Council

7 December 2022

Digital Transformation Strategy Refresh

Executive Summary

HCPC's Digital Transformation Strategy was published in April 2021. Much progress has been made since this date, and the organisation's understanding of its digital needs has evolved. A refresh of the strategy is therefore timely.

The presented refreshed strategy has been developed following a careful review of progress to date, both in terms of the many significant achievements but also areas where further improvements can be made. Views of a wide range of stakeholders have been sought, and a recurrent theme has been that the existing strategy is more theoretical than practical and hasn't provided a clear sense of direction for our digital journey to date. The current Vision statement was also felt to be unrealistic and not sufficiently rooted in HCPC's purpose and strategic aims.

This refreshed strategy therefore contains a revised Vision statement developed in consultation with key stakeholders and defines our Transformation Approach based on the risk appetite of the organisation and our current level of digital maturity. It incorporates a set of Digital Principles that should inform and shape how we approach the delivery of the strategy.

The second part of the document sets out the key actions that will be prioritised in 2023 and beyond, and the digital aims and milestones incorporated in our Corporate Plan. These sections are currently in draft pending the conclusion of the corporate planning process for 2023-24. This section of the document will be revisited on an annual basis within the context of the agreed Vision, Digital Principles and Transformation Approach.

Previous consideration	The People and Resources Committee was consulted in the development of the refreshed strategy on 6 September 2022.
Decision	The Council is asked to approve the refreshed Digital Transformation Strategy.
Next steps	Following approval the refreshed strategy will be published to the wider organisation and its stakeholders. We will work with Comms on how best to communicate the strategy internally and with stakeholders. The detailed corporate plan milestones referenced in the Strategy will be updated following the conclusion of the current corporate planning process, although this will not require the Strategy itself to be reapproved. Individual workstreams arising from the strategy will be taken forward as part

	of the IT and Digital Transformation team's work plan and the wider business change programme.
Strategic priority	The refreshed digital transformation strategy is explicitly aligned with the Corporate Plan. It will support the achievement of all of HCPC's strategic aims, in particular strategic aims 1 (continuously improve and innovate), 3 (develop insight and exert influence) and 5 (build a resilient, healthy, capable and sustainable organisation).
Financial and resource implications	Delivery of the digital transformation strategy will require investment of both money and time. All individual investment decisions will be subject to separate business case approvals in accordance with the HCPC benefits framework, within the budgets set by ELT and Council.
EDI impact	Improving the capture and analysis of EDI data has formed a key element of work to date on delivering the strategy. The refreshed strategy makes explicit the need to design new digital solutions around the needs of the end user, including those with specific accessibility requirements.
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Digital Transformation Strategy 2021-2025: 2022 Refresh

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Strategy on a Page

Vision for a Digitally Enabled HCPC

HCPC will excel in the use of digital solutions and ways of working in order to provide effective regulation and prevention, and to provide a straightforward, value-adding experience for our stakeholders.

Digital Principles

- Benefits driven
- User centred
- Value for money
- Cloud first
- Build (and invest) incrementally
- Standardise
- Keep it simple
- Keep it safe

Key Actions

- Complete our migration to the Cloud
- Adopt a Digital Platforms approach
- Improve the user experience
- Build our data platform and culture
- Develop our digital skills and capabilities
- Prepare for regulatory reform

Transformation Approach

HCPC 2021-25

- Digital Reinvention
- Digital Optimisation
- Digital Platforms

HCPC will develop its digital platforms and optimise how it delivers its existing services. We will explore discrete opportunities for reinvention to achieve truly transformative change where there is a clear need and an acceptable level of risk.

Corporate Plan Digital Aims

* Our processes are easily accessible * Our users have a positive experience * Our data is accurate, accessible, and useful * * We have effective mechanisms for engaging with all our key stakeholders * We are responsive to those who contact us * * We have improved our stakeholders' experience and our efficiency * We have the right skills to drive our future performance *

Vision for a Digitally Enabled HCPC

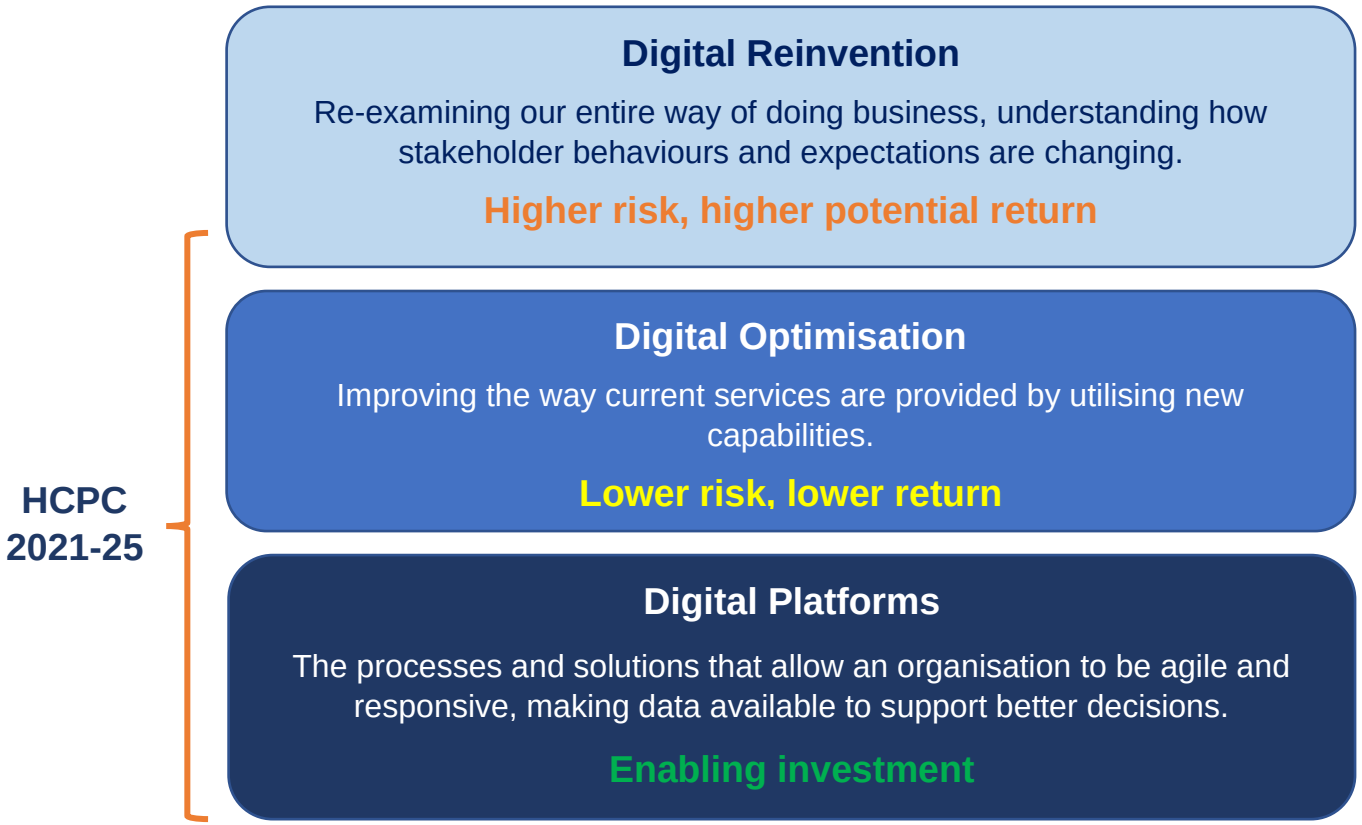
The original Digital Transformation Strategy set out a vision *"to be seen as the UK's leading regulator for effective use of digital technology to support an agile organisation".* While this statement provided an important sense of ambition and drive, it did not provide a sense of why digital transformation will benefit HCPC, and more importantly its stakeholders, and what our future might look like once the transformation has been achieved.

A revised vision statement has therefore been developed, in consultation with key stakeholders:

Vision for a Digitally Enabled HCPC:

HCPC will excel in the use of digital solutions and ways of working in order to provide effective regulation and prevention, and to provide a straightforward, value-adding experience for our stakeholders.

Defining our Transformation Approach



During this strategy timeframe, HCPC should focus on developing its digital platforms and optimising how it delivers its existing services by taking advantage of new digital capabilities. This approach recognises the risk appetite set by the Council, whilst still providing a wide range of opportunities to deliver tangible improvements.

Discrete opportunities to engage in digital reinvention to deliver truly transformative change will be considered where this can be done at an acceptable level of risk and cost, and where a clear need exists.

This will help us to build our digital transformation experience and skills in readiness for further potential reinvention following regulatory reform.

Digital Principles

The work we undertake to deliver the Digital Transformation Strategy will be informed by the following principles:

Benefits driven	All investment decisions will be made in accordance with our Benefits Framework and will need to demonstrate that the benefits outweigh the costs.
User centred	Services and solutions will be designed around the needs of the end user, including those with specific accessibility needs, and we will actively seek feedback from our stakeholders on how we can improve their experience.
Value for money	We will ensure that our investments and ongoing costs for digital solutions offer good value for money to the organisation and to the Registrants who fund our work.
Cloud first	We will maintain a strong preference for Cloud-based solutions that minimise the need for upfront investment, increase our resilience and simplify the end user experience.
Build (and invest) incrementally	We will break down major projects and investments into smaller chunks, learning as we go. This reduces risk and helps to ensure we keep solutions aligned with evolving organisational needs.
Standardise	Consistent technical, architectural and design standards will ensure the separate solutions we put in place add up to a coherent whole.
Keep it simple	We will always look to reduce complexity in the solutions we implement, whilst ensuring organisational objectives can be achieved.
Keep it safe	We will build in security and privacy safeguards from the outset to protect the data we look after and ensure we use it responsibly.

Key Actions

Building on the successes of the first two years of the Digital Transformation Strategy and the Corporate Plan, we will prioritise the following actions in 2023 and beyond. These actions, and the Corporate Plan milestones and aims in the next section, will be revisited on an annual basis within the context of the Vision, Digital Principles and Transformation Approach set out above. This will ensure that delivery of the refreshed strategy remains relevant to the evolving needs and emerging challenges of the organisation.

Complete our Migration to the Cloud

Over the past few years we have replaced the majority of our legacy on-premise applications with modern, Cloud-based solutions. In parallel, we have also migrated much of our underlying infrastructure to the Cloud in order to enhance resilience and flexibility.

Once migration to the Cloud is complete, the on-premise data centre can be largely decommissioned, retaining only the equipment necessary to run onsite services. This will make a substantial contribution to HCPC's sustainability objectives by reducing energy usage for the head office by an estimated 33%. It will also enable us to simplify the employee and partner experience, removing a number of security layers that are only necessary to be able to access data held on site.

Adopt a Digital Platforms approach

In recent years HCPC has made some significant and technically successful investments in new technologies. Of necessity, the solutions that have been put in place with this investment have largely been based on the need to take immediate action to address specific business issues rather than as part of a broader organisation-wide architecture. Indeed there has been a conscious choice to adopt an approach where solutions to specific problems could be put in place rapidly without being slowed down by the inertia often experienced with traditional "monolithic" technology architectures.

The trade-off of this approach is that it can be difficult to ensure that the full value of each investment is secured, with the risk that duplicate or overlapping solutions may be introduced rather than fully leveraging existing solutions first. It increases the security and maintenance overhead, with more threat surfaces to protect, more servers to maintain, and greater complexity to manage.

By adopting a Digital Platforms approach, it is possible to have the best of both worlds. “Platform” technologies are generic solutions that can be readily configured to meet many different scenarios and needs. By standardising on to a limited number of digital platforms, HCPC can reduce complexity, increase consistency, and maximise value whilst continuing to offer individual departments the ability to innovate. They will do so by utilising the broad range of capabilities that the platform technologies can offer to develop specific “Products” that sit alongside each other on these platforms.

Only where it can be demonstrated that an existing platform is not able to meet a specific business need would there be a case for procuring a new technology. The approach also enables end user departments to move quicker, as there will be fewer technical challenges to address in each project as the Digital Platforms will already have the core infrastructure and integrations in place which can be scaled and configured to meet the new requirement.

Improve the User Experience

A key principle of this refreshed strategy is that all our digital solutions must be designed around the needs of the end user (meaning registrants, service users, applicants, education providers and other key stakeholder groups). Beyond this, we will also work to ensure that the overall experience of engaging with HCPC is as straightforward and value-adding as possible. By mapping the user journeys of our key stakeholder groups (including registrants, employers and service users), we will identify opportunities to streamline them. We will identify and remove specific barriers to access, especially for stakeholder groups with particular needs arising from issues of equality, diversity and inclusion.

The corporate plan identifies a goal to introduce a single customer access point for HCPC. For us to become a digitally enabled regulator, this needs to move beyond the current traditional telephone-based service to offer an integrated user experience across whichever channels our registrants and other stakeholders choose to engage with us. We will investigate the potential to move to a new “omnichannel” customer service platform that ensures consistency across our online and traditional channels.

Listening to feedback is essential to improving the user experience, and we will engage with our end users and other stakeholders on an ongoing basis to ensure we hear what is working for them, and we can improve.

Build our data platform and culture

Developing our data and analysis capabilities is a core theme of our corporate plan and will continue to form a large element of the work on this refreshed strategy. A major project is underway in 2022/23 to establish a modern data platform. An incremental approach is being utilised, so that the build can largely be undertaken using inhouse resources and without the need for significant upfront investment. This work will continue in 2023/24, and we will develop our plans for delivering comprehensive self-service tools for both internal use and for our stakeholders. The opportunities offered by Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence to enhance our analytical capabilities will be explored.

This work will continue to be taken forward in alignment with HCPC's Insight and Intelligence Framework and the Programme for Data Excellence so that we are not only building our technical data capabilities but also translating the data into actionable insight and analysis that informs our work as an effective regulator.

Develop our digital skills and capabilities

As well as building our data skills, becoming a digitally enabled regulator will require us to develop a number of other important skills and capabilities. Some of these will be relevant to all employees and partners, such as learning how to use a modern cloud-based document management system to collaborate with colleagues securely and efficiently. Support and training for system users will form a key element of the rollout of new systems and solutions to make sure that new ways of working become embedded, and the benefits of the new technologies secured.

Other skills and capabilities are more specific to the teams most heavily involved in delivering the solutions that HCPC's digital transformation relies upon. We will continue to evolve our approach to programme and project management, embedding an agile approach that reduces risk and improves quality. The Product Management function will also develop further, supporting our

regulatory functions in continuously improving the solutions they use to support their day to day work. We are continuing to evolve our technology architecture and data engineering capabilities.

As we forward with this strategy, further capabilities will need to be put in place, in particular:

Business Partnering and Analysis: working with operational teams across the organisation to understand their evolving requirements, working alongside the Product Managers.

Solution Design: identifying cost effective but technically robust solutions to meet business needs, leveraging the capabilities of our technology platforms.

Platform Management: as we complete our migration into the Cloud, the work of the infrastructure engineers will evolve from maintaining our network and data centre into providing platforms that enable flexible and secure solutions to be efficiently and effectively implemented.

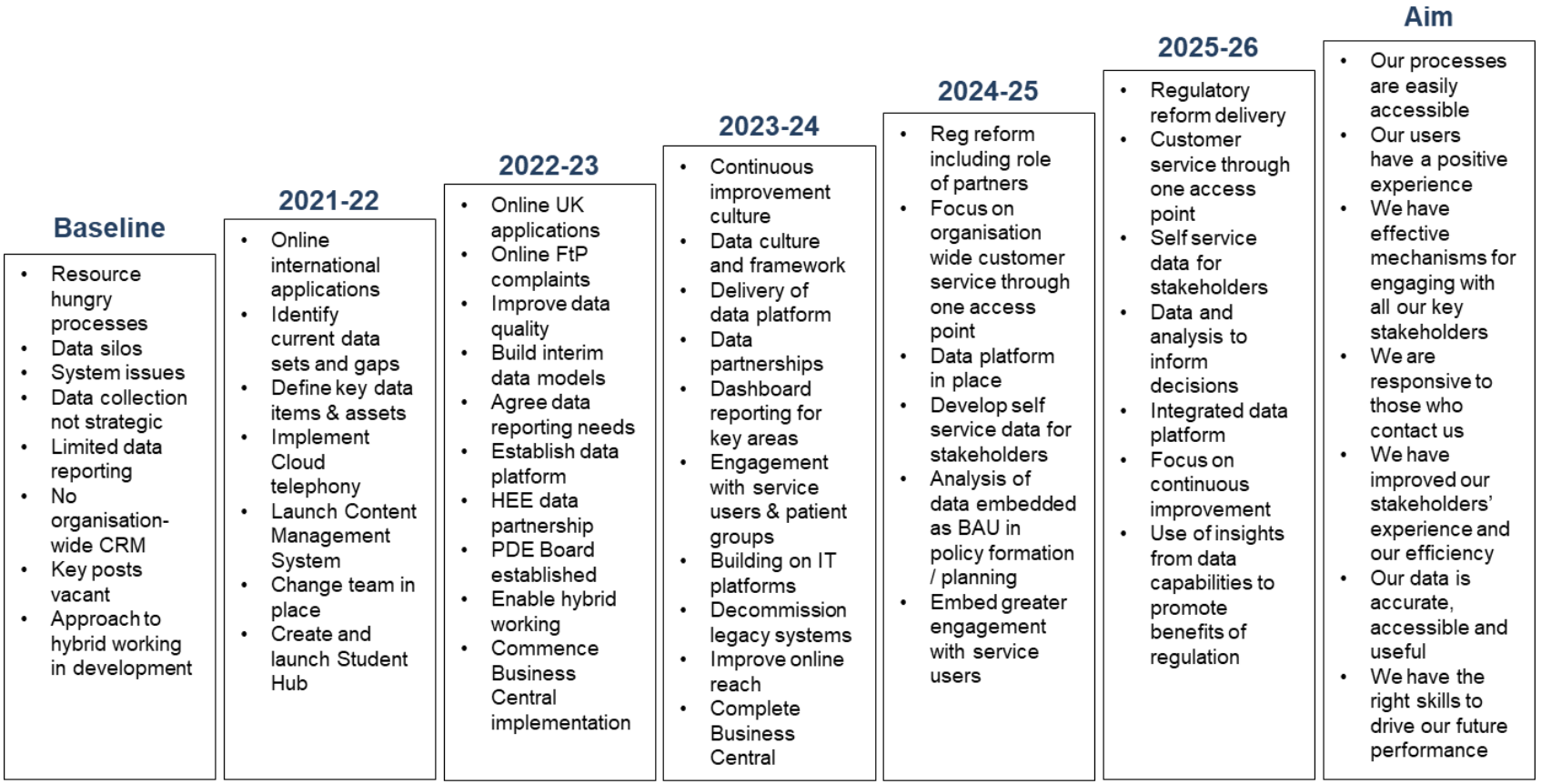
IT Supplier Management: managing strategic partnerships with our key IT suppliers to ensure we secure value for money, high quality services.

Automation: to help free up capacity with which to develop these new capabilities, increased automation (and provision of self-service solutions) for more routine aspects of the current IT workload will need to be put in place.

Prepare for regulatory reform

The timescale and nature of regulatory reform for HCPC are as yet unknown. However by increasing HCPC's ability to respond flexibly and quickly to change, the digital transformation strategy will be a key enabler for regulatory reform. As more clarity emerges, we will review our digital plans to ensure they will enable HCPC to make the most of the opportunities that regulatory reform will offer and will deliver at the pace required.

Corporate Plan Digital Milestones

The HCPC Corporate Plan sets out the priority developments for the organisation. The refreshed Digital Transformation Strategy is intended to support the delivery of these developments, and the achievement of the HCPC's strategic aims and outcomes.

The diagram below sets out the main milestones in the Corporate Plan that relate to this strategy.