



## CABINET

Tuesday, 03 May 2022

<b>Subject</b>	Data Analytical capacity
<b>Report by</b>	Councillor Stephen Burroughes, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Customer Services, ICT and Commercial Partnerships
<b>Supporting Officer</b>	Sandra Lewis Head of Digital and Programme Management <a href="mailto:Sandra.lewis@eastsoffolk.gov.uk">Sandra.lewis@eastsoffolk.gov.uk</a> 01394 444205

Is the report Open or Exempt?	OPEN
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Category of Exempt Information and reason why it is <b>NOT</b> in the public interest to disclose the exempt information.	Not applicable
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All Wards

## Purpose and high-level overview

### **Purpose of Report:**

To seek approval of growth in staffing budget for the Digital & Programme Management service area to appoint a Senior Data Analyst.

### **Options:**

In assessing the options to address the needs outlined in this report, the following have been considered:

1. Appointment of a Senior Data Analyst to address capacity needs as detailed in this report.
2. Continue as we are, with limited data analytical capacity, utilising one-off pieces of work with SODA.
3. Commission specific pieces of work with a contractor or external supplier.

Option 1 is considered the most appropriate way forward to deliver a well-resourced, flexible and continuous approach to addressing the data needs of a modern authority.

### **Recommendation/s:**

That Cabinet approves a supplementary budget increase of £65,508 including all on-costs for the appointment of a Senior Data Analyst role within the Digital and Programme Management service area.

## Corporate Impact Assessment

### **Governance:**

No negative impact on governance however additional resource to assist with managing and understanding data will have a positive impact on governance across the organisation, enabling us to have better insight into monitoring services and the performance of the organisation as a whole.

### **ESC policies and strategies that directly apply to the proposal:**

East Suffolk Strategic Plan

Digital Strategy

### **Environmental:**

None, although delivery of the Strategic Plan Environment theme will benefit from greater data analysis capability.

### **Equalities and Diversity:**

An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken (reference EQIA408619373) – this proposal will have a positive impact on protected characteristic groups because additional capacity within the council to better understand the data we hold about our district will enable us to work in a proactive way to understand inequalities across services, provide data to tackle/address inequalities, ensure our resources are focused on the right areas, and enable early intervention.

### **Financial:**

Additional budget requirement as detailed in this report, Finance have been involved in and support this request for resources.

**Human Resources:**

Recruitment of an additional post, HR have been involved in and support this request.

**ICT:**

This proposal is to address capacity needs within this team.

**Legal:**

None

**Risk:**

The risk if we do not move forward with this proposal, is that we cannot keep pace with the digital data demands of a modern council in terms of understanding our district, our customers and other key priority areas using data to provide insight to all services.

This includes the risk that we cannot adequately deliver to Priority P17 of the Strategic Plan – Effective use of data.

Without this post in place and proper data insight work, there is greater risk of the inefficient use of resources and less focussed delivery of services and projects. Early intervention and prevention initiatives are less likely to take place without the support of this resource, leading to greater costs to East Suffolk Council and more of our residents facing crisis.

**External Consultees:** None

## Strategic Plan Priorities

Select the priorities of the <a href="#">Strategic Plan</a> which are supported by this proposal: <i>(Select only one primary and as many secondary as appropriate)</i>		Primary priority	Secondary priorities
<b>T01</b>	<b>Growing our Economy</b>		
P01	Build the right environment for East Suffolk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P02	Attract and stimulate inward investment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P03	Maximise and grow the unique selling points of East Suffolk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P04	Business partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P05	Support and deliver infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>T02</b>	<b>Enabling our Communities</b>		
P06	Community Partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P07	Taking positive action on what matters most	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P08	Maximising health, well-being and safety in our District	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P09	Community Pride	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>T03</b>	<b>Maintaining Financial Sustainability</b>		
P10	Organisational design and streamlining services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P11	Making best use of and investing in our assets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P12	Being commercially astute	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P13	Optimising our financial investments and grant opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

P14	Review service delivery with partners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>T04</b>	<b>Delivering Digital Transformation</b>		
P15	Digital by default	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P16	Lean and efficient streamlined services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P17	Effective use of data	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P18	Skills and training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P19	District-wide digital infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>T05</b>	<b>Caring for our Environment</b>		
P20	Lead by example	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P21	Minimise waste, reuse materials, increase recycling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P22	Renewable energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P23	Protection, education and influence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>XXX</b>	<b>Governance</b>		
XXX	How ESC governs itself as an authority	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

#### How does this proposal support the priorities selected?

This proposal directly addresses priority P17 – Effective use of data – by putting in place additional resource to take forward our ambitions of being a data-led authority. It also supports all other themes of the strategic plan, including governance, by providing a vital data service to underpin everything we do as an organisation – delivering the technical skills to provide insights and data analytics to the organisation as a whole, subsequently leading to improved delivery of front-line services across all areas of the council.

This proposal is key to unlocking a better understanding of delivery of services, including providing better focus, efficiency and different perspectives on tackling the needs of the district and all who live in it. Unlocking the power of data in a co-ordinated and managed way will provide a vital next step for the authority.

## Background and Justification for Recommendation

<b>1</b>	<b>Background facts</b>
1.1	The East Suffolk Strategic Plan states within priority <b>P17 Effective use of data</b> that we will be data led in the way we make decisions and the way we manage services.
1.2	A <a href="#">National Data Strategy</a> published in 2020 by the <i>Department for Digital, Culture, Media &amp; Sport</i> (DCMS) sets out the importance of data across all sectors and includes priority areas of action such as unlocking the value of data to help boost the economy; using data in a trusted way; and transforming government’s use of data to improve public services.
1.3	The demand for data science skills will only increase. <a href="#">Research from DCMS</a> predicts that data analysis will become the fastest growing digital skills cluster in the UK, increasing by an estimated 33% in the next five years.
1.4	The use of data plays an ever-increasing role in designing, delivering and transforming public services to improve outcomes and drive efficiencies. More data than ever is available to inform services and obtain greater insights into the needs of our organisation, the people within our district and the places we serve.

1.5	The data we hold, and held regionally or nationally by others, is growing exponentially and will continue to grow. The complexity and the requirements on the digital team to manage the data grows with it.
1.6	East Suffolk Council (or predecessor councils) has never had a specialist data analytical team which is unusual for a council of this size.
1.7	The <a href="#">Levelling Up the United Kingdom</a> White Paper published in February 2022 sets out expectations on local government that include improved data and transparency, oversight and analytics, evaluation and experimentation. It states that “Monitoring local performance and policies is crucial if they are to be understood and responded to by local citizens and improved by local leaders over time.” It also sets out that a new local government body will be put in place to have oversight and drive transparency in this area.

## 2 Current position

2.1	<p>We do use data at East Suffolk, we use it every day in the work and decision making of the council, however there are several observations to be made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many teams develop manual processes to report on siloed data, without the knowledge or expertise to fully analyse or efficiently manage it.</li> <li>• Considerable time and effort is being spent by officers whose specialism lies in other fields across the organisation (such as planning or housing) on data preparation, redundant processes, and ad-hoc reporting.</li> <li>• There are efficiencies to be made by making better use of centralised analytical skills to automate dynamic reporting and dashboard style visual aids to make information instantly accessible to services.</li> <li>• There are areas where we are not utilising data to inform service delivery to the extent we could be.</li> <li>• We are not fully joining up data sources across council services to present a joined-up view to understand issues or proactively address needs.</li> </ul>
2.2	We know the possibilities we have available to us in utilising data for a more informed and joined up approach to service delivery, greater visibility of performance at all levels and efficient use of resources, however we lack capacity to deliver this vision. We do have access to SODA (Suffolk Office of Data Analytics), where there is a team of data analysts; however, this is delivered at a Suffolk-wide level based at Suffolk County Council and we do not have direct management of SODA resources to deliver the volume and depth of work at our local level, using our own data sources and systems. We have taken advantage of training opportunities and other joined-up working at a Suffolk level though, and the SODA network is a valuable resource to us.
2.3	We have one Data Analyst currently employed within the Digital & Programme Management service area, a Band 6 post which has been in place since October 2020, currently reporting directly to the Head of Service.
2.4	The existing Data Analyst, albeit in a relatively junior role, has already achieved some fantastic work in the field of data analytics, using resources such as PowerBI to develop dashboards and other insights – this has increased awareness across all teams of the power behind using data to inform service delivery, which we wish to take advantage of.
2.5	The ambitions of our strategic plan and level of demand on this single post cannot be met by this relatively junior member of staff and there is not enough capacity within the Head of Service role to fully lead this area of work and do it justice.

2.6	<p>A set of data-led principles have been developed by the Digital team in conjunction with a cross-organisational officer group, to underpin the direction and areas of focus to deliver to priority <b>P17 Effective use of data</b>, these principles are:</p> <p><b>Technical</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will ensure the right technical foundations are in place to fulfil our aims of being a truly data-led authority which can only be fully realised when data is fit for purpose, recorded in standardised formats on modern, future-proof systems and held in a condition that means it is find-able, accessible, interoperable and reusable.</li> <li>• We will ensure our data is dynamically accessible from a single source of truth by implementing technical solutions to enable us to make better use of data, so there is a unified corporate approach to the way we manage data.</li> <li>• We will utilise PowerBI and other corporate technical solutions for data analysis such as our corporate GIS platform, so that information is presented consistently, from verified and dynamic sources once without duplication or manual handling of data where possible.</li> </ul> <p><b>Data governance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will ensure that everything we do by being a data-led authority complies with data protection legislation</li> <li>• We will explore opportunities to share and join up information appropriately with other partners and agencies who will have a positive impact on our aims of being data-led and adhering to our data-led principles.</li> <li>• We will improve the quality of the data we hold, to make it more effective and drive better insights and outcomes from its use.</li> </ul> <p><b>Understanding our district</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will understand our district by using a variety of sources including nationally available demographic data, our own data from internal sources, spatial data, qualitative data and specific data we are able to share from partner organisations.</li> <li>• We will use demographic data to aid in decision making and understanding where issues and inequalities lie across the district to feed into all strategic themes of our Strategic Plan.</li> </ul> <p><b>Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will understand the performance of our organisation by Strategic Plan theme, by use of dashboards to identify direction and progress against our priorities including key performance measures.</li> <li>• We will understand the performance of our services at a more granular level, by using verified, easily accessible and analysed data to assist managers in monitoring the performance of their own services and our impact on our communities and businesses.</li> </ul> <p><b>Shaping services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will use data to assist at all levels of the organisation in decision making, feeding into business case development and providing evidence to support decisions taken.</li> <li>• We will use data to improve services, including by joining data up, to show where issues may lie and focus attention on delivering the right solution at the right time and in the right place to improve services to customers and improve internal processes.</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will use data to provide direction in the future planning of all services and strategic aims.</li> </ul> <p><b>Early intervention</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will use data to make a difference in the services we provide, meaning that early intervention by use of data forecasting and analytical tools may prevent families or vulnerable people going into crisis, with a view to improving the lives of people in our communities, reducing demand on critical services and having a positive effect on the prospects of our communities and economy.</li> </ul>
2.7	<p><b>Technical</b> – We do not currently have the capacity to put in place the technical architecture needed to manage our data in a more comprehensive way. Also, without an adequate level of technical support, service areas will struggle with sourcing, interpreting and leveraging data in the correct way to provide the type of insight we are capable of delivering to manage front-line services across the authority – we run the risk of services going in different directions to satisfy their data requirements in an uncoordinated or uninformed way.</p>
2.8	<p><b>Data governance</b> – Everything we do is of course bound by data protection legislation; however, we know there are opportunities to explore better sharing of data with and from other agencies to provide a more rounded picture of people and places, of course working with the Data Protection team to facilitate this. We are also aware that in some areas we need to address issues of data quality, for consistency purposes or where there is lack of any usable data at all.</p>
2.9	<p><b>Understanding our district</b> – A recent example of good use of data to inform decision making was through the use of data packs in Community Partnership meetings – these were pulled together as a one-off piece of work by SODA (Suffolk Office of Data Analytics) using high level demographic data. Our ambitions lean toward providing this type of insight about our district on a dynamic and more local basis, so that Members can understand their wards, managers can understand issues affecting their services and strategically we fully understand and utilise data about the demographic make-up of our district to aid in prioritising projects and making decisions.</p>
2.10	<p><b>Performance</b> – We have recently been working to develop a new set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), to work alongside and monitor our delivery against the Strategic Plan. Delivery of fully functioning dashboards to provide Members, Senior Management and the public at-a-glance insights to our performance is a large piece of work that will need further capacity to fully deliver in the most efficient way. There are also opportunities to better provide managers with accurate and immediate access to lower-level detailed performance data about their services, which needs fully exploring and delivering across the whole authority.</p>
2.11	<p><b>Shaping services</b> – One example of a recent piece of work where data has been utilised to great effect is adding a satisfaction rating to our transactional services on our self-service website portal. All customers are asked a simple question once they have completed a process – How likely are you to recommend our online services? Their subsequent ratings are used to inform our web team on how well each online process is performing, and poorly performing areas are investigated and improved. This can be translated to many examples of how we can use data to focus our attention to how best to shape the services we deliver, from where to build council houses to particular hotspots in fly tipping, for example. We can use data to ultimately deliver our services in a more efficient way.</p>

2.12	<p><b>Early intervention</b> – We know there are opportunities to utilise data to better understand issues faced by our communities and do something about them before hitting crisis point, and we already have ambitions of this in our pilot project using a product called LIFT (Low Income Family Tracker). One example of better use of data may be the current cost of living crisis – understanding where people are at risk of poverty or being able to look for red flags where people could be going down a route of disaster, will give us the opportunity for early intervention to assist people heading towards crisis, meaning potentially preventing homelessness or assisting in lifting people out of poverty situations. This not only helps the people involved but would also prevent further demand on our services in addressing homelessness or debt recovery procedures reactively.</p>
2.13	<p><b>Peer review recommendations</b> – The recent LGA Peer Challenge highlighted a need to shore up capacity and recommended another hot house to refresh the Council’s approach to focus on prioritisation, capacity, capability, governance and oversight. Data is clearly central in enabling the Council to improve itself in these areas. Data will help shape and define areas of priority and focus. It will then provide an objective basis against which we can assess our progress, in terms of performance and oversight. Clearly, working in a focussed, more data led way will make better use of existing resources and greatly assist with the Council’s capacity issues.</p>
2.14	<p>In conclusion, we have proven examples where using data in a more joined up and proactive way leads to tangible results – including achieving cost savings, increasing productivity or more focussed delivery of services. We are already working in pockets with the resources we currently have, piloting areas such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The data from ratings of our online services leading to direct service improvements.</li> <li>• Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) work under the LIFT pilot project leading to a more targeted distribution and take up of DHPs.</li> <li>• Proactive identification of issues leading to housing rent arrears using data from our housing system, resulting in better rent collection rates.</li> <li>• Demographic data being used to understand local issues in a more joined up way, such as identifying priorities of Community Partnerships.</li> <li>• Joining up data across services to provide a holistic view of performance.</li> <li>• Joining up data to provide an impact analysis such as making changes to waste or recycling collection and any subsequent impact on fly tipping, for example.</li> <li>• Our ambitions in using footfall and other data from digital towns implementation to boost the local economy and help us make informed choices around other services, such as parking.</li> </ul>

### 3 How to address current situation

3.1	<p>To provide focus, lead development and provide an area of expertise within the organisation, it is proposed to appoint a Senior Data Analyst to lead on the Data-led Services Programme, reporting to the Head of Digital and Programme Management, heading up a small team of Data Analysts (currently one FTE, however there are further data analyst posts being discussed and funded by other service areas, which will also sit within this team if they are agreed).</p>
3.2	<p>The responsibilities of this proposed post can be found at Appendix A. It is a specialist technical role to deliver the necessary data systems architecture, data</p>



	quality requirements, specialist data analytical skills and lead on the programme of embedding a data-led culture across all services, delivering solutions to service areas to cater to their data needs, acting as a lynchpin for the organisation to enable better use of data in all front-line services.
3.3	<p>Creating the Data Analytics team provides a central resource in much the same way that all digital services are delivered to the authority, and will sit within the Digital &amp; Programme Management service area alongside other technical teams such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business Systems team, enabling direct access to our data sources</li> <li>• Performance Reporting and Strategic Plan Management team</li> <li>• Corporate Project Management team</li> </ul>

#### 4 Reason/s for recommendation

4.1	To address this currently under resourced area.
4.2	To ensure we maintain a modern and efficient working environment for East Suffolk Council, utilising all data available to us to improve services and meet the data needs of the organisation.

## Appendices

### Appendices:

<b>Appendix A</b>	Senior Data Analyst Job Description
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### Background reference papers:

Date	Type	Available From
Dec 2020	<a href="#">National Data Strategy</a>	Link provided
May 2021	Research from DCMS – <a href="#">“Quantifying the UK Data Skills Gap”</a>	Link provided
Feb 2022	<a href="#">Levelling up the United Kingdom</a>	Link provided