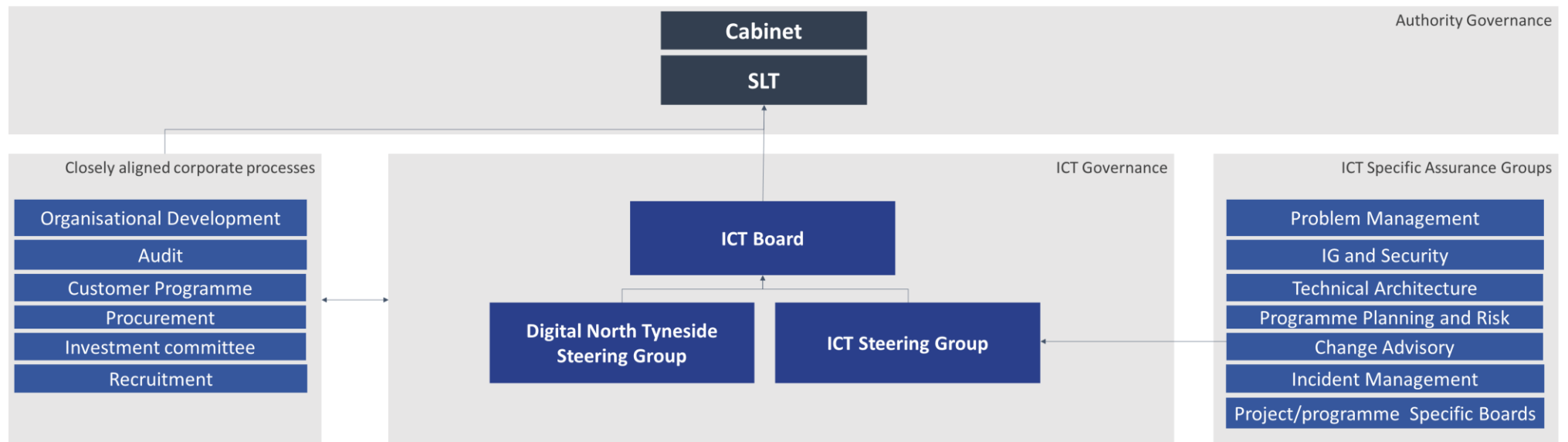


Figure 8.1

Specific activities to deliver the digital strategy will be split into projects overseen by the IT Board and IT Steering Group. These projects will be managed by the Digital Delivery Operating Model. This model sets out the processes that projects will follow to help ensure quality, cost and time are maintained. The Model is detailed in its own document but a summary of the process is in figure 8.2

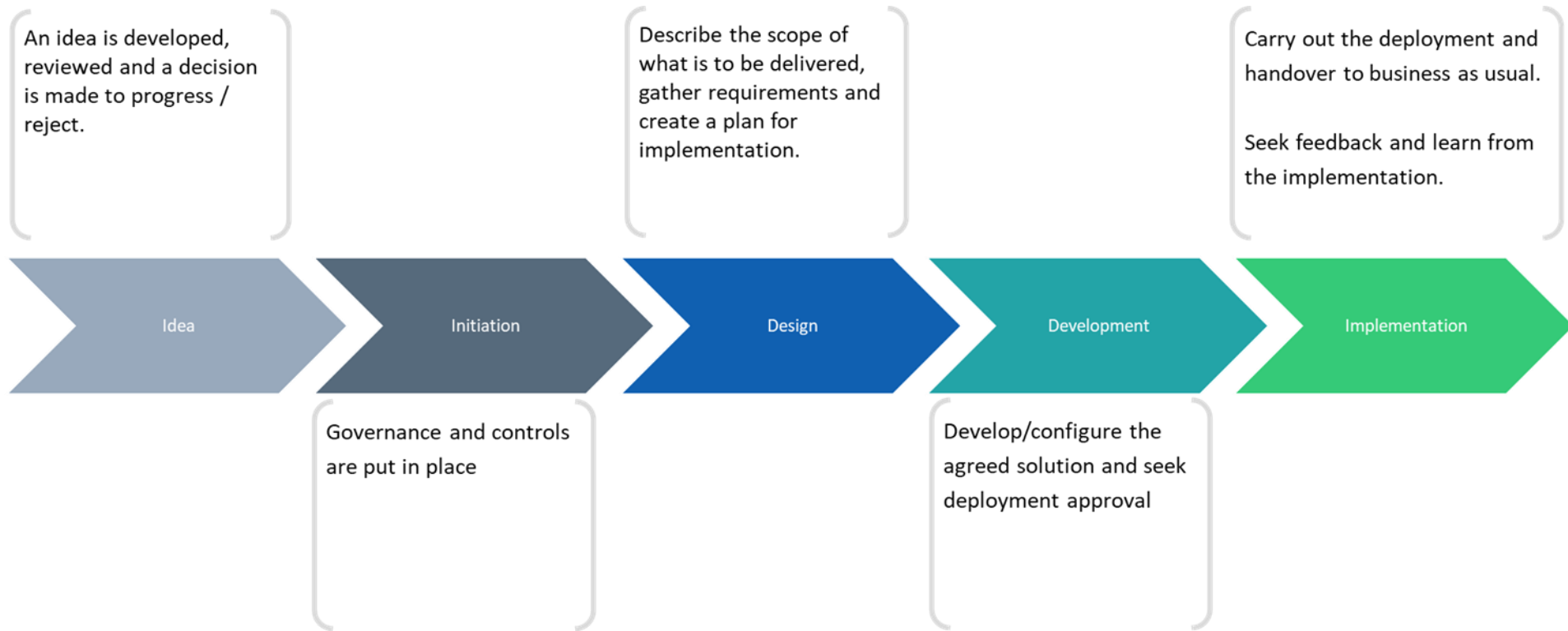


Figure 8.1

9. Standards

The Council will use the Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) framework. ITIL is a collection of best practices for delivering IT services; it standardises the planning, selection, delivery, and support of IT services to optimize efficiency and maintain predictable service levels.

Specifically, the IT service will maintain and follow the following ITIL processes:

- An Incident process which defines how the IT service responds to minor and major incidents.
- A change management process which defines how the IT service reviews and accepts changes into live service.
- A service transition process which defines how the new products are transferred from development to live service.
- Problem Management Process which defines how problems are identified, managed and resolved.
- A service catalogue which defines the standard regular requests which will be processed by the IT team

These specific processes will be overseen by the IT steering group and any significant changes approved by the IT Board.

Performance of the IT service will be monitored regularly through incident response and resolution statistics, customer satisfaction feedback, critical service availability, project monitoring and digital maturity progress.