

Agenda



Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

Date: Friday, 29 July 2022

Time: 10.00 am

Venue: Hybrid Meeting

To: Councillors P Hourahine (Chair), M Al-Nuaimi, M Evans, James, C Baker-Westhead, P Bright, Davies and Horton

Item	Wards Affected
1	<u>Apologies</u>
2	<u>Declarations of Interest</u>
3	<u>Minutes of the Previous Meeting</u> (Pages 3 - 8)
4	<u>Annual Digital Report 21-22</u> (Pages 9 - 40)
5	<u>Digital Strategy Report</u> (Pages 41 - 54)
6	<u>Conclusion of Committee Reports</u> Following the completion of the Committee reports, the Committee will be asked to formalise its conclusions, recommendations and comments on previous items for actioning.
7	<u>Scrutiny Adviser Reports</u> (Pages 55 - 60) a) Actions Arising (Appendix 1)

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Date of Issue: Friday, 22 July 2022

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Draft Minutes

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

Date: 24 June 2022

Time: 10:00am

Venue: Council Chambers- Hybrid Meeting

Present: Councillors P. Hourahine (Chair), M. Al-Nuaimi, M. Evans, L. James, G. Horton

In attendance: Gareth Price (Head of Law and Regulation), Rhys Cornwall (Strategic Director – Transformation & Corporate Centre), Janice Dent (Policy and Partnership Manager), Hywel Jones (Welsh Language Officer).
Neil Barnett (Scrutiny Officer), Leanne Rowlands (Democratic and Electoral Services Manager)

Pamela Tasker (Governance Support Officer), Emily Mayger (Governance and Support Officer), Anne Jenkins (Governance Team Leader)

1. Apologies

Councillor Paul Bright and Councillor Claire Baker-Westhead

2. Declarations of Interest

None

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting 21 January 2022

The Minutes of the previous meeting of the 21 January 2022 were moved as a true record.

4. Welsh Language Annual Monitoring Report 2021-22

Invitees:

Rhys Cornwall (Strategic Director – Transformation & Corporate Centre)

Janice Dent (Policy and Partnership Manager)

Hywel Jones (Welsh Language Officer)

The Chair requested that Members referred to Section A of the report, at the recommendations where the Committee was asked to focus on whether the Annual Report reflected a true and fair account of the councils Welsh Language Performance over the period in question 2021-2022 and whether the report highlighted the ongoing commitment to the Welsh Language effectively.

The report was presented to the Committee by the Strategic Director.

Main Points:

The Strategic Director informed the Committee that this was a draft report to go to Cabinet and Council following committee member comments today.

The Annual report was required as part of the Councils Welsh Language standards imposed by the Welsh Language Measure. There was a series of standards imposed on Newport City Council by the Welsh Language Commissioner which had to be adhered to.

The report covered specific requirements and gave a broad overview of performance during the year and there was also a series of specific data sets required such as staffing figures in relation to the Welsh Language, standards of Welsh spoken, complaints received and general staffing levels, training, and recruitment processes.

The Strategic Director reminded the Committee that this report was a reflection on the 2021/2022 financial year where there were Covid restrictions in place and this had an impact on the ability to provide face to face training and any face-to-face community activities.

Highlights:

- The Welsh In The Community Grants
- An update in the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan
- A refresh of the 5-year promotional strategy to promote Welsh .
- Welsh Language Skills Policy.

The Strategic explained that for Newport one of the key pressures in the Welsh Language was being able to recruit fluent Welsh speakers to deliver services.

The report had information on a number of Complaints received in relation to Welsh Language Standards and if a complaint was received and the complainant was not satisfied with the response, they could then report to the Welsh Language Commissioner. The Welsh Language Commissioner could then instigate an investigation.

There were some complaints received from the Commissioners Office but the Council were in line with other Welsh Local Authorities so there was nothing of concern. The Welsh Language Commission were also happy so far with the responses given by Newport City Council.

Questions:

Cllr Al-Nuaimi commented on the target of 1 million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050 and asked what the percentage of the population in Newport would be.

The Strategic Director stated that there were 2 mechanisms to measure the amount of Welsh speakers in Newport. One was Census data, but the analysis was not complete on this data yet. Looking back at the data from 2011, the data figures were skewed due to the percentage of under 18s who were recorded as fluent Welsh speakers as they were studying

Welsh for GCSE so there was a big difference in over and under 18s. The exact data figure was not available but could be provided to the Committee if needed. The other mechanism was the number of pupils in Welsh medium education which was the basis for planning over the next 5 years.

The Welsh Language Officer confirmed that in terms of the numbers it was 90% based on the census data in 2011 and there was an analysis to be completed on this. In terms of the number of Welsh speakers the annual monitoring report would work closely with the Strategic Plan. To increase speakers, you would need to look at who was going through Welsh medium education. There was a focus on development of Welsh in the community working with stakeholders and partners to look at increasing the amount of Welsh speakers. In the Council there was an increase in training to increase Welsh speaking staff.

The Strategic Director confirmed that there was no specific percentage target in Newport as Newport City Council were not in a position to do this. The promotional standards for the Council in relation to this report would be, are we doing what we need to do to promote the use and take up of the Welsh Language.

Councillor Al- Nuaimi commented that this report could be accepted this year but for future years it was a very ambitious target for 2050 to achieve 1 million Welsh speakers. Councillor Al- Nuaimi suggested that it would be useful to have comments on this target on the annual report and it would be a useful exercise for the Council to attempt to provide figures on the percentage of Newport Welsh speakers.

The Policy and Partnership Manager confirmed that this would be taken on board and would be included in the report for next year.

Councillor James asked what level of Welsh fluency was the aim.

The Welsh Language Officer confirmed that the tables in the report were for staff and there was a breakdown on the establishment list in terms of levels of Welsh that staff had such as None, Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced. Going forward the team wanted to look at framework to measure linguistic ability in Welsh to standardise the Council alongside other Public Bodies.

The Policy and Partnership Manager commented on the key 2021-22 achievements and that there was lot of progress despite the challenges of Covid.

- The Welsh Language Promotion Officer was really supportive in Education in raising awareness.
- The Welsh in the Community Grants really helped community groups in the increase of use of the Welsh language. One in particular was a Hungarian Community group who was supporting families and children to learn Welsh in school.
- The Many Faces of Welshness campaign. Welsh was historically seen as a White British language, but the aim was to engage all communities in Newport which was a priority for next year.

- The Welsh In Education Strategic Plan, the Promotional plan, and the 5 Year Promotional Policy showed that there was a lot of work ongoing, and these would be reported on.
- Employment skills and increasing people's confidence as well as fluency, to try to encourage staff to use Welsh but not to be perfect.
- Monitoring report: it was a challenge for Newport to recruit staff who were Welsh speakers. The Council was low in relation to this, but it was a recruitment that was ongoing. Vacancies were published as Desirable in Welsh in every post. A lot of time was spent speaking to schools and colleges to speak to fluent Welsh speakers who might wish to work for the Council.
- At one time there was only one Welsh medium high school in Bargoed, now we have many more Welsh medium schools, so a lot of work was happening.
- There was a break down in the tables of work to be completed. A video shared with the Committee before the meeting was another way to increase knowledge and understanding of Welsh.
- Key Activities in 2021/2022: there was work with refugee, migrant and minoritized ethnic groups to be completed to increase Welsh in other minorities. Next year the aim was to fully embed the Welsh Language skills policy to be able to report on progress.
- Building on creative partnerships. Recently the Welsh Language Officer and a colleague were involved in a Welsh language rhymes exercise with school children and children from Ysgol Casnewydd to raise Newport's profile.

Councillor Evans stated that he was impressed with the production of the Welsh Video but was not impressed with some of the content and felt that there was some political content in the video but that this was a personal view. Councillor Evans commented on the number of complaints received which was excellent.

Councillor Evans noted that no one had wanted training in Welsh only and that it would be useful to have the training figures in percentages the whole way through. Councillor Evans made a reference to the Community surveys and that it would be useful to have a summary of the residents comments from the 600 responses received.

Councillor Evans commented on the grants and stated that it was a great idea but how were they monitored as it stated in the report some of the grant was used for rent, cleaning products etc so how much of this was monitored and was it used for the correct purpose.

The Strategic Director explained that the monitoring of grants was very important to make sure this had a correct impact and the information around the data included. In relation to the Video the Strategic Director requested that if Councillor Evans had any specific issues, he could speak to the Strategic Director and the Monitoring Officer, and this would be looked at.

The Chair commented on the Hungarian choice and was it chosen due to Welsh being in the same language family.

The Policy and Partnership Manager agreed that it was a similar area and that it was an open bidding process. Councillor Hughes and the Welsh Language Officer was on the panel. It was also about helping people to feel at home and to feel part of Wales and part of Newport and to be able to practice Welsh with their children.

The Welsh Language Officer explained that there was a grant instruction, and the grant applications were panel assessed with an open process and a number of those were postponed due to Covid. There was a monitoring process and a follow up process where receipts and expenditure would be provided.

Councillor Evans mentioned Welsh church funding and grants, and the issue of rent was not something the Council did.

The Welsh Language Officer stated that rent was added due to the community having to rent a venue due to not having a venue of their own so they would not have been able to hold the event otherwise. In terms of the 600 responses this was work completed as part of the 5 Year Strategy so they were included in the Appendix, but Councillor Evans's comments on referencing them in the report would be taken on board.

The Strategic Director stated that this plan was being delivered in a very multi-cultural and diverse Newport where lots of different languages were spoken, so this was about reaching out to Communities and including lots of different ethnic groups.

Councillor Al- Nuaimi commented on the key achievements where it mentioned the Promotional Officer and their engagement with the Black Asian and ethnic minorities in Newport. Councillor Al-Nuaimi stated that they felt the report did not mention what had been achieved with this engagement and what were the results. Councillor Al-Nuaimi stated that the promotion of Welsh in general to staff and residents of Newport was a sweeping statement but there was nothing specific there. Councillor Al-Nuaimi also commented on the surplus places for Welsh Medium Nurseries and that the Promotion Officer may need to work with Welsh Medium Schools to look at this surplus.

The Strategic Director commented that they would ensure that there would be some detail added to the report on the key achievements but in relation to the nursery provision this point would need to be raised with the Chief Education Officer. The Corporate Director and the Policy and Partnership Manager would look to incorporate the work of the Promotional Officer into this report and subsequent reports.

The Corporate Director thanked the Welsh Language Officer for all their hard work as they were leaving the authority to take up a new post in Audit Wales.

5. Conclusion of Committee Reports

Actions:

To monitor the outcomes of the grants provided to various organisations.

To receive an executive summary of responses from the Community resident surveys.

Conclusions:

The Committee agreed that the report was a fair reflection of what had occurred over the past year.

The Committee agreed that the Annual Report highlighted the ongoing commitment to the Welsh Language.

The Committee noted that where it was asked to consider whether the report highlighted the ongoing commitment to the Welsh Language effectively and focused on the appropriate areas for development, the Committee agreed that there was an absence of specific achievements and that they needed to be evidenced clearer.

The Committee agreed that the comments and recommendations made should be submitted to Cabinet.

The Committee requested a comment from the Chief Education Officer regarding the surplus of Welsh Medium Nursery places.

6. Scrutiny Adviser Report

Actions Received

The Scrutiny Advisor assured the Committee that a comment would be requested from the Chief Education Officer regarding the surplus of Welsh Medium Nursery places.

The Digital Services Strategy Report would be discussed at the next Committee.

The Draft Annual Forward Work Programme would be discussed at the next Committee.

7. Date of the Next Meeting

29th of July 2022 at 10am- Hybrid Meeting



Scrutiny Report

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

Part 1

Date: July 2022

Subject Annual Digital Report

Author Samantha Schanzer (Scrutiny Advisor)

The following people have been invited to attend for this item:

Invitee:	Area / Role / Subject
Tracy McKim	Head of People, Policy and Transformation
Mark Bleazard	Digital Services Manager
Dominic Gibbons	Digital Projects Manager
Sam Ali	Digital Projects Manager
Tariq Slaoui	Information Manager

Section A – Committee Guidance and Recommendations

<p>1</p> <p>Recommendations to the Committee</p> <p>The Committee is asked</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider the report and provide feedback on past performance and future actions

2 Context

Background

2.1 This report is designed for best practice rather than of a statutory nature. The purpose of this report is to provide an assessment of the IT and digital arrangements for the council and identify where action is required to identify weaknesses and deliver improvements.

The benefits of the report are as follows:

- Provide an overview of the council's IT and digital services
- Highlight the importance of digital services to the organisation especially given the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic, the opportunities they provide and the risks of under-investment
- To compare performance with previous years with the aim of continuous improvement
- This is the second Annual Digital Report designed to complement the Annual Information Risk Report which is now in its ninth year
- Identify opportunities, address weaknesses and develop an action plan

Previous Consideration of this item

- 2.2 This is the second time that the Annual Digital report has been brought to the committee, the first iteration appearing in [July 2021](#).

3 Information Submitted to the Committee

- 3.1 This report provides a summary of the council's IT and digital services. It looks at the work carried out primarily during the 2021-22 financial year across the council.
- 3.2 The report has an executive summary followed by information on activity during 2021-22. Conclusions as a result of this activity are then detailed followed by an action plan for 2022-23.
- 3.3 The reports contents are:-
- Executive summary
 - Background and purpose
 - Current position
 - Conclusions
 - Actions summary
 - Actions plan

4. Suggested Areas of Focus

Role of the Committee

The role of the Committee in considering the report is to:

Consider the report and provide feedback on past performance and future actions

- Take a backward look at activity around IT/digital during 21/22 and how it contributes to the effectiveness of service delivery
- Assess and make comment on:
 - The contribution of IT/Digital to service delivery
 - The future plans for 22/23 and their appropriateness
 - Whether the Committee is satisfied that it has had all of the relevant information to consider

Suggested Lines of Enquiry

- 4.1 General review of previous activity and future action plan

Section B – Supporting Information

5 Supporting Information

- 5.1 This work supports the council's Digital Strategy and the Modernised Council theme.

6 Links to Council Policies and Priorities

- This report is most relevant to the council's Digital Strategy that is referenced in the report. Many of the activities are in line with the principles of a Modernised Council referenced in the Corporate Plan.

Well-being Objectives	Promote economic growth and regeneration whilst protecting the environment	Improve skills, educational outcomes & employment opportunities	Enable people to be healthy, independent & resilient	Build cohesive & sustainable communities
Corporate Plan Commitments	Thriving City	Aspirational People		Resilient Communities
Supporting Function	Modernised Council			

7 Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act

7.1 General questions

- Details of the sustainable development principles are below

7.2 Wellbeing Goals

- IT/digital can make a positive contribution to the wellbeing goals detailed in the Act

7.3 Sustainable Development Principles

- The report demonstrates how as an authority we are working in accordance with the sustainable development principles from the act

- **Long Term**

Initiatives in IT/digital need to consider the long term and follow a plan as demonstrated in the existing Digital Strategy. The work on a new Digital Strategy enables a review of the long term plans associated with the strategy. The strategic move to the cloud is one example of this long term vision along with commitments around climate change

- **Prevention**

Preventative measures are key to ensure the effectiveness of the service by ensuring the infrastructure and systems are fit for purpose and appropriately supported and protected. The proactive migration of systems to the cloud is designed to prevent system availability problems and the SRS data centre move is also a positive step. IT systems can provide data to inform better decision making and preventative measures. Digital can also make a positive impact to reduce climate change impacts

- **Integration**

IT needs to be designed as part of business processes rather than an add-on at the end. The Digital team plays an important role integrating IT into business processes in conjunction with SRS

- **Collaboration**

IT delivery relies on the collaboration between the council's IT service delivery partner, the Shared Resource Service (SRS) the Digital team and all council services as well as with partners and suppliers

- **Involvement**

the council has contact with internal services, members of the public and businesses in relation to IT delivery. The new Digital Strategy referred to in this report included wide engagement with internal and external stakeholders. More generally, the council has IT systems to engage with the public including via its web site and bus Wi-Fi

8. Background Papers

- [The Essentials - Wellbeing of Future Generation Act \(Wales\)](#)
- [Corporate Plan](#)
- [Digital Strategy](#)
- [5G networks](#)

Report Completed: July 2022

Draft Annual Digital Report 2021/22

Created by	Mark Bleazard
Date	19/04/22
Reviewed by	Digital Services
Date	

Document Control

Version	Date	Author	Notes / changes
V0.1	19/4/22	Mark Bleazard	Initial draft
V0.2	16/6/22	Mark Bleazard	Revised draft
V0.3	18/7/22	Mark Bleazard	Revised Draft for Scrutiny
V0.4	20/7/22	Mark Bleazard	Final revisions for Scrutiny

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Executive Summary

Digital Strategy

- Work to review the existing [Digital Strategy](#) is progressing well with final version for sign off quarter 3 2022. This recognises the crucial part technology plays in service delivery and will be aligned to the council's new Corporate Plan

Organisation and Governance

- **To ensure effective and efficient service delivery, the Shared Resource Service (SRS) remains critical, combined with a major contribution from Digital Services and Service Areas**
- **Additional resources in the Digital team continue to have a positive effect including a successful Local Broadband Fund bid**
- Governance is provided by means of a number of SRS boards attended by SRS and partners, a Delivery Group plus various internal council meetings and processes
- Groups are in place to support schools in strategic developments and deliver the "EdTech" project funded by Welsh Government

Performance

- Of the four performance measures, SRS is green on three and amber on the other one
- **The most significant measure is performance against Service Level Agreement (SLA) which is well over the target of 85% with 94.9% of calls resolved against SLA**
- **This measure has been well over target for the last three years**
- The only amber measure is for call waiting times which will be reviewed further and action taken as appropriate

Funding

- **Shared Resource Service (SRS) is funded by partner organisations**
- **The council has a number of retained budgets** including capital programme, PC replacement budget and "retained contracts" for major systems
- **Additional budget allocated over last three financial years has made a positive contribution in various areas and is almost £1M extra per annum**
- Schools fund their own IT provision, boosted recently by Welsh Government "EdTech" funding

Projects

- The number and size of projects identified highlights the important projects carried out and the positive impact they make to service delivery.
- The majority of current and on-going projects include a significant technology element
- **Key projects during 21/122 were the procurement of a new finance system, Microsoft 365 developments, Committee Room and Meeting Room Audio Visual Equipment and various cloud migrations**

Core Planned

- Whilst core planned work is generally less time-consuming than projects, it is very important to ensure continued effective operation of services especially from a security perspective

Reactive

- The reactive IT service is often the most recognised IT function, the IT Service Desk
- Performance for reactive incidents is provided in the Performance section of this report
- An initiative to promote self-service logging of incidents rather than by telephone will be promoted.

Compliance, Security and Audit

- Most of this work is detailed in the Annual Information Risk Report
- This is crucial work, especially in the current environment

Infrastructure, Capital Programme and Cloud

- **A major project led by the SRS for the migration to a new data centre will be completed during 22/23**
- **4 major systems were migrated to the cloud in 21/22 and there are plans for 5 major systems in 22/23 including the finance system**

Devices and Operating Systems

- All Windows devices are now Windows 10
- Microsoft Office Message Encryption and OneDrive was rolled out to replace current Egress system for secure messaging and large/secure file sharing
- Replacement remote access VPN solution to be rolled out in early 22/23

Digital Developments

- **A successful bid made to Welsh Government as part of the Digital Democracy Fund resulted in better hardware in the Council Chamber and software to support “hybrid meetings”**
- **Local Broadband Fund – a successful bid was made to Welsh Government to improve gigabit capable full fibre connectivity and the provision of in-building assistive technology and telecare services to three council managed adult residential care homes in Newport**
- Digital Skills – New initiatives in this area including Get Connected courses run in conjunction with Digital Communities Wales
- Digital Inclusion – Work continues with Digital Communities Wales on Digitally Connected Communities to improve digital inclusion in Newport. Newport City Council is the only council in Wales with accreditation to Digital Inclusion Alliance
- Robotic Process Automation (RPA) – successful migration from “Archive Manager” solution for e-mails. Future opportunities will be considered and a programme for RPA developed.
- The roll out of the Electronic Document Management System (EDMS) continues and this is complemented by further roll out of the hybrid mail system
- There remains a need for handling paper documents and the Document Services team carries out this important function
- **Public Wi-Fi is provided in the city centre, on buses and in a number of public buildings**

Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery

- Increased resilience was a factor in the decision to join the Shared Resource Service (SRS) and this will be improved by the planned data centre move during 22/23
- A more proactive move of systems to the cloud took place in 21/22 and will continue. This is designed to provide greater availability and better business continuity/disaster recovery

Coronavirus Impact and the ‘New Normal’

- The Coronavirus pandemic has continued to provide challenges but the council is in a strong position to continue service delivery. IT systems continue to be vitally important and the strategic move of systems to the cloud is expected to improve resilience, support and availability of these systems

Climate Change

- **There is an important digital element to the council’s climate change plans**
- A number of areas have been identified that will be progressed by the Digital team and Shared Resource Service (SRS)

1. Background and Purpose

Technology plays a critically important role in effective and efficient service delivery for organisations. Newport City Council relies on IT systems for its effective day to day operation. Continued effective service delivery despite the vast majority of staff working from home as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic has demonstrated the robustness of IT systems although further improvements are planned. In addition, the provision of digital infrastructure for the city is another important aspect of the use of technology in the day to day lives of citizens and businesses.

The actions outlined in this report form part of the People, Policy and Transformation service plan and further detail is incorporated in the Digital team annual business plan.

1.1. Purpose of the Report and Benefits

The purpose of this report is to provide an assessment of the IT and digital arrangements for the council and identify where action is required to identify weaknesses and deliver improvements.

The benefits of the report are as follows:

- Provide an overview of the council's IT and digital services
- Highlight the importance of digital services to the organisation especially given the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic, the opportunities they provide and the risks of under-investment
- To compare performance with previous years with the aim of continuous improvement
- This is the third Annual Digital Report designed to complement the Annual Information Risk Report which is now in its tenth year
- Identify opportunities, address weaknesses and develop an action plan

2. Current Position

This part of the report identifies the council's current position in relation to digital services.

2.1. Digital Strategy

In 2015 the [Digital Strategy](#) was developed which highlights the importance of effective digital services. This report in various ways recognises the increasing importance of IT/digital services to the organisation especially given the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic. At the time of writing this report, the new Digital Strategy is being drafted. A large amount of engagement has taken place internally and externally. Evidence has been gathered by means of customer surveys and internal stakeholder engagement including the Newport Managers Network of senior managers. It is anticipated that the strategy will be completed in October 2022 following review by Scrutiny Management Committee, Cabinet Member for Organisational Transformation and Cabinet.

2.2. Organisation and Governance

IT Service – Shared Resource Service (SRS)

The IT Service became a partner in the Shared Resource Service (SRS) on 1/4/17 so Newport City council has been a partner for five years. The SRS is also made up of Torfaen County Borough Council, Monmouthshire County Council, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council and Gwent Police. There is SRS representation on the various council groups including the Digital City Board, Information Governance Group and New Normal Board. The Digital team provides the link between the council and the SRS. This important relationship continues to develop and further improvements have been made during the last year. As a result of a large amount of collective effort, the partnership is developing positively. As detailed later, this includes a data centre move and a number of collaborative initiatives.

SRS Governance Arrangements

The SRS continues with three boards. As suggested by an Audit Wales Report previously, all documents are now available to members of all boards to improve communication and transparency. The three boards are as follows:-

Strategic Board

This purpose of this board is to set the Strategic Direction of the SRS. It provides collective challenge to the Business and Collaboration Board around alignment to the SRS Strategy and identifying collaborative opportunities across all partners. It provides collective challenge to the Finance and Governance Board around alignment to the SRS Strategy and assurance to all partners. It provides collective challenge to the SRS Chief Operating Officer to drive forward SRS strategic principles. NCC is represented on this board by the Chief Executive and the Cabinet Member for Organisational Transformation. The Strategic Board provides updates on audits, performance as well as progress on the annual tactical plan. During this year the Board identified global supply chain risks for laptops and network equipment plus challenges of staff recruitment and retention that appear to be partly due to the impact of the New Normal on the industry.

Finance and Governance Board

The purpose of this board is to assure the Strategic Board that the SRS is delivering value for money, support the development of a medium term financial plan for the SRS, support the audit programme at the SRS and receive updates from audit in relation to the combined audit programme, provide collective challenge to each other around alignment to the SRS Strategy. It also provides collective challenge to the SRS Chief Operating Officer to drive forward the SRS strategic principles. NCC is represented on this board by the Head of Finance. The Finance and Governance Board provides updates on audits, SRS budget monitoring and agrees annual partner budgets.

Business and Collaboration Board

The purpose of this board is to provide collective challenge to the SRS Chief Operating Officer to drive forward the SRS strategic principles including to deliver effective ICT services from a single combined unit and operate as one SRS, to improve services to provide a solid foundation upon which partner organisations can operate, to ensure the investment in technology is focused on delivery of the corporate priorities of the partner organisations, to develop a capable, professional workforce that can meet the challenges within technology over the coming years and to provide a collaborative platform for public sector organisations to share common ground. NCC is represented on this board by the Head of People, Policy and Transformation and the Digital Services Manager. The Business and Collaboration Board provides an overview of performance, the annual tactical plan together with opportunities for collaborative working across partners on an informal and formal level.

These boards continue to mature with a strong sense of collaboration. All decisions made by boards need agreement by all partners. Developing a strategic, cohesive vision for all partners is challenging despite each partner's commitment to the partnership and its aims. An Audit Wales report into the partnership identified an increased level of consistency of vision and direction.

In addition to the three boards there is also a Delivery Group.

Delivery Group

The SRS holds four weekly Delivery Group meetings with each partner separately. At these meetings, performance data is reviewed with individual partners and work is prioritised for the next four week period. NCC is represented by its client function led by the Head of People, Policy and Transformation. The focus of these meetings is being shifted to more strategic initiatives as operational service delivery improves.

Information Security Leadership Board

Newport now attends a cross SRS partner information governance forum that complements our internal officer Information Governance Group.

Digital Services

The Digital team sits in the People, Policy and Transformation service area and is complemented by the existing Information Management team to form Digital Services. Increased funding for digital was allocated to various areas last year and two posts were created. These posts have increased capacity and capability of the team and are now well integrated in the team. This has enabled a more strategic and wider outlook in terms of the city as well as the council. The development of the new Digital Strategy has been led by these new team members and they have also carried out a large amount of engagement internally and externally. This has made a positive difference and has re-affirmed the importance of technology to all these stakeholders.

The Digital team plays a key role for the council. It provides the link between the council and the SRS for IT work and always aims to add value in the process. It maintains an important relationship with the SRS and undertakes a client management role on behalf of the council including performance management with the SRS. It has a strategic role for the council as demonstrated in its lead on the new Digital Strategy. It has an important part to play in the Digital City Board and New Normal Board. The team also manage a number of "retained" IT budgets including contracts for most large IT applications (financials, HR etc.), a PC replacement budget for the council and a capital programme for major infrastructure updates. The team manages a newly created cloud budget and has led on the migration of systems to the cloud as detailed elsewhere in this report. The new team members aim to contribute to an improved digital infrastructure for the city with a more proactive approach. This is evidenced in a successful bid to the Welsh Government Local Broadband Fund designed to improve dark fibre and wider broadband provision in the city as part of the project's wider aims.

The Digital team also has a more operational/tactical role. This role is around:-

- reactive incidents
- core planned work to maintain the existing IT infrastructure
- projects
- compliance including Public Services Network (PSN)

In all these areas the Digital team manages the escalation and prioritisation with the SRS as necessary, working with services on behalf of the council. It also provides general advice and guidance to the council and plays a key communications role. This role is an important one for the council and the relationship with the SRS which continues to improve.

Service Areas

Service Areas use a number of IT systems to operate their services. Services are responsible for the information stored in their respective systems and to maximise the benefits of technology in conjunction with Digital and the SRS. As detailed last year, additional budget was allocated to pay for necessary system updates that would previously have been paid for by services directly. The Digital team has worked with Service Areas in a more proactive migration of IT systems to the cloud. The review of the Digital Strategy has included a large amount of engagement with internal stakeholders to incorporate their priorities in the strategy and future plans.

Groups

“New Normal”

The “New Normal” Board was set up to develop plans for the longer term strategy of the council as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic. This is with a view to recognising benefits identified during the pandemic and incorporating this into future plans for service delivery going forward. This is chaired by the Strategic Director, Transformation and Corporate.

Digital City Board

This board provides the strategic direction for the Council on digital matters including development and management of the council’s Digital Strategy. The role of the board has been reviewed, its terms of reference updated and future membership considered. When necessary the role of the board is to prioritise large scale projects. The Board is chaired by Strategic Director, Transformation and Corporate and comprises representatives from areas of the Council. This group has membership from NCC and SRS.

Digital Champions

The council has approximately 30 “Digital Champions” who are advocates for the use of digital technology. They provide a key contact point for services using digital technology. They were a key part of the testing for the roll out of the remote access Virtual Private Network (VPN) roll out.

Schools

Schools fund their own IT provision and the majority use the in house schools service provided by the Shared Resource Service (SRS) although a number have provision from other service providers. A strategic group called the Schools IT Strategic Group with representation from schools, the Education service, Shared Resource Service and Digital meets regularly. The group has the following roles:-

- ensure that the ICT Strategic Group is kept informed of digital developments in education, identifying new opportunities and trends
- identify and support opportunities to innovate and share best practice, particularly in the use of Hwb and assist with the provision of professional learning opportunities and development of case studies
- support the ICT Strategic Group in researching what digital technology could help and enhance provision in schools
- provide professional advice from a teaching and learning perspective on the suitability and use of digital devices in schools

This strategic group focuses on the development of the IT provision in schools and recognises the importance of this to effective teaching and learning. Welsh Government provided additional funding designed to improve the infrastructure of schools under the “EdTech” programme. This and other initiatives have been progressed with the Education service, Shared Resource Service and Digital.

2.3. Performance

Performance Information

The Shared Resource Service has a number of common performance measures across all their respective partners. As such all partners have common targets and are measured on the same basis.

Performance Measures

The SRS has a number of common Performance Indicators (PI's) agreed and monitored across all partners as part of the Service Level Agreement.

Percentage of Calls Resolved Against Service Level Agreement (SLA)

The performance for the year 21/22 is 94.9% against a target of 85.0% This compares with 20/21 performance of 91.8% and 19/20 performance of 93.0%. This represents excellent performance for reactive calls and is almost 10% above target. This demonstrates that reactive calls are being responded to well and generally resolved within target. Performance is consistently very good throughout the year, exceeding the target in every month with monthly variations ranging from 91.6% to 98.1%.

Customer Satisfaction

The performance for the year 21/22 as a whole is 78% of those responding were satisfied against a target of 70% so performance is above the target. This compares with 64.7% in 20/21 and 76.0% for 19/20 so represents an improvement over the last two years. Performance by month ranges from 60% to 93% during the year that represents quite a variation.

Calls Resolved at First Point of Contact

The performance for the year 21/22 is 78.8% against a target of 70.0% so performance is above target. 20/21 as a whole was 58.8% and 19/20 as a whole was 60.5%. The performance for 21/22 is very good and better than previous years. Resolving calls at first point of contact solves calls quickly without the need to refer to other IT staff and is beneficial to customers and the IT Service alike.

Average Call Response time

An average for the year is currently not calculated due to a change in system during the year and the need to combine figures. However, figures for the two periods have both missed the target so the overall response would be well over the 90 second target representing amber performance.

The average call response time for the year is currently being compiled. This compares with 5 minutes 27 seconds in 20/21 and 5 minutes 31 seconds for 19/20. This has been a challenge for SRS and it needs to consider how to improve this.

Of the four performance measures, SRS has three green performance measures and one amber. In 20/21 and 19/20 three measures were amber and one green but with the most important, calls resolved against SLA, green during this period. 21/22 represents a positive improvement in performance over this three year period in terms of the four measures and the aim is to maintain and improve performance further.

2.4. Funding

As detailed in the organisation section above, spend on IT/digital is incurred in various areas. The majority of the funding is provided to the Shared Resource Service (SRS) that employs IT staff and pays for a number of contracts on behalf of the council. Working with SRS, the council has realised savings by rationalising systems, especially where facilities exist as part of the council's Microsoft Enterprise Agreement.

In 21/22 savings were made for secure file transfer/secure e-mail and from 22/23 savings will be made as a result of changing the remote access Virtual Private Network (VPN) system as detailed elsewhere in this report. The council also has a number of budgets that remain with the council including for major systems “retained contracts”, capital programme and equipment spend. The council continues to look to rationalise systems wherever possible.

As highlighted in last year’s report, additional funding of £220,000 was allocated in 19/20, £470,000 in 20/21 and £250,000 in 21/22. Over this period a number of improvements have been made as a result as detailed below:-

- PC replacement budget – this is now more sustainable and has improved the equipment being used by staff due to a reduced laptop refresh cycle. It also enables the regular refresh of member laptops rather than capital spend for each new council administration.
- Cloud funding – this funding has facilitated the migration of IT systems to the cloud that provides improved accessibility, availability, resilience, performance and support. Further details are provided elsewhere in the report
- Cyber security – increased funding enabled a solution to be procured and implemented to improve protection against ransomware as well as a policy management solution procured and implemented to educate and engage with staff. A Security Operations Centre (SOC) and Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) was procured on behalf of all partners by SRS designed to increase proactive security measures and implementation has commenced
- Innovation and development fund – this provides support for digital innovation and has been used to provide interactive screens for committee/meeting rooms to facilitate hybrid meetings with attendees in the building and remotely. It has also been used to develop facilities on the Internet of Things IoT network in Newport. It will also make a financial contribution to the Local Broadband Fund if successful
- Digital team resources – two additional posts were created to increase capacity and capability and this has made a positive difference already
- System support fund – this contributes to costs associated with important system updates and removes ad hoc pressures on Service Area budgets
- Robotic Process Automation – a system has been procured and implemented. It is designed to automate activities carried out by IT system users to free up time to spend on higher value tasks than data entry. The system has been used for one specific project to date with further use cases being identified across the organisation

The extra funding provided has made a positive contribution in various areas such as equipment provision, proactive cloud migration, cyber security and a system for Robotic Process Automation. It also provides funding for innovation and development and extra resources in Digital to deliver more for the council. The system and resource improvements should also facilitate cost and efficiency savings to be realised on behalf of the organisation

As mentioned above, schools fund their own IT provision from their own budgets. This has been supplemented by Welsh Government “EdTech” funding highlighted elsewhere in this report

2.5. Projects

Financial System Replacement

Procurement took place for an improved, cloud based financial system for the council. This is expected to improve facilities and streamline financial process. This is a large implementation project that is currently planned to go live on 1/4/2023.

Microsoft 365 (formerly known as Office 365)

Secure e-mail and secure/large file transfer using Office Message Encryption and One Drive for Business was implemented, finishing in late April 21 that replaced a previous system providing these facilities. This enabled annual savings to be made. A project commenced to remove the need for the 'Archive Manager' solution and importing older e-mails into the core e-mail system. This went live early in the financial year 22/23.

Following a successful pilot, the Always On VPN (Virtual Private Network) solution was implemented. This provides a secure, remote access solution for people working remotely. Roll out will complete in April 2022. This has been a successful roll out for the organisation to date and has been positively received. The solution will also facilitate various security improvements due to how it operates. These are planned for 22/23.

Web Site

The council's primary web site, www.newport.gov.uk, was identified as needing significant work in terms of the look and feel plus a review of the amount of content. A business case was agreed for resources to support the re-development of the web site and is intended to improve sustainability of the site in future. This is major project that will commence during 22/23 and aims to make a positive improvement to the customer experience of the council's web site. In March 2022, the council's web platform was successfully migrated to a cloud solution that is expected to provide improved features, performance and resilience.

New Normal

The council's New Normal Programme Board has been working on the council's response to the Coronavirus pandemic and future operations, learning lessons from its operation during this period. Technology has provided a key part in continued effective service delivery including Microsoft Teams meetings and hybrid council meetings facilitated by new audio visual equipment in the Council Chamber and meeting rooms. Development of room/desk booking systems commenced and should be completed in spring/summer of 2022. Initial work was carried out to review the council's current telephony systems and a major piece of work is planned for 22/23. Equipment needs for the Civic Centre have been identified in line with the future use of the building.

Committee Room and Meeting Room Audio Visual Equipment

Interactive screens installed last year in Committee Rooms and meeting rooms have been set up to enable Microsoft Teams meetings for those in the building as well as enabling people to join remotely. Screens have camera, speaker and microphones and have been used already. These will assist in future for hybrid meetings.

Intranet – Migration to SharePoint Online

The council's intranet was migrated from an on premise solution to Microsoft SharePoint Online in the cloud. This was a move of platform with a wider re-development of the Intranet required in future to improve functionality and the look and feel of the site.

Cloud Migrations

These include migration to a cloud system for the council's web site, the Mayrise system used in Highways and the system for the democratic process.

“EdTech”

This funding from Welsh Government has made a huge impact on the digital infrastructure for schools and over the last 3 years in addition to improving their networks schools have also received:

- 1248 laptops
- 6587 Chromebooks
- 401 PCs
- 935 iPads
- 51 Macbooks and iMacs
- 153 charging trolleys
- 262 projectors
- 263 digital screens
- And hundreds of other peripheral devices including monitors, docks, headsets, speakers, webcams, casting devices, splitters and connectors.

2.6. Core Planned

As well as larger time-limited projects, there are required pieces of work that are not reactive. This may be to provide additional system features, required updates for security purposes or work as a result of organisational changes. This work is categorised as core planned work. This work needs to be incorporated in to the wider work of the IT Service. Some of this work can be quite small but it can also be more significant despite not being as large as a project.

The most significant core planned pieces of work are:-

- IDOX Uniform Oracle and system upgrade
- Oracle Financials database upgrade
- Capita One Education updates
- Capita Revenues and Benefits patches and updates
- Electoral register system updates
- Libraries migration from the EDU network to corporate
- Revised telephony directory system following intranet migration to cloud

Most of this work requires some element of downtime. The impact of this is identified with SRS, the system provider and Digital Services and agreed by an appropriate method depending on the potential impact

2.7. Reactive

Clearly things don't always work as they should and therefore the IT service needs to respond to incidents that happen in a reactive way. These incidents are logged on a service desk system by the SRS service desk or self-service by users. Incidents are primarily managed by the SRS but the Digital team get involved to escalate and assist with higher priority incidents by exception. The Coronavirus pandemic has caused some challenges given the need for devices to be fixed for instance when a remote fix is not possible. In the main this has been facilitated by prearranged appointments with the SRS. This will need to be considered in the development of the New Normal. Details of the performance in relation to reactive incidents are included in the wider performance information section above. An initiative to promote self-service logging of incidents rather than by telephone will be promoted.

Occasionally major incidents occur that may result in some system down time. These incidents are managed by SRS with support from Digital Services. On these occasions SRS and Digital Services will identify lessons learned and implement any improvements as a result.

2.8. Compliance, Security and Audit

As well as core planned work, there is work to ensure compliance with requirements such as the Public Services Network (PSN). This and other work around compliance and audit needs to be scheduled and managed between the SRS and the council. There is a small, more technical security team within the SRS that complements the Information Management team in the council.

As mentioned in last year's report, SRS tendered for a Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) solution and a Security Operations Centre (SOC) designed to boost preventative measures to protect the council's data and systems. The council and other SRS partners agreed to implementation of these solution. Implementation has started and will be completed during 21/22.

The Information Management team develops and publishes an Annual Information Risk Report that is reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee. The report for 21/22 has been drafted and will be reviewed by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee.

2.9. Infrastructure, Capital Programme and Cloud

A major project led by the SRS commenced in 20/21 to move all SRS partners to a new data centre. All the respective partners formally signed off the business case for the data centre move which is a major milestone. For Newport specifically the [business case was agreed by Cabinet in October 2020](#). This means the migration to a new data centre replacing equipment the vast majority of which is currently in Newport's computer rooms. This will provide better resilience and availability including a core network with SRS partners. Some local network equipment in council buildings is still required that will include considerations around the "new normal". This was ordered in January 2022 but delivery has been delayed due to global supply chain issues. The council's capital programme was used to pay for the required infrastructure in the new data centre that is progressing well. It is anticipated that Newport will be live by end of March 20223 which is much earlier than originally planned and a very positive step.

More systems continue to be moved to the cloud and the pace of this migration has accelerated with a more proactive approach being undertaken supported by previous additional budget for cloud services. A number of advantages are expected from the migration of systems to the cloud:-

- Access from any device, location
- Improved availability, resilience
- Improved performance
- Improved support
- Positive contribution to carbon reduction

The main disadvantages are additional costs and reduced control over these services but these need to be considered as part of the total cost of ownership. Based on the council's experience with systems migrated to date, the advantages vastly outweigh the disadvantages.

The migration to the cloud is based on a number of principles:-

- Cloud first
- Highest priority IT systems are targeted
- Review on a case by case basis
- Ultimate responsibility for these cloud systems remains with the council

Cloud migrations go through a comprehensive process to ensure their suitability including appropriate procurement and information governance based on the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) cloud security principles, development of a cloud register and Data Protection Impact Assessments.

Council systems that are currently provided in the cloud are detailed as below:-

- E-mail as part of Microsoft 365 project
- Telephony
- Social Services system, WCCIS an all Wales cloud hosted system
- Customer Relationship Management (CRM)
- iTrent HR/Payroll system is in a MHR cloud environment.
- Payment solution
- Home Care scheduling system
- Income management system.
- iShare web mapping solution

New cloud migrations that took place in 21/22

- Web site and “A-Z” (primary council web site plus customer services knowledge base)
- Mayrise (highways, cleansing etc.)
- SharePoint online (intranet)
- Modern.gov (democratic process management and documents)

Planned Cloud Migrations for 22/23 onwards

- The project to replace the existing financial system to the Technology One solution has commenced and includes migration to the cloud currently estimated as April 2023
- The Paygate BACS system is planned for go live in early 22/23
- The Capita One education management system has been approved for cloud migration with planned go live in late 2022
- The IDOX Uniform public protection system has been approved for cloud migration with planned go live in 2022
- Legal case management system – this project is almost complete with planned go live in early 22/23

2.10. Devices and Operating Systems

Devices

The council now almost exclusively uses laptops for flexibility and mobility. Laptops will always be issued unless there is a specific reason that a desktop device is required in very limited scenarios. The availability of laptops has been invaluable during the Coronavirus pandemic with a large number of staff working from home. Windows 10 is deployed to all devices now. A number of Windows 10 updates will also be required for a large number of devices

Microsoft 365 (formerly Office 365)

The council previously migrated its e-mail solution to Microsoft 365 with e-mail in the cloud. This provides improved collaborative, agile working facilities and information security. The solution uses Microsoft Multi Factor Authentication (MFA). In addition, the Microsoft Advanced Threat Protection (ATP) solution protects against attachments and links sent in e-mails. The e-mail configuration includes the use of Transport Layer Security (TLS) to encrypt e-mail to external e-mail systems set up to the same standard which should include all local authorities and the public sector generally.

Microsoft Teams continues to provide instant messaging/chat facilities as well as video/audio conferencing facilities. These facilities are used extensively and enable the organisation to hold a large number of virtual meetings and informal discussions. This has been invaluable to the organisation given the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic and the solution is regularly updated by Microsoft with additional features and other improvements. The latest version of the Microsoft 365 client is rolled out to all Windows devices.

Devices for Members

The first Annual Digital Report highlighted the procurement of tablet devices for members. These, in combination with existing laptop devices have provided a good solution for members in carrying out their role and have been especially beneficial. The refresh of member laptop devices are now included within the wider laptop refresh cycle so there is no need for a capital programme for members at the local government elections in May 2022. Tablet and mobile phone devices will be re-issued as necessary for the turnover of members.

Digital Champions

The council has approximately 30 “Digital Champions” who are advocates for the use of digital technology. They provide a key contact point for services using digital technology. They were a key part of the testing for the roll out of the Microsoft Always On VPN solution and a number of other initiatives.

Remote Access Virtual Private Network (VPN) Solution

The council has commenced the migration from its existing remote access solution to Microsoft Always On VPN solution. This will enable all staff who need to work from home to do so. It will provide the ability to carry out password resets and Windows updates due to its “always on” connection type that will enhance security. Staff are able to work from anywhere where a wireless network is available, as if they were sat at their desk, which also reduces the requirement to carry paper documents.

Multi-Function Devices

‘Follow Me’ print is available to all users, who are able to access council printers from any location with a device. A Multi-Function Device (printer/copier/scanner) contract commenced in October 2017 and an upgrade is planned to provide the latest version of the print management solution. Due to the impact of the Coronavirus there has been much reduced use of these devices and consideration will be given to what is an appropriate number of devices in future given the likely changes to the number and frequency of staff attending some buildings. This will be included in procurement for a new contract

Secure/Large File transfer solution

As planned last year, secure and large file transfers are now provided using Microsoft Office Message Encryption and Microsoft One Drive for Business.

Xerox Mail “hybrid mail”

More services have been set up to use the “hybrid mail” system to streamline the production of paper and electronic outputs. This enables documents to be sent to production printers in the print room and then processed through the mail room folder/insert machine. This improves security by ensuring that print outputs are split into envelopes automatically in the folder/insert machine. The system’s use continues to increase led by the EDMS Project Manager with the Digital team

Wireless Staff Access

Wireless Access points are provided in many council buildings. This includes appropriate security controls in place. Major updates planned for 20/21 were delayed due to the impact of Coronavirus and equipment ordered has been delayed due to global supply chain issues.

Wireless Public Access

Wireless public access is provided in select council locations and this is protected using appropriate security measures where users can create logins for a limited period. Public Wi-Fi is available in the city centre (Newport City Connect), over 50 public buildings (Newport Community Cloud) and on buses. Gov Wi-Fi is available in various public buildings too.

Physical Security

Major buildings are limited to staff with physical access tokens and alarmed outside of opening hours. As detailed in the physical access policy:

- IT facilities must be located in secure areas protected from unauthorised access
- Any visitors to IT secure areas must be signed in and accompanied at all times
- Computer rooms are subject to additional security measures to protect them from unauthorised access, damage and interference
- Plans are in place to upgrade the system used for door access in the Civic Centre

The policy and Building Access policy also require staff to display identity badges at all times.

Mobile Phones

The council has a large number of mobile phones issued to staff. The vast majority are now smart phones with e-mail, internet access etc. For those that just need calls and texts, basic phones are provided as they are much cheaper. All phones are managed using a Mobile Device Management (MDM) solution to limit access and the ability to wipe phones remotely if required.

Tablets

A relatively small number of tablets are in use across the organisation for specific purposes including tablets for members. These devices are managed using the same Mobile Device Management (MDM) solution as for mobile phones.

2.11. Digital Developments

Digital Democracy

A successful bid was previously made to a Welsh Government Digital Democracy Fund. Work was completed to replace equipment and software in the Council Chamber to improve the facility and enable the use of “hybrid meetings” where some people attend in person and some people can attend remotely. This was first used in May 2022 for the Council’s Annual General Meeting and is expected to provide a modern and powerful solution for future meetings.

Local Broadband Fund (LBF) Bid

Newport City Council submitted a Local Broadband Fund (LBF) bid in December 2021. The fund is provided by Welsh Government. The bid is to improve gigabit capable full fibre connectivity and the provision of in-building assistive technology and telecare services to three council managed adult residential care homes in Newport. The following will be provided in all three buildings: -

- The provision of a gigabit capable dark fibre connection. The scheme will expand the footprint of dark fibre within Newport that will also act as a catalyst for other applications
- The upgrade of in-building infrastructure including routers, Wi-Fi access points and the potential installation of sensors
- An overlay of Internet of Things (IoT) based telecare applications including monitoring and environmental control

The council was advised in April 2022 that it was successful in its bid which is excellent news. The project will be implemented in 22/23.

Digital Skills

Get Connected courses have been run in conjunction with Digital Communities Wales. These are 6 week digital skills courses, initially on a train the trainer basis. 4 cohorts took place in community hubs and centres so the council can deliver in house. The council is represented on the Regional Skills Partnership Board including Newport City Council, Coleg Gwent, Careers Wales, and University of South Wales. They have 6 key strategic priorities around skills.

A Digital Skills Audit for council employees was undertaken with the Digital Team, HR and Digital Communities Wales. The survey will be analysed and included within the council's planned workforce strategy.

Accessibility training was provided for some Social Services employees giving them the knowledge and skills to help people with accessibility requirements.

Digital Inclusion

Work continues with Digital Communities Wales on Digitally Connected Communities to improve digital inclusion in Newport. Newport City Council is a member of the Digital Inclusion Alliance Wales and is the only council in Wales with accreditation to Digital Inclusion Alliance, making a commitment to deliver the 6 key strategic priorities.

Newport has formed a group called Get Newport Online with Digital Communities Wales with membership from the council, Higher Education, Further Education, charities and housing associations. The aim is to improve digital inclusion and deliver digital skills across the city. Investigation will take place about the possibility of a potential tablet loan scheme to improve digital inclusion.

Public Building Wi-Fi

Funded by the council, "Newport Community Connect" provides a free public Wi-Fi service in over 50 public buildings in the city. The Coronavirus pandemic has highlighted the value of this service in digital inclusion. This has been improved by the use of "One Click Connect" to simplify users connecting to the service.

City Centre Wi-Fi

The City Centre Wi-Fi is provided as a concession with a company and this serves the area around the city centre only. Work has been carried out during the year to make improvements in some areas.

Bus Wi-Fi

Free Wi-Fi on Newport buses is provided, funded by the council and Newport Transport. This service has always been well used and the council uses it as a way to engage with the public with short online surveys.

Electronic Document Management System (EDMS)

Much of the information held by the council would conventionally be stored as paper copies, on network file shares or within teams and service areas. The use of an Electronic Document Management System (EDMS) provides the council with a modern, efficient, electronic system for managing documents, improving the way information and documents are used and the flow of information around the council.

EDMS has a number of benefits including security, access to information and records management by storing all service related documents securely in one place. EDMS is key to ensuring appropriate retention periods of documents stored in the system.

Developments in 21/22 include

- Housing Strategy implementation now complete
- Environmental Health (Food Team) – in progress
- Highway's implementation – in progress
- System version upgrade

Document Services

Whilst the intention of the organisation is to use digital methods wherever possible, there is clearly a need for handling paper documents and the Document Services team carries out this important function. The team manages mail, print, scanning and paper document storage.

Mail and other items are received by the council from Royal Mail and various couriers/suppliers. Out-going mail is prepared by Document Services and collected via Royal Mail daily. The council has a central print room with digital equipment for printing internal documents, leaflets etc. The contract for the print room equipment was reviewed with Procurement and a new contract awarded. Document Services carries out central scanning for a large number of services using the EDMS system detailed above.

In addition to the central print facilities the council has a fleet of multi-function devices (MFD's) across sites that provide printing, copying and scanning facilities. Print volumes generally are reducing over time and scanning is increasing in a move to more digital ways of working. MFD print volumes have been down as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic. The exiting MFD contract was extended for a further year and will need to be reviewed again near the end of this period.

The council also has a hybrid mail solution that is designed to simplify and streamline the processes for out-going mail including the ability to send more information electronically. The proportion of documents going through this system continues to increase that in turns reduces the amount of franking carried out. Mail costs via the hybrid mail solution are cheaper than the equivalent franked mail costs which is one of the main drivers for the roll out of this system. The EDMS Project Manager now leads on this work and there has been very good progress as a result and this work is complementary to the work on the EDMS solution.

Robotic Process Automation (RPA)

Robotic Process Automation (RPA) technology is designed to automate repetitive tasks to reduce data entry and streamline routine tasks. It can also be used for data migration and other tasks. RPA has now been implemented successfully for the migration of e-mails stored in the "Archive Manager" solution into the core Microsoft 365 e-mail system. This is a technology that can improve the council's effectiveness and efficiency and budget has been allocated to facilitate its use. Further opportunities for the use of RPA will be considered and a programme will be developed.

Internet of things (IoT) Network pilot

In conjunction with a supplier, the council continues to pilot an Internet of Things (IoT) network that includes trialling sensors connected to the network for various purposes. This is using LoRaWAN technology (Long Range Wide Area Network) with a number of gateways across the city. Specific sensors have been set up for one area and a dashboard created to provide up to date readings and monitor trends. Further applications are planned for 22/23 to make further use of the network and how it can help the council.

Mobile Networks and 5G

[5G networks](#) are starting to be rolled out by mobile operators across the UK and 5G is starting to become available in the area. Whilst there may be some planning considerations when mobile operators want to change their infrastructure, the council has no real influence on the roll out of such networks or general mobile networks. 5G is significantly faster than existing 4G networks and therefore provides benefits to consumers for streaming high quality video and other tasks that need increased bandwidth.

2.12. Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery

There is an ever-increasing reliance on digital technology to support business activities and it is therefore important to maximise the availability of systems. Increased resilience was a factor in the decision to join the Shared Resource Service (SRS) and this is expected to be improved by the planned data centre move now expected earlier than planned within 22/23.

As detailed above, a more proactive move of systems to the cloud took place in 21/22 and will continue. This is designed to provide greater availability and better business continuity/disaster recovery.

2.13. Coronavirus Impact and 'New Normal'

A number of areas of this report mention the impact of the CoronaVirus pandemic which had the most significant effect on organisations from "lockdown" which commenced on 23rd March 2020. During the 21/22 financial year there were varying degrees of restriction in place but services have continued to operate. It is clear as a result of the CoronaVirus pandemic that digital technology has even greater importance than before, with much increased home working. This places even greater emphasis on the availability and performance of IT systems in this new environment. As detailed elsewhere in this report, the strategic move of systems to the cloud is expected to bring a number of benefits. There are also greater information governance challenges from home working including increased cyber security threats. As detailed elsewhere in this report, a New Normal Programme Board is looking at issues arising from the Coronavirus impact and how the organisation operates in future. This work will continue in 22/23.

2.14. Climate Change

The council's Climate Change Plan 2022-2027 includes a digital element and Digital is represented on one of the internal groups that are progressing council plans. This is an extremely important plan for the council and digital will play its part in some of the initiatives. Some initial areas are to:-

- Develop a new digital strategy that fully considers the Council's climate change commitments and net zero aspirations (as detailed elsewhere in this report)
 - Actively considers climate change and associated actions
 - Supports the "new normal" way of working and associated actions.
 - Provide technology solutions that reduce the need for customer and staff travel
 - Maximise the use of digital solutions to reduce paper usage including digitising paper records where possible
 - Minimise data storage to reduce infrastructure requirements and reduce energy consumption
- Migrate to more energy efficient technology solutions including data centre and cloud provision taking advantage of economies of scale in terms of cooling efficiency.
- Maximise the use of digital solutions such as Internet of Things (IoT) network to measure climate change action and carbon emissions
- Providing information and data to facilitate organisational and individual informed decisions around climate change and carbon emissions
- Work with IT Partner, Shared Resource Service (SRS) Wales to consider climate change measures across service delivery and take appropriate actions to reduce energy usage and reduce carbon and waste
- Consider climate impact and carbon reduction when purchasing IT equipment
- Embed reduce, reuse, recycle principles in IT policies and practices

3. Conclusions

Digital Strategy

A large amount of engagement has taken place for the digital strategy and the final version is expected in October 2022. This report again highlights the increasing importance of IT/digital solutions to the organisation, especially given the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic. At the time of writing, draft themes have been identified with outcomes and how they will be achieved. This strategy is important for the council's future plans and will be heavily linked to the development of the council's new corporate plan.

Organisation and Governance

The report again highlights the importance of the Shared Resource Service, the council's Digital team and Service Areas in improving IT provision and the impact on service delivery. The SRS continues to mature in partnership with the Digital team, Service Areas and the other partners. SRS Boards are more joined up and effective. Additional resources in the Digital team continue to make a positive impact including a successful Local Broadband Fund bid as mentioned elsewhere in this report. The importance of IT in schools is also recognised and continues to be developed by a strategic group. This is complemented by Welsh Government funding of its "Edtech" programme across Wales that has made a huge impact

Performance

Performance has been consistently good in terms of calls resolved against SLA during the last three financial year. Two other measures are also now green in terms of customer satisfaction and calls resolved at first point of contact. The time to answer calls remains amber and this needs to be reviewed.

Funding

This report details the funding for IT services and explains that Shared Resource Service (SRS) funding is provided by partner organisations. Whilst funding is allocated primarily to the Shared Resource Service, the Digital team also manages a number of significant retained budgets. In 22/23 savings will be made as a result of changing the remote access Virtual Private Network (VPN) system as detailed elsewhere in this report. This is part of a drive to standardise systems and maximise the benefits of systems including Microsoft 365. Over previous years nearly £1M of additional revenue funding has been provided. This has had a very positive impact on the laptop replacement budget, cloud funding, cyber security improvements, Robotic Process Automation and digital team resources.

Projects

The number and size of projects identified in the section above highlights the important projects carried out and the positive impact they make to service delivery. Nearly all projects include a significant technology part and key projects during 201/22 were the procurement of a new finance system, Microsoft 365 developments, Committee Room and Meeting Room Audio Visual Equipment and various cloud migrations.

Core Planned

Whilst core planned work is generally less time-consuming than projects, it is very important to ensure continued effective operation of services especially from a security perspective. As usual, a number of important updates were made to various systems including to the Uniform system, Education system etc. To some extent cloud migrations may add to short term work but should reduce longer term work as a result.

Compliance, Security and Audit

The majority of this work is detailed in the Annual Information Risk Report so this report makes little mention but this is crucial work especially in the current environment. The Information Management team, Digital team and the SRS work collectively to progress this work to keep systems and information secure. Agreement and associated funding was provided for a Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) system and a Security Operations Centre (SOC) led by the SRS for partners and implementation has commenced.

Reactive

The reactive IT service is often the most recognised IT function given that IT systems don't work all the time and a reactive service desk is required to respond to these incidents. This service is provided by the SRS. An initiative to promote self-service logging of incidents rather than by telephone will be promoted. Where major incidents happen these need to be managed by SRS and Digital Services with the identification of appropriate lessons learned and improvements made.

Infrastructure, Capital Programme and Cloud

A business case was agreed by all SRS partners for a data centre move to include core shared infrastructure and this is expected to be completed by the end of March 2023. Local networking equipment will be implemented in 22/23. 4 major systems were migrated to the cloud in 21/22 and there are plans for 5 major systems in 22/23. This strategy will continue with the move to more of a revenue funding model and the more proactive migration of key systems to the cloud.

Devices and Operating Systems

The organisation now has only Windows 10 devices in operation which is a positive position. Versions of Windows 10 are regularly updated by Microsoft and these updates need to be applied to all devices. These updates will be possible when on a remote connection when the migration to the remote access VPN solution is completed which is another important development. Microsoft Office Message Encryption and OneDrive solutions were rolled out for secure messaging and large/secure file sharing.

Digital Developments

Digital Democracy – the hardware and software to facilitate “hybrid meetings” in the Council Chamber was installed and is operational. This follows a successful bid to Welsh Government for the Digital Democracy fund as part of the requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

Local Broadband Fund - a successful bid was made to the Local Broadband Fund, representing funding of £210k. The bid is to improve gigabit capable full fibre connectivity and the provision of in-building assistive technology and telecare services to three council managed adult residential care homes in Newport. This is very positive and will commence implementation in 22/23.

Digital Skills

A number of initiatives in this area have been progressed including some train the trainer session for digital skills. A digital skills audit was undertaken for council employees that will feed in to the development of a workforce strategy.

Digital Inclusion

The importance of digital inclusion has become increasingly apparent, especially since the beginning of the Coronavirus pandemic. This is an area for further development and is included in the draft digital strategy themes together with digital skills.

Robotic Process Automation (RPA)

The first use of RPA was successful for the migration of e-mails from the “Archive Manager” solution. Future opportunities will be considered with a view to developing a programme for RPA.

EDMS and hybrid mail solution – further progress has been made with both these systems that enhances capabilities of flexible and agile working.

Document Services is an important enabler for mail, print and paper document storage with an increasing move to scanning documents in to the EDMS system.

Public Wi-Fi is provided in the city centre, on buses and in a number of public buildings. This makes a positive contribution to digital inclusion that is part of a draft theme for the new Digital Strategy.

Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery

Increased resilience was a factor in the decision to join the Shared Resource Service (SRS) and this will be improved by the planned data centre move during 22/23. A more proactive move of systems to the cloud took place in 21/22 and will continue. This is designed to provide greater availability and better business continuity/disaster recovery.

Coronavirus Impact and 'New Normal'

The Coronavirus pandemic has continued to provide challenges for organisations including the council. Many of the earlier initiatives mean the council is in a strong position to continue service delivery. IT systems continue to be vitally important and the strategic move of systems to the cloud is expected to improve resilience, support and availability of these systems. The council maintains a strong commitment to digital as demonstrated by the activities detailed within this report many of which facilitate a 'New Normal' way of working.

Climate Change

The council's Climate Change Plan 2022-2027 includes an important digital element. This programme will be managed as part of the plan and will include important contributions from the Digital team and SRS.

4. Actions Summary

Digital Strategy

The council's existing Digital Strategy is being reviewed and developed and is now due to be completed in quarter 3 2022.

Organisation and Governance - the relationship between the council and the Shared Resource Service (SRS) is one that aims for continuous improvement in partnership working. The SRS will be a vital part of the delivery of the new Digital Strategy. The Digital team also has an on-going role to engage with other services and contribute to their respective plans and strategies. The "EdTech" programme will continue to make improvements in schools.

Performance - one measure in relation to time to answer calls is worse than its target and this will be looked at. The Digital team will work with SRS to review performance and take actions as necessary.

Funding – savings will be pursued wherever possible, especially in relation to Microsoft 365 facilities that may enable system rationalisation. This will include the migration of remote Access VPN solution in early 22/23 but other opportunities will be taken where possible. The aim would be to re-invest where savings are identified given the importance of technology.

Projects – in 22/23 there will be a number of important projects including the finance system migration and various cloud migrations.

Core Planned - core planned work is required to ensure systems are kept up to date and will continue with necessary updates.

Compliance, Security and Audit

Implementation of a Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) system and a Security Operations Centre (SOC) has commenced and will be completed in 22/23 across all SRS partners.

Reactive - incidents are logged on a service desk system by the SRS service desk or self-service by users. SRS and Digital will continue to manage and escalate incidents as necessary based on priorities. An initiative to promote self-service logging of incidents rather than by telephone will be promoted.

Infrastructure, Capital Programme and Cloud – SRS will complete the data centre move for Newport and will carry out the council's local network infrastructure refresh in key sites. The council plans to migrate 5 key systems to the cloud including its core financial system. The council continues its proactive move systems to the cloud.

Devices and Operating Systems – Windows devices will be updated to later versions to stay up to date. The Microsoft AlwaysOn VPN solution will be rolled out as the remote access solution, replacing the current solution that will result in costs savings.

Digital Developments

Local Broadband Fund – the project is to improve gigabit capable full fibre connectivity and the provision of in-building assistive technology and telecare services to three council managed adult residential care homes in Newport will be implemented.

Robotic Process Automation (RPA) – future opportunities will be considered and a programme for RPA developed.

EDMS – further roll out across services is planned along with the council's hybrid mail system.

Public building Wi-Fi usage and costs continue to be reviewed in the light of the importance of digital inclusion.

The contracts for Multi Function Device (MFD) contracts will be reviewed again. Use of the LoRaWAN network will be reviewed and further roll out considered.

Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery - business continuity will be improved by the planned data centre move and further cloud migrations in 22/23.

Coronavirus Impact and 'New Normal'

The reliance on and use of technology needs to be monitored to ensure technology continues to support the "new normal".

Climate Change

The digital elements of the climate change plan will be progressed as part of the council's groups working on this plan.

5. Risk Management

Risk	Impact of Risk if it occurs* (H/M/L)	Probability of risk occurring (H/M/L)	What is the Council doing or what has it done to avoid the risk or reduce its effect	Who is responsible for dealing with the risk?
Digital Strategy is not up to date/relevant	M	L	Review and update Digital Strategy with stakeholders	Digital Services Manager (DSM) and Digital Projects Manager with internal and external stakeholders in partnership with SRS
Funding of service is not sufficient to meet the organisation's demands and aspirations, especially given the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic	M	L	Additional funding now allocated to areas of need	Digital Services Manager (DSM) and Digital Projects Manager in conjunction with Head of PPT / SRS management
Delivery of IT Service by Shared Resource Service (SRS) provides less control	M	M	Develop relationship with the SRS further and contribute to its strategic direction and governance. Develop client side role to provide strategic input and performance monitoring. Continue to contribute to the delivery of projects, core planned and reactive work	Digital Services Manager (DSM) and Digital Projects Manager in conjunction with Head of PPT/ SRS management
Critical IT systems are not available to services	H	L	Data centre migration in 22/23. A more proactive move of systems to the cloud will provide improved availability and resilience	Digital Services Manager and Digital Projects Manager in conjunction with SRS and services
Appropriate devices and operating systems are not available	M	L	Laptops remain the standard and Digital Strategy will consider future needs. Windows 10 updates to take place for devices	Digital Services Manager (DSM) and Digital Projects Manager in conjunction with in conjunction with SRS

6. Action Plan

Action	Deadline
Digital Strategy	
Review - Digital Strategy to be reviewed and developed for publication	Oct 22
Organisation and Governance	
SRS Boards - represent Council at Shared Resource Service (SRS) Board meetings	On-going
Relationship management - continue to develop relationship between Council and SRS especially in relation to the planned deliverables in the revised Digital Strategy.	On-going
“EdTech” project - work with Education service and SRS in delivery of Welsh Government “Edtech” funding for 22/23	Mar 23
Education/schools support – support Education service, schools and SRS in development of digital strategy for schools in Newport	On-going
Digital team engagement with services and contribution to other plans and strategies throughout the organisation	On-going
Performance	
Monitor and manage performance between SRS and Digital team	On-going
Follow up on call response time performance with SRS to identify areas for improvement	Oct 22
Funding	
Savings and re-investment - identify areas for savings to enable system rationalisation and further re-investment where possible	On-going
Projects	
Management/support – Management/support of projects in conjunction with SRS and Service Areas	On-going
E-mail Archive System Migration – migration of e-mails to the core e-mail system from ‘Archive Manager’ solution	May 22
Major projects – include finance system migration and various cloud migrations	On-going
Core Planned	
Core planned work - management of core planned work in conjunction with SRS and Service Areas	On-going
Compliance, Security and Audit	
Implementation of SRS partner procured Security Operations Centre (SOC) and Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) system	Mar 23
Reactive	
Work with SRS and Digital to escalate as necessary	On-going
Digital team and SRS to promote self-service logging of incidents rather than by telephone	Sep 22
Infrastructure and Capital programme	
Data centre move – data centre migration to be completed	Mar 23
Capital programme - work with SRS on this project to improve resilience	On-going
Cloud services – proactively look to migrate systems to the cloud as with cloud the preferred option when practical and affordable	On-going
Cloud services – migration of new financial system, Education management system, public protection system, BACS system and legal case management solutions to cloud provision	Mar 23
Devices and Operating Systems	
Microsoft 365 Always On VPN solution implementation - roll out of remote access solution for all users	Apr 22
Windows 10 – version upgrades to take place facilitated by roll out of Always On VPN solution	On-going

Devices for members – roll out of appropriate laptops as part of refresh cycle and re-issue of tablet and mobile phone devices as appropriate	May 22
Mobile Phones - the existing mobile phone contract will be reviewed based on new normal requirements.	Feb 23
Laptops – laptops are the preferred replacement devices unless there is a strong and specific reason to have a desktop device	On-going
Digital Developments	
Local Broadband Fund – implementation of gigabit capable full fibre connectivity and the provision of in-building assistive technology and telecare services to three council managed adult residential care homes in Newport.	Jun 23
Digital Skills – develop a programme to improve digital skills	Dec 22
Digital Inclusion – consider development of a tablet loan scheme	Dec 22
Electronic Document Management System (EDMS) - continue roll out of (EDMS) through organisation	On-going
Document Services - continued management of mail, print, scanning and paper file storage	On-going
Hybrid Mail Solution – roll out across further areas of hybrid mail solution to streamline process for mail	On-going
Multi-Function Devices – review of existing Multi-Function Device contract and future plans in the light of “new normal”	Aug 22
Public Buildings Wi-Fi - review of options for public buildings Wi-Fi provision	On-going
Internet of Things (IoT) LoRaWAN network - consider extension and future roll out as appropriate	On-going
Robotic Process Automation (RPA) – future opportunities will be considered and a programme for RPA developed.	Dec 22
Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery	
Improved Business Continuity – data centre move and cloud migrations to improve business continuity	On-going
Coronavirus Impact	
Review IT provision and implement changes required as a result of the “new normal”	On-going
Climate Change	
Digital Strategy - fully considers the Council’s climate change commitments and net zero aspirations	Oct 22
Climate Change Digital Elements – develop and progress digital elements of the council’s climate change plan	On-going

Scrutiny Report

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

Part 1

Date: July 2022

Subject **Digital Strategy Report**

Author Samantha Schanzer (Scrutiny Advisor)

The following people have been invited to attend for this item:

Invitee:	Area / Role / Subject
Mark Bleazard	Digital Services Manager
Tracy McKim	Head of People, Policy and Transformation
Sam Ali	Digital Projects Manager
Tariq Slaoui	Information Manager
Dominic Gibbons	Digital Projects Manager

Section A – Committee Guidance and Recommendations

1 Recommendations to the Committee

The Committee is asked

1. To consider the report and provide feedback on the themes highlighted within including any additions or amendments.
2. To consider any areas of concern/challenge within the report.

2 Context

Background

- 2.1 The first [Digital Strategy 2015-2020](#) was adopted by Cabinet in October 2015. The strategy was the council's response to a changing world where digital interaction is the norm for many customers, citizens and businesses.

The Digital Strategy 2022-27 is a continuation of and development on the previous strategy in light of the challenges faced and learning done throughout the pandemic to reflect the change in digital need experienced by the council, its staff and the residents and businesses of Newport.

Previous Consideration of this item

- 2.2. The Digital Strategy returned to the Community Planning & Development Scrutiny Committee in October 2016 with a progress review.

3 Information Submitted to the Committee

- 3.1 The report details the challenges faced by the council as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and the need for adaptation in the planning and delivery of the digital strategy to reflect the changes and learning done throughout that period. It highlights 4 key themes that committee are asked to consider.

3.2 Theme 1 – Digital Transformation

This theme details the aims to transform services using digital technology to be more effective, easy to use and with consideration of user needs.

Theme 2 – Digital Skills and Inclusion

This theme details the aims to improve digital skills and support throughout Newport, for council staff, citizens and businesses to improve their relationship with and use of digital technology.

Theme 3 – Data and Collaboration

This theme details the improvement of service delivery by better use of data and increased collaboration built on secure systems and processes.

Theme 4 – Digital Infrastructure and Connectivity.

This theme details work to be carried out to improve the digital infrastructure and connectivity within Newport for the council, residents, and businesses.

4. Suggested Areas of Focus

Role of the Committee

The role of the Committee in considering the report is to:

Consider the report and provide feedback on the themes and their aims and actions.

- Assess and make comment on:
 - The themes identified.
 - The vision of the themes.
 - The priorities and actions.
 - The effect of the strategy on the council, citizens and businesses.
 - Whether committee is satisfied it has had all relevant information to consider.
 - Anything else committee feel is prudent.

Suggested Lines of Enquiry

- 4.1 The committee is asked to consider:

- Do you agree with the 4 proposed themes? Do you feel that anything has been missed?
- Do you agree with the associated vision of each of the themes?
- For each of the themes, do you agree with the priorities and actions identified?
- Do you have any other comments or recommendations regarding the report, themes, actions or risks?

Section B – Supporting Information

5 Supporting Information

- 5.1 [Digital Strategy Review 2016](#)
[Digital Strategy 2015-2020](#)
[Digital Strategy Approval Decision](#)

6 Links to Council Policies and Priorities

The Digital Strategy fully supports the aspirations in the Corporate Plan, the vision for Newport and Well-being and Future Generations (Wales) Act.

Well-being Objectives	Promote economic growth and regeneration whilst protecting the environment	Improve skills, educational outcomes & employment opportunities	Enable people to be healthy, independent & resilient	Build cohesive & sustainable communities
Corporate Plan Commitments	Thriving City	Aspirational People		Resilient Communities
Supporting Function	Modernised Council			

7 Impact Assessment:

- **Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act**

7.1 General questions

- Details of the sustainable development principles are below

7.2 Wellbeing Goals

- IT/digital can make a positive contribution to the wellbeing goals detailed in the Act.

7.3 Sustainable Development Principles

- The strategy demonstrates how as an authority we are working in accordance with the sustainable development principles from the act

- **Long Term**

The strategy looks at the longer term and this includes specific long term activities such as digital elements of the council's climate change plan and improvements to the digital infrastructure of the city.

- **Prevention**

Preventative measures are key to ensure the effectiveness of the service by ensuring the infrastructure and systems are fit for purpose and appropriately supported and protected. The proactive migration of systems to the cloud is designed to prevent system availability problems as is the Shared Resource Service (SRS) data centre migration. IT systems can provide data to inform better decision making and preventative measures. Digital can also make a positive impact to reduce climate change impacts

- **Integration**

IT needs to be designed as part of business processes rather than an add-on at the end. The Digital team plays an important role integrating IT into business processes in conjunction with SRS

- **Collaboration**

IT delivery relies on the collaboration between the council's IT service delivery partner, the Shared Resource Service (SRS) the Digital team and all council services as well as with partners and suppliers

- **Involvement**

The digital strategy included wide engagement with internal and external stakeholders. This included a survey on the council's web site, paper surveys and surveys via free public Wi-Fi users. The completion of this strategy will involve further engagement with various stakeholders.

8. Background Papers

Include all additional documents that are referenced in the report, and those that you have used as background reading. Hyperlink to online versions of them if available.

- [The Essentials - Wellbeing of Future Generation Act \(Wales\)](#)
- [Corporate Plan](#)
- [Socio-economic Duty Guidance](#)
- [Public Sector Equality Duty](#)
- [Welsh Language Measure 2015](#)
- [Wales National Well-being Goals](#)

Report Completed: July 2022

Digital Strategy 2022 – 2027

Developing Themes – draft

Introduction

This strategy has been developed in a period of unprecedented challenges, most notably the Covid pandemic. The pandemic increased the pace of change towards digital services as restrictions changed the way people work, socialise and deliver services. In Newport, and at Newport City Council we also saw the impact that digital technology had on the way we engaged with our communities, ensured continuity of our services and provided greater flexibility for staff and Councillors.

At Newport Council we were able to demonstrate how quickly we can adapt and deliver change, moving over 1,000 office based staff to home and hybrid working. We were also able to continue our democratic duties delivering key democratic meetings and decisions using technology. The Council also saw significant increases in the use of its online services and social media to communicate with its citizens and businesses.

The pandemic also highlighted the inequalities which many vulnerable and disadvantaged communities have to accessing digital technology and services. This included families who needed to provide suitable devices for young learners to home schooling, elderly people wanting to use technology to keep in touch with their family members and businesses needing to provide online services for their customers. Despite these challenges over the last two years, Newport Council alongside its IT partners (Shared Resource Service), Welsh Government funding and charitable donations were able to prevent the short term impact for many of these families, residents and businesses.

The pandemic has also resulted in quicker and more collaborative sharing of data in the context of saving lives. This includes the rapid development of vaccines supported by collaborative efforts and the development of the Test, Trace and Protect service across Wales. The council recognises the even greater importance of data in effective service delivery and decision making. It also recognises the principle of transparency of performance and service delivery. This is in the context of heightened cyber security threats worldwide and the council recognises the need to improve cyber resilience further and protect the data it holds effectively.

To enable the effective use of technology, digital infrastructure and connectivity is critical for citizens, businesses, employees and members. The council will drive improvements to the infrastructure of the city and the council to ensure that digital facilities can be used effectively. It recognises the importance of digital infrastructure and connectivity in economic prosperity and will do everything it can to stimulate developments.

There is now an opportunity to build on from what we have learnt as an organisation and transform the way we use digital technology and services to improve Newport Council's offer for its residents, businesses and staff. We also need to continue our collaboration with our communities, service users and partners to breakdown the structural inequalities that exist for people to access digital technology, services and improve employment opportunities in this digital age. With the use of digital technology, there is also the environmental impact that we must consider in how we can use technology to support the Council's goal of becoming net zero carbon by 2030 and look at how we sustainably procure our technology and services.

This Digital Strategy outlines the Council's long term priorities and how it will support the Council's ambition to provide 21st century services for its citizens, economy and visitors.

Background

This is the council's second digital strategy, developed at a time when digital technology is increasingly important to service delivery. It has been developed following extensive engagement with citizens, businesses, employees and members. This engagement has identified various common needs and aspirations. It also recognises differences in how customers want to interact with the council given their level of digital skills and inclusion. The strategy builds on and develops activities commenced in the original digital strategy.

Citizens, businesses, employees and members expect:

- simple, effective solutions designed around their user needs
- the use of modern technology, innovation and responsiveness
- a choice of delivery channels
- support for improving their digital skills and inclusion
- protection of their data and appropriate sharing of this
- decisions to be made based on sound evidence
- the council to drive improvements in the city's digital infrastructure and connectivity

The strategy sets the strategic direction for the council over the next five years.

The strategy is based on four themes:-

1. Digital Transformation

We will transform services by the innovative use of digital technology that is effective, easy to use and designed around user needs

2. Digital Skills and Inclusion

We will develop the digital skills of our citizens, employees and members plus support improved access to digital technology

3. Data and Collaboration

We will improve service delivery by better use of data and increased collaboration built on secure systems and processes

4. Digital Infrastructure and Connectivity

We will drive excellent digital infrastructure and connectivity for the city and for the council

Further details on these four themes are provided within this document.

The proposed strategy will identify what we will achieve and how we will do it. It will also highlight various activities that will support its delivery. These are primarily focused on the next two years but the themes of the strategy will drive future work. Progress against these activities will be managed and published both through service area updates, and the Annual Digital Report.

The themes of the Digital Strategy supports the Well-being of Future Generations Act and the strategic priorities of the Council.

[Wales National Well-being Goals](#)

The Well-being of Future Generations Act requires public bodies in Wales to think about the long-term impact of our decisions and to work with our communities, people and each other to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change.

The Well-being Act has put in place seven well-being goals that all public-bodies, including Newport Council must work towards in this Corporate Plan:



A Prosperous Wales	A Wales of cohesive communities
A Resilient Wales	A Wales Vibrant Culture and thriving Welsh Language
A Healthier Wales	A Globally responsible Wales
A more Equal Wales	

In the delivery of our themes, we will need to work collaboratively, locally, regionally and nationally with other public sector bodies, not for profit organisations, charities, private sector, communities and representative groups.

Over the next five years, Newport Council will be working with a range of partners including the Cardiff Capital Region (Corporate Joint Committee), Gwent Regional Public Services Board and Regional Partnership Board to deliver our Well-being Objectives and our strategic priorities.

Throughout the delivery of this strategy, we will ensure the decisions that we make consider five Ways of Working: Long Term, Integration, Involvement, Collaboration and Prevention.

We will also ensure that the impacts of our decisions consider the socio-economic impacts on Newport’s communities, service users, and staff that work for Newport Council.

Corporate Plan 2022-27

The Corporate Plan sets out the long term priorities of Newport Council and the delivery of its services to communities, citizens, businesses, visitors of Newport. The Corporate Plan will be focused on how it will continue to transform services to meet 21st Century demands of its residents, businesses and visitors. The Plan will also outline how the Council will become more inclusive and sustainable ensuring people will have access to the services they need.

Further information to be provided following final agreement of the Corporate Plan.

Newport City Council Climate Change Plan 2022-27

To support the Welsh Government’s target for all public services to be net carbon zero by 2030, Newport City Council launched its Climate Change Plan that sets out how the Council will achieve this target. The delivery of this strategy, action plan and projects will align and support the Council’s Climate Change Plan and will consider the environmental impact on the Council and communities.

Theme 1 - Digital Transformation

We will transform services by the innovative use of digital technology that is effective, easy to use and designed around user needs

What will we achieve

For citizens and businesses

- Services transformed by the innovative use of digital technology
- Digital solutions that are innovative, effective and easy to use
- Digital solutions that are available 24x7 from anywhere
- Digital solutions that meet design, accessibility, Welsh Language and other standards
- A positive contribution to climate change targets including reduced travel by the use of digital solutions
- The council's web site is the preferred channel for customers, together with council app and customer account facilities
- Access channels that are joined up effectively, providing choice and consistency of service

For employees and members

- Digital solutions that are effective and easy to use
- Digital solutions that enable remote working and participation including hybrid meetings
- Processes for employees are automated to reduce data entry in IT systems

Some ways we will achieve this

- Improved web site
- Transformation Programme
- Digital elements of climate change plan

Theme 2 - Digital Skills and Inclusion

We will develop the digital skills of our citizens, employees and members plus support improved access to digital technology

What will we achieve

For citizens and businesses

- Improved digital skills for citizens and businesses
- Improved digital inclusion by providing access to devices
- Improved digital inclusion by providing free public Wi-Fi
- Improved digital inclusion driven by customer insight profiling
- Services that are joined up across partners

For employees and members

- Improved digital skills for employees and members
- Improved access to devices and systems for employees currently without a device
- Employees and members have access to equipment to work in an agile manner

Some ways we will achieve this

- Deliver free digital skills programme
- Council workforce strategy
- Free Public Wi-Fi

Theme 3 - Data and Collaboration

We will improve service delivery by better use of data and increased collaboration built on secure systems and processes

What will we achieve

For citizens and businesses

- People have confidence in the council's management of their data
- Data is shared appropriately to support partnership and collaborative working for improved service delivery
- Decision making, service delivery and planning is facilitated by better use of data
- Data protected against cyber attacks and other threats
- Schools are supported in sound information management, cyber resilience and information security
- Improved business continuity by digital solutions that are resilient with high availability
- Data from digital solutions such as sensor technology makes a positive contribution to climate change targets
- Up to date and meaningful information is available to citizens, businesses etc.
- Improved transparency with council data made available that facilitates the use of data for public good in an open format where possible
- Targets achieved for customer requests for information such as Freedom of information and Subject Access Requests
- An improved understanding of the city, its citizens and businesses as a result of insight profiling, census and other data sources

Some ways we will achieve this

- Maintain accreditation to information security standards
- Improve cyber resilience
- Develop further capabilities for the Newport Intelligence Hub (NIH)

Theme 4 - Digital Infrastructure and Connectivity

We will drive excellent digital infrastructure and connectivity for the city and for the council

What will we achieve

For citizens and businesses

- Excellent connectivity in the city – broadband, Wi-Fi and mobile telecommunications including 5G
- Increased inward investment in the city's infrastructure
- Newport established as Wales' first data city
- Council services are delivered by fast and reliable networks
- Smart city technology implemented
- Digital infrastructure for the city considered in council buildings, planning and road infrastructure and assets

For employees and members

- Building infrastructure that supports a flexible and agile workforce
- Employees and members have access to systems irrespective of where they choose to work

Some ways we will achieve this

- Implement the Local Broadband Fund (LBF) project in council adult residential care homes
- Provide and develop public Wi-Fi in public buildings, city centre and buses

Development of the Plan

The Digital themes have been developed in consultation with citizens and businesses to understand their future priorities, using a website survey and a paper alternative. Online surveys have also been conducted using the city's public Wi-Fi in buildings and on buses. There has been a large amount of internal engagement including directly with senior managers, working with the Digital City Board and wider officer groups.

Scrutiny discussion in July 2022 will support the development of the themes and the detailed planning that follows. Once this is complete, the draft Strategy which will be developed to sit alongside the new Corporate Plan will be considered by Cabinet.

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Scrutiny Report

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

Part 1

Date: July 2022

Subject Scrutiny Adviser Report

Author Scrutiny Adviser

The following people have been invited to attend for this item:

Invitee:	Role
Samantha Schanzer (Scrutiny Adviser)	Present the Committee with the Scrutiny Adviser Report for discussion and update the Committee on any changes.

Section A – Committee Guidance and Recommendations

Recommendations to the Committee

The Committee is asked to:

1. Action Plan

Consider the Actions from previous meetings (**Appendix 1**):

- *Note the responses for the actions;*
- *Determine if any further information / action is required;*
- *Agree to receive an update on outstanding issues at the next meeting.*

2 Context

Background

- 2.1 Attached at **Appendix 1** is the Action Sheet from the Committee meetings. The updated completed actions are included in the table.
- 2.2 Any actions that do not have a response will be included on the Action Sheet at the next meeting to ensure that the Committee can keep track of outstanding actions.

3 Information Submitted to the Committee

3.1 The following information is attached:

Appendix 1: Action Sheet from Previous Meetings;

4. Suggested Areas of Focus

Role of the Committee

The role of the Committee in considering the report is to:

- **Action Sheet from Previous Meetings - Appendix 1**
 - Consider the responses to the actions from the meeting;
 - Are you satisfied that you have received the necessary information?
 - Are there any further issues arising from the responses that you would like to raise?
 - For the actions that do not have responses – these actions will be rolled over to the next meeting and reported back to the Committee.

Section B – Supporting Information

5 Supporting Information

- 5.1 The Corporate Assessment, and the subsequent [follow up assessment](#) provide background information on the importance of good work programming. Specific reference is made to the need to align the Cabinet and Scrutiny work programmes to ensure the value of the Scrutiny Function is maximised.
- 5.2 The latest Cabinet work programme was approved by the Cabinet on a monthly basis for the next 12 months and includes the list of reports scheduled for consideration. Effective forward planning by both Cabinet and Scrutiny needs to be coordinated and integrated in relation to certain reports to ensure proper consultation takes place before a decision is taken. A link to the Cabinet work programme is provided [here](#) to the Committee as part of this report, to enable the Committee to ensure that the work programmes continue to reflect key decisions being made by the Cabinet.

6. Links to Council Policies and Priorities

- 6.1 Having proper work programming procedures in place ensures that the work of Overview and Scrutiny makes a positive impact upon the Council's delivery of services, contributes to the delivery of corporate objectives, and ensures that work can be undertaken in a timely and well-planned manner.
- 6.2 This report relates to the Committee's Work Programme, Actions from Committee's and Information Reports that support the achievement of the Scrutiny Committee, in accordance with the Law and Regulation Service Plan, Objectives, Actions and Measures and the Wellbeing objectives:

Well-being Objectives	Promote economic growth and regeneration whilst protecting the environment	Improve skills, educational outcomes & employment opportunities	Enable people to be healthy, independent & resilient	Build cohesive & sustainable communities
Corporate Plan Commitments	Thriving City	Aspirational People		Resilient Communities
Supporting Function	Modernised Council			

7 Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act

7.1 The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015 which came into force in April 2016 sets the context for the move towards long term planning of services.

7.2 General questions

- How is this area / policy affected by the new legislation?
- How will this decision / policy / proposal impact upon future generations? What is the long term impact?
- What evidence is provided to demonstrate WFGA has been / is being considered?
- Evidence from Community Profiles / other data?
- Evidence of links to Wellbeing Assessment / Objectives / Plan?

7.3 Wellbeing Goals

- How are the Wellbeing goals reflected in the policy / proposal / action?
 - *A prosperous Wales*
 - *A resilient Wales*
 - *A healthier Wales*
 - *A more equal Wales*
 - *A Wales of cohesive communities*
 - *A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language*
 - *A globally responsible Wales*

7.4 Sustainable Development Principles

- Does the report / proposal demonstrate how as an authority we are working in accordance with the sustainable development principles from the act when planning services?
 - **Long Term**
The importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs
 - **Prevention**
How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives
 - **Integration**
Considering how the public body's well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their other objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies
 - **Collaboration**
Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body to meet its well-being objectives
 - **Involvement**
The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves.

8 Background Papers

- [The Essentials - Wellbeing of Future Generation Act \(Wales\)](#)
- [Corporate Plan 2017 - 2022](#)
- The Corporate Assessment and [follow up assessment](#).

Report Completed: July 2022

**OVERVIEW AND MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
ACTION SHEET – 24.06.22**

	Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	Outcome
1	Welsh Language Annual Monitoring Report	Scrutiny Advisor to send commends and recommendations to Janice Dent (Policy and Partnership Manager)	Scrutiny Advisor	COMPLETED – emailed Janice Dent with comments and recommendations on 27 th June 2022.
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				

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