

Agenda



Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

Date: Friday, 8 September 2023

Time: 10.00 am

Venue: Teams Meeting / Committee Room 1

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

Item	Wards Affected
1	<u>Apologies</u>
2	<u>Declarations of Interest</u>
3	<u>Minutes of the Previous Meeting</u> (Pages 3 - 16)
4	<u>Annual Digital Report 22-23</u> (Pages 17 - 56)
5	<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.
6	<u>Scrutiny Adviser Reports</u> (Pages 57 - 64) a) Actions Arising (Appendix 1) b) Forward Work Programme Update (Appendix 2)
7	<u>Live Event</u> Please click here to watch the Live Event.

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Date of Issue: Friday, 1 September 2023

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Draft Minutes

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

Date: 28th July 2023

Time: 10am

Venue: Microsoft Teams Meeting / Committee Room 1

Present: Councillors P Hourahine (Chair), M Al-Nuaimi, C Baker-Westhead, M Evans, B Davies, L James, G Horton.

Rhys Cornwall (Strategic Director for Transformation and Corporate), Paul Jones (Strategic Director for Environment and Sustainability), Tracy McKim (Head of People, Policy and Transformation), Silvia Gonzales-Lopez (Head of Environment and Public Protection), Mark Bleazard (Digital Services Manager), Ross Cudlipp (Service Manager – Climate Change), Cllr D Batrouni (Cabinet Member for Organisational Transformation), Cllr Y Forsey (Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Bio-diversity).

Samantha Schanzer (Scrutiny Advisor), Emily Mayger (Governance Support Officer), Taylor Strange (Governance Support Officer)

Apologies: Councillor Bright and Cocks

1. Apologies

Cllrs S Cocks and P Bright.

2. Declarations of Interests

None.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting: 23rd June 2023

The Committee asked that the minutes clarify the disappointment by the referrer of the Levelling Up Bid item concerning their request for Officers attendance.

- The Scrutiny Advisor agreed to do this.

The Chair highlighted to the Committee that the meeting that had been scheduled for the 29th September had been moved to the 9th October 2023.

- The Scrutiny Adviser noted that the time of the of this meeting would start earlier to allow time in the meeting to cover both reports.
- The Committee understood that the meeting had to begin earlier however wished to start an hour later than scheduled at 2pm.
- The Scrutiny Advisor agreed to change the start time.

The Chair asked if there were any matters arising.

The Committee noted that there was an ongoing issue with the vacancies in the internal Audit team and asked the Chair whether their concerns can be raised as other Committees have done.

- The Strategic Director for Transformation and Corporate gave a brief overview of the issues and explained that there had been a number of officers who had moved on to other opportunities from the Audit team and that this had left the Council with vacancies.
- The Strategic Director for Transformation and Corporate noted the issue had been raised in Place and Corporate Scrutiny Committee when considering the end of year report, and in Governance and Audit Committee as part of the terms of reference. The Director confirmed that the Head of Finance had made an agreement to return to Governance and Audit Committee with an updated Audit Plan for the remainder of 2023/24, which is likely to include securing additional resource from an external organisation.
- The Strategic Director for Transformation and Corporate added that audit vacancies were currently out to advertisement for applications, and the service was exploring other methods for recruitment such as apprenticeships. The Council is engaged in informal discussions exploring the opportunities that a regional service could provide, but that this was for further consideration.
- The Chair noted that over the years there has been a lot of movement in the Audit team and a vacancy for a period of time.
- The Strategic Director for Transformation and Corporate explained that there had been a vacancy carried in the team but noted that this had been removed from the team as part of activity to balance the budget. The Strategic Director for Transformation and Corporate explained that although there is no current capacity to reduce staffing levels, there will be a need to balance the budget again in the coming year.
- The Committee queried how many people were employed in the internal audit team and the Strategic Director for Transformation and Corporate noted that by the Summer there will be one person in the team.
- The Committee asked whether engaging the external Audit organisation would be more expensive than if the internal roles were filled. The Strategic Director for Transformation and Corporate confirmed that the Council already deploy the company for some audit and that the Head of Finance has been asked to create a detailed report which can then be circulated to the Committee following Governance and Audit Committee.
- The Committee asked whether there was any support that they could provide concerning the remuneration package for officers, and the Strategic Director for Transformation and Corporate explained that the pay policy and structure was set by the Council, and that it would not be as simple as putting more money into a particular role as all roles are linked.
- The Chair noted that in the past market factors had been applied to a role and the Strategic Director for Transformation and Corporate agreed but explained that there is a process that must be followed before that point.

The Committee raised the previous request for the University to come to the Committee and stated that this had not been completed as they were waiting on a response.

- The Chair explained that a response had been forwarded.
- The Committee considered that the response had not fully addressed all the questions that they had.

- The Chair noted that the University had been repurposing buildings to allow for a greater number of students.
- The Chair explained that if the University was to accept an invitation to discuss this with Council representatives, then they would not likely come to Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, as the terms of reference of the Committee does not include scrutinising the University.
- The Committee noted that it was purely a request as it is important to have openness and transparency and added that was critical to attract students to live in the city.
- The Strategic Director for Transformation and Corporate explained that the Committee does not have the authority to scrutinise the University but added that he would ensure that an invitation is sent to them, whereby they have the option to decline the invitation. .
- The Committee queried whether the word Scrutiny may put them off and the Strategic Director for Transformation and Corporate noted that it would be made clear in the request that they were not being invited to be 'scrutinised'.
- The Chair asked what the appropriate forum was to scrutinise the University, and the Strategic Director for Transformation and Corporate stated that although it was not the Committee, they had raised some legitimate questions.

The Committee noted in the training recommendations there had been a statement about the Council being unable to control training due to it being facilitated externally. They added that if the training provision was not functioning in the way that was required, then other training options could be explored. The Committee also noted that although the recommendations made did not have to be accepted for action, it may be of use to understand the reasons for this.

- The Chair noted that this would be raised again and stated that the Council could provide the rationale for using the external providers so that the reason can be documented for Committee.
- The Scrutiny Adviser stated that a draft document to monitor recommendations had been created which would be brought to the next Scrutiny Chair's Meeting and CMT for feedback before its implementation.

The Scrutiny Advisor added that the Head of Democratic and Electoral Services has been working on getting the response from the Chief Executive regarding the responsibility of recommendation implementation and would ask that a response be provided on the matter of training.

The minutes of the previous meeting held **23rd June 2023** were **accepted as a true and accurate record**.

4. Climate Change Plan Annual Report 22-23

Invitees:

Councillor Yvonne Forsey – Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Biodiversity

Paul Jones – Strategic Director of Environment and Sustainability

Silvia Gonzales-Lopez – The Head of Environment and Public Protection.

Ross Cudlipp – Service Manager for Climate Change.

The Committee agreed to hear this item first.

The Chair reminded Committee that this was the first year of reporting.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Biodiversity introduced the report and the Head of Environment and Public Protection gave an overview of the report.

Questions:

The Committee queried the Business Travel and Employee Commuting figures and asked why this had increased and what the challenges of reducing this would be.

- The Service Manager stated that there had been an increase in 22-23 compared to previous years due to the pandemic. The Service Manager highlighted that it would be better to compare data to 2019 as a baseline. The Service Manager informed Committee that they would find out why emissions were higher when homeworking was also increased and provide Committee with that information.

The Committee noted the changes in the way that the Welsh Government attribute organisational Carbon Emissions and asked whether this methodology had been applied retrospectively to the previous years as well as whether it was Officers' opinion that overall emission levels had dropped.

- The Service Manger informed the Committee that they had not been applied retrospectively but noted that this could be done and provided to Committee.
- The Head of Service added that this is reported annually, and that the official data would not be able to be changed.
- The Strategic Director explained that the methodology is continuously evolving and added that there are likely to be further changes.
- The Chair stated that the Committee would receive the information but that it would not be regarded as official data.
- The Strategic Director stated that they are confident that the emissions are going down.

The Committee noted that the People and Culture Strategy Action had a red rating and asked what challenges there had been.

- The Head of People, Policy and Transformation noted that this had been on the plan from the year before and explained that since the staff conference, the development time scale had been set and that it was being drafted to be brought back to the Committee.

The Committee noted the action on using the Council's influence to encourage the staff pension fund to invest ethically and stated that this would be a yes or no question and so queried how had it been marked as amber and what the challenges were associated with it.

- The Service Manager stated that this would be checked back on and a response provided to Committee.
- The Strategic Director stated that as the Climate Change Plan was all encompassing and they may not be able to provide all answers at that moment.
- The Committee noted that in their personal experience there had been delays in getting a response from the pension fund and that could be the reason why it was amber.
- The Chair noted that in the past the pension funds had only stated that they would only do what was economical.

The Committee noted the actions to ensure that all new Council buildings would be net zero carbon and asked why there were four that were being discussed with Newport Norse and asked whether more detail could be provided.

- The Service Manager explained that initially the action had been to complete a document on their requirements but noted there had been a delay. The Service Manager stated that the document and the report could go to the Cabinet for briefing and explained that the document that was currently in its draft form would set out the requirements, approach and minimum standards.
- The Strategic Director noted that in many cases, the Council would not be the sole financier and that many grants would be conditional. The Strategic Director added that the majority of buildings that are in construction are currently following this as the net zero agenda is moving so quickly.
- The Service Manager stated that no gas was being used in new build homes, and each building has as much onsite energy generation as possible. The Service Manager explained that the remaining energy need comes from sustainable suppliers.

The Chair queried the net zero of the supplier and asked how far down the supply chain they had gone to prove sustainability.

- The Service Manager stated that as they no longer used gas it was only looking at electricity suppliers. The Service Manager informed the Committee that they have solar panels on site and that the remaining need is met by a German electricity company that have certified that they get all energy from solar and wind energy. The Service Manager added that ideally, they would make the majority of it on site.

The Committee asked about the deep retrofit and the Solar PV and what the challenges had been.

- The Strategic Director stated that they had provided an overview and added that Officers had been critical as they wished to hold themselves to a higher standard.
- The Service Manager stated that part of the challenge had been that many of the buildings retrofit have been grant funded and informed the Committee that the grant budget had been put in place 2 to 3 years prior and so they had faced challenges staying on budget in the present day.
- The Service Manager highlighted the challenges as finding funding and maximising energy creation.

The Committee asked about the further installation of solar panels on schools.

- The Service Manager stated that a full review of operational buildings had been done and that they were looking for a delivery route for the solar panels as one package. The Service Manager added that they intended to get this rolled out in the current financial year and added that although there had not been a policy at that point they wished to get Solar on all suitable schools by 2025.
- The Chair asked about the figures and whether they only showed the year before.
- The Cabinet Member informed the Committee that the numbers had shown the total to that point.

The Committee asked about the action for tackling illegal parking and queried what threshold had been used as it was marked as Green.

- The Service Manager stated that they would have to refer back to the Action owner for that information.
- The Strategic Director stated that they would provide more detail on this going forward and added that although they had not eradicated illegal parking, it had improved over the 5 years since the civil enforcement had been brought in.

The Committee asked about the city-wide bike hire scheme and whether there had been an update on progress.

- The Strategic Director noted that the bike hire scheme was rolled into the Burns recommendations and that there had been a backlog but that they should be making progress. The Strategic Director stated that they would get a date for the Committee. The Strategic Director added that the scheme was delivered by Newport City Council staff.

The Committee queried the demand responsive transport scheme and asked whether this had looked at extending to areas with air quality management issues.

- The Strategic Director noted that they are served by main bus routes and that the DRT are used in areas where main bus routes are not commercially viable. The Strategic Director added that for AQMAs they would be looking at getting electric fleets.

The Committee asked about the updates and challenges from the Electric Vehicle Taxi Scheme.

- The Service Manager stated that there had been a pilot scheme of this in Cardiff and that they had done a limited trial. The Service Manager added that they had encouraged this action so that an additional trial could be done. The Service Manager informed the Committee that the action was currently Red as there had been no progress but that this was expected to change as they have had an increase in resource in the team.

The Committee queried the action regarding new taxi's being ULEV and asked whether they would provide a percentage.

- The Head of Service stated that they would provide information to the Committee on this.

The Committee noted there had been some progress on the plastic free Newport and asked for more detail.

- The Head of Service stated that a ban on non-reusable plastic had recently come in but added that the Council has limited influence. The Head of Service informed the Committee that they had moved a motion to encourage it in their premises but as this had been implemented, the pandemic began. The Head of Service added that they had made progress with water fountains and reusable bottles as well as supporting re-fill shops.

The Committee noted the action of ensuring pension funds use more ethical funds and queried how they were planning to do this.

- The Strategic Director noted that this would be a case of writing to the pension funds and informing them of the Council's desire to use more ethical funds. The Strategic Director added that although they would have limited control, they wish to make their position clear.
- The Committee noted that there did not appear to be a way to measure this and added that it was unlikely to achieve what they wish it to.
- The Strategic Director stated that the reduction can be picked up on monitoring and that the balance of the environment and investing had been made previously.
- The Chair noted that this question had been an issue for 40 years and that it may be more applicable to be in the political forum.

The Committee stated that the report had been easy to read but noted that there should be further explanations on actions that have been listed in red and highlighted action points that have due dates that have been exceeded.

- The Strategic Director noted that there had been a slight lag due to the annual update and noted that an update on the expired actions would be included in the following report.
- The Chair noted that it may be of use to include the date the report had been authored for clarity.

The Committee queried the use of the terminology when stating that they were encouraging the use of public transport and asked whether there had been any evidence to back up its green status.

- The Strategic Director noted that the use of public transport had increased but added that they would need to go and find out further detail for the Committee.
- The Committee asked for further explanation of the word encourage.
- The Cabinet Member stated that the aim was to get the public to increase their use active travel routes even if this was just occasional.

The Committee asked whether there had been any evidence to support that green waste 3 weekly collections had increased recycling.

- The Cabinet Member stated that this had in part been done for budgetary reasons but added that many orange bins would not be full when collected. The Cabinet Member informed the Committee that if needed, residents can apply for a second orange bin.

The Committee noted that there was reference to encouraging active travel and public transport and asked how they were encouraging this for people with restricted mobility as well as the elderly.

- The Strategic Director stated that there had been funding for bus shelter replacements and that this had started to be rolled out and that they would hope to have replaced them all over the coming 3 to 4 years.
- The Committee asked whether there was a compiled list of when the improvements will come to each area as this may be of use.
- The Strategic Director stated that the priority had been worked out based on the use and the ones in the worst condition and stated that he would ask for this list to be shared.

The Committee asked whether there had been any research into whether the addition of a new bus stop may increase the usage.

- The Strategic Director noted that he would enquire but stated that often where there are no shelters is due to the engineering challenge of the spot to physically put one there and added that they also had limited funding. The Strategic Director noted that many of the bus shelters were in very poor condition and so there was a need to get these up to standard.

The Committee asked whether the Council offers a home composting bin.

- The Strategic Director stated that the Council used to as well as a phase where they offered ones at a discounted rate and added that this was something that could be looked into.
- The Committee noted that if more people were using home composting bins, this would reduce the quantity of waste the vehicles would be taking.

The Committee asked whether the cycle to work scheme had been rolled out and whether the Council workforce were able to utilise it.

- The Head of Service stated that they would need to confirm this.
- The Service Manager stated that the scheme had been open over two periods in a year and added that this had then also been extended for a further year.
- The Chair questioned whether they were referring to the salary sacrifice.
- The Head of People, Policy and Transformation stated that the scheme had been open to Members due to the fact that it had been due to go to scrutiny. The Head of People, Policy and Transformation noted that it was due to the nature of the scheme that they use that it would only be open for certain times and added that it was the same scheme under a different name.
- The Service Manager noted that there was a series of staff benefits that included the salary sacrifice scheme and noted that was a lease arrangement which has been running for 7 years.

The Committee asked whether there would be a way to measure how often the bikes have been used to get to work and noted that it would be worth having a metric to use to measure the use.

- The Cabinet Member informed the Committee that there had been comments in the staff network.
- The Strategic Director noted that they could discuss a way of measuring this but added that if they were being used outside of work, this was still a benefit.
- The Head of Service noted that there had been intentions to perform a survey.

Conclusions:

The Committee welcomed the report and thanked Officers for their hard work.

- The Committee asked for more information regarding the increase of both homeworking figures and commuting figures as these seemed contradictory.
 - The Committee asked for an exercise to be completed wherein the new changes to the measurement of supplier emissions be applied to previous years' data to better understand trends and changes.
 - The Committee asked for more information on the threshold of Green actions, especially in regards to illegal parking.
 - The Committee asked for the date on which the city wide bike scheme would be rolled out.
 - The Committee asked for the percentage of new taxi licenced drivers with ULEV cars.
 - The Committee asked for further explanation regarding the improvement in public transport and why that action was marked as green.
 - The Committee asked for a response on how the Council is ensuring that work is being carried out to encourage ethical investments by the staff pension fund.
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- The Committee recommended that data on 3 weekly garden waste collections' impact on recycling waste be included in next report.

- The Committee recommended that lists of bus shelter improvements be shared more widely with Members and the work programme of these improvement be shared with Ward Members so residents can be informed.
- The Committee recommended a survey be carried out to ascertain in which areas would improvements to bus shelters encourage bus usage.
- The Committee recommended that monitoring be carried out to ascertain how often those in the Cycle to Work Scheme use their bicycles to travel to work.
- The Committee recommended that more information be included regarding pensions in the Organisational Leadership and Culture Action Plan under Priority 4, Action V in the report.
- The Committee recommended that Red, Amber and Green RAG ratings have a commentary/explanation column added to the report.
- The Committee recommended that more information regarding rating thresholds be included in the report.
- The Committee recommended that the date the report is written should be included to increase clarity when considering dates within the report – namely action dates which have been exceeded by the meeting but may have been met outside the time where the report is able to be edited.

5. Annual Information Risk Report 22-23

Invitees:

Councillor Dimitri Batrouni – Cabinet Member for Organisational Transformation
Rhys Cornwall – Strategic Director for Transformation and Corporate
Tracy McKim - Head of People, Policy and Transformation
Mark Bleazard - Digital Services Manager

The Head of Service introduced the report and noted that it was not a statutory report.

The Digital Services Manger gave a brief overview of the report and highlighted some key points.

Questions:

The Chair congratulated the Officers on including detail on the version and authors of the report but queried why this had only begun in April and asked whether there had been any previous versions.

- The Digital Services Manager explained that the reports cover a period of a year and that they begin to write the report in April but noted that the team would be recording data throughout the year.

The Committee asked that the data be presented as percentages as well as figures to contextualise data.

The Committee queried why the Council had not been compliant with the PSN for a period of year and asked whether there were risks that had been associated with this.

- The Digital Services Manager stated that the Council had not been formally compliant due to a late health check. The Digital Services Manager stated that the Council had been in the process of replacing the finance system which had created particular

challenges but noted that although there had been a relatively small risk, there had been mitigation for this. The Digital Services Manager added that the check for the current year had already been put in place.

- The Digital Services Manager stated that an external provider carries out the health check and notes points of vulnerability. The Digital Services Manager added that when applying for compliance, it had not been accepted due to the listed vulnerabilities.

The Committee asked the Officers to state the vulnerabilities.

- The Digital Services Manager listed some of the vulnerabilities and noted that the list appeared to be large due to the vulnerabilities being individually listed.
- The Head of Service stated that there had been difficulties removing some of the vulnerabilities due to them having information systems on them.
- The Digital Services Manager stated that although there were many on the list, they had all related to a singular system.

The Chair asked what shared systems had been in use with other Local Authorities and queried who had been determined to lead on these.

- The Digital Services Manager stated that many of the Local Authorities would share a similar core infrastructure which had been driven by resilience as well as cost saving but noted that there would always be their own individual versions to avoid data concerns. The Digital Services Manager added that whilst in collaboration with SRS they had ensured that the Council had multiple different systems including the payroll system.
- The Strategic Director noted that many authorities had moved to the Cloud but that they had their own system which would not be shared.

The Committee asked how regularly a third party is asked to administer a test.

- The Digital Services Manager stated that this occurred annually.
- The Committee queried whether this was frequent enough considering the speed that change happens in technology.
- The Digital Services Manager stated that the annual test was due to a formal process but added that there were multiple and more frequent tests administered by SRS and explained that as well as tests the system was monitored at all times for malicious attacks.

The Committee asked how many 'malicious attacks' there had been.

- The Digital Services Manager stated that there had not been any but added that it would be hard to quantify.

The Committee queried whether there had ever been a severe attack.

- The Digital Services Manager stated that there had been a ransomware attack 7 years prior and before SRS were in place, but informed the Committee that there had been minimal consequences. The Digital Services Manager stated that they had put in place specific solutions due to this attack and that there had been many improvements made to the Council's back-ups. The Digital Services Manager stated that they had also improved the meta-compliance simulations but noted that they wished to educate those who had clicked on any link.
- The Strategic Director stated that the incident had been identified quickly and that the main impact that it had caused had been a system shut down rather than any data breach. The Strategic Director added that the Council had taken part in nation-wide

simulated attacks and added that they had also been wary of the human reactions to these issues.

The Committee queried whether the Officers were confident that the Council would be ok if there was another attack.

- The Digital Services Manager stated that they were but added that this did not mean that they were complacent and explained that there had been a large amount of investment in that area.
- The Head of Service informed the Committee that when there had been national events there are additional controls overlaid during that period.

The Committee queried whether there was a possibility of locking users from their accounts until they have completed their Meta-compliance course.

- The Digital Services Manager informed the Committee that there is a course that all new starters are required to take prior to being given access and added that they had been focussing on encouraging uptake rather than removal of access but noted that it would be a possibility if needed.
- The Cabinet Member stated that compliance was a huge issue that would be continued to be discussed and added that it was a learning process on how to improve. The Cabinet Member stated that although they would not be able to give 100% assurances they would be up to date on compliance.

The Committee referenced the publishing data section and noted that some of the documents were not up to date on the website.

- The Digital Services Manager apologised and added that this was done via a process which should be done on an annual or quarterly basis.

The Committee queried the definition of a complex Subject Access Request and asked whether the Committee were planning on adding an additional table for complex SARs and what the consequences of not complying would be.

- The Digital Services Manager state that the definition of a complex SAR was given by the Commissioner's Office and added that they did not plan on recording them separately but that they would just be given a longer deadline. The Digital Services Manager stated that they could record the number of complex SARs.

The Committee asked for the number of complex SARs to be reported back to the Committee and queried whether it would be many.

- The Digital Services Manager stated that they would have to check on the request as the number was not recorded automatically. The Digital Services Manager stated that there would not be many but that the majority of them come from Social Care.

The Committee asked what risks were associated with not hitting the set target.

- The Digital Services Manager stated that the Commissioner's Office would be able to enforce the Council to take action. The Digital Services Manager noted that the Council would then be required to clear the relatively small back log.
- The Head of Service stated that there would be reputational risk and added that public trust was of high importance. The Head of Service added that the Council had not applied the exception to date which had meant that the target had been artificially deflated.

- The Strategic Director informed the Committee that that the Commissioner's Office publish the occasions where they have taken action and highlighted that the Council's situation was different to these. The Strategic Director noted that the Council's issues had been around social care provision where records are required to be kept for 99 years and are in a variety of formats.
- The Digital Services Manager noted a further challenge was ensuring 3rd party confidentiality.

The Committee queried where the records had been stored.

- The Digital Services Manager stated that the majority of records were kept electronically and that the older records had been housed in a variety of places and added that this had caused logistical challenges.

The Committee queried what the Cyber Stock Take had covered and asked whether the results were available.

- The Digital Services Manager stated that it was a self-assessment that had been carried out across Wales and noted that it had been done in conjunction with SRS due to their involvement in the technical controls. The Digital Services Manager informed the Committee that there was a Cyber Security Group WARP that operated across Wales and noted that they would learn lessons from other partners and local authorities. The Digital Services Manager noted that they had chased the results and that it would depend on the timings which report it would be included in but highlighted to the Committee that they had done well in previous years.

The Committee asked about the time scale for the Audit Wales Final Report.

- The Digital Services Manager stated that they did not know when it would be returned but that it was likely to be soon and added that they had provided further information a month prior which they expected the report to consider.
- The Head of Service noted that the report would be part 2 but that they would be able to provide a summary.

The Chair requested that the most up to date report to be provided to the Committee.

- The Head of Service noted that as the report was not done by all local authorities as it was not a statutory report the Audit Wales timeframe would not align.
- The Strategic Director noted that the report would be a generic one and added that the information could leave them vulnerable if shared but stated that elements from the report could be given.

The Committee noted that online training may not be sufficient and praised the use of the phishing simulations and queried how many had individuals had fallen victim to it.

- The Digital Services Manager noted that it was important to not be too extreme but added that even one would be too many. The Digital Services Manager noted that the aim had been to educate rather than to punish. The Digital Services Manager noted that they had done multiple types which had been subtly different and noted it would be hard to compare them.
- The Head of Service informed the Committee that 9.2% of users had clicked on the link but that 4% had then put in data and added that the 4% were then required to take training.

The Committee queried the reliance on digital data and asked what would happen if there were to be a complete failure in the Civic Centre.

- The Digital Services Manager stated that there are non-corruptible back ups and that there are different copies which are maintained for different lengths of time.
- The Strategic Strategic Director stated that this had been covered by Civil Contingencies and that there was a disaster recovery plan in place.

The Committee stated their concern for an unredacted email that had been sent and queried whether there had been training following this.

- The Digital Services Manager stated that every incident and the actions needed would be looked at on an individual level and added that Newport Council had reported very few incidents.
- The Cabinet Member wished to thank the Committee for their questions and insights.

Conclusions:

The Committee welcomed the report and thanked Officers for their knowledge and expertise.

- The Committee welcomed the Officer's offer of providing articles containing more information on cases of ICO action.
- The Committee asked for a summary of the Audit Wales report be circulated. If the current year is unavailable for this, the Committee were content to receive information from a previous year as to improve their understanding of the purpose of the report.
- The Committee asked for more information regarding the Cyber Stock Take and examples be provided. If the current year is unavailable for this, the Committee were content to receive information from a previous year as to improve their understanding of the report.

- The Committee recommended contextualising data with percentages.
- The Committee recommended the inclusion of specific "particularly complex" SAR numbers in future reports.
- The Committee recommended that stronger responses to incomplete training be considered.
- The Committee felt that there was significant overlap between the Information Risk Report and the Annual Digital Report and asked that Officers consider merging the reports.

6. Conclusion of Committee Reports

The Committee asked that these be recorded at the end of each relevant agenda item.

7. Scrutiny Advisor Report

a) Actions Arising (Appendix 1)

The Scrutiny Adviser reported the outstanding actions to the Committee.

The Scrutiny advisor reported back to the Committee that there were approximately 250 EV charging outlets in Newport.

The Scrutiny Advisor noted that the Strategic Director for Transformation and Corporate would contact the university on behalf of the Committee.

b) Forward Work Programme (Appendix 2)

The Scrutiny Advisor noted that there was one item on the agenda for the 8th September and that there were two items on the agenda for the meeting on the 9th October and added that the October meeting will begin at 2pm.

The Date of the next meeting was confirmed as the **8th September 2023**.

8. Live Event

[The recording of the meeting can be watched here.](#)



Scrutiny Report

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

Part 1

Date: August 2023

Subject Annual Digital Report 2022-23

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
Tariq Slaoui	Information Manager
Rhys Cornwall	Strategic Director for Transformation and Corporate
Councillor Dimitri Batrouni	Cabinet Member for Organisational Transformation

Section A – Committee Guidance and Recommendations

1 Recommendations to the Committee

The Committee is asked to:

- i. Consider the report and provide feedback on past performance and future actions.
- ii. Decide whether it wishes to make any comments or recommendations to Cabinet.

2 Context

Background

- 2.1 This report is presented for best practice and is not a statutory report. 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.

- 2.2 By presenting this report, the benefits include:
- Providing an overview of the council's IT and digital services
 - Highlighting the importance of digital services to the organisation especially given the impact of the pandemic, the opportunities they provide and the risks of under-investment
 - Comparing performance with previous years with the aim of continuous improvement
 - Identifying opportunities, address weaknesses and develop an action plan
- 2.3 The committee were consulted in the creation of the Digital Strategy 2022-27 on the [29th July 2022](#).
- 2.4 This is the fourth Annual Digital Report designed to complement the Annual Information Risk Report which is now in its eleventh year. This is the first Annual Digital Report under the new Strategy.

Previous Consideration of this item

- 2.5 The Committee previously considered the Digital Strategy Report 2022-27 on [29th July 2022](#) and the previous Annual Digital Report on [9th July 2021](#).

3 Information Submitted to the Committee

- 3.1 This report provides a summary of the council's IT and digital services.
- 3.2 The report has an executive summary followed by information on activity during 2022-23. Conclusions as a result of this activity are then detailed followed by an action plan.
- 3.3 The reports contents are:-
- Background and Purpose
 - Current position
 - Digital Strategy Progress
 - Conclusions
 - Actions Summary
 - Risk Management
 - Action 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 22/23 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 23/24 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.

Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act

5 Ways of Working	Types of Questions to consider:
<p style="text-align: center;">Long-term</p> <p>The importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs.</p>	What consideration have you given to the long term trends that could affect your proposal or; how could your proposal impact these trends?
	How will the needs of your service users potentially change in the future?
<p style="text-align: center;">Prevention</p> <p>Prevent problems occurring or getting worse.</p>	What is the objective (or the desired outcome) of this proposal?
	How are you addressing these issues to prevent a future problem?
	How have the decisions, so far, come about? What alternatives were considered?
<p style="text-align: center;">Integration</p> <p>Considering how public bodies' wellbeing objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their other objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies.</p>	Are there any other organisations providing similar / complementary services?
	Have you consulted with the health board, third sector, emergency services, businesses and anyone else you think might be impacted?
	What practical steps will you take to integrate your project with existing plans and strategies of other public organisations to help us all contribute fully to the seven national well-being goals?
<p style="text-align: center;">Collaboration</p> <p>Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the organisation itself).</p>	Who have you been working with? Why? Who have you collaborated with in finding out more about this problem and potential solutions?
	How are you co-working with other sectors?

	How are you using the knowledge / information / good practice of others to inform / influence the Council's work?
<p style="text-align: center;">Involvement</p> <p>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.</p>	How have you involved the people who are being impacted by this decision?
	How have you taken into account the diverse communities in your decision making?
	How have you used different / alternative methods to reach people and involve them?
	How will you communicate the outcome of your decision?

Section B – Supporting Information

5 Links to Council Policies and Priorities

Well-being Objective	1 – Economy, Education and Skills	2 – Newport's Environment and Infrastructure	3 – Preventative and Equitable Community and Social Care	4 – An Inclusive, Fair and Sustainable Council
Aims:	Newport is a thriving and growing city that offers excellent education and aspires to provide opportunities for all.	A city that seeks to protect and enhance our environment whilst reducing our carbon footprint and preparing for a sustainable and digital future.	Newport is a supportive city where communities and care are at the heart of what we do.	Newport City Council is an inclusive organisation that places social value, fairness and sustainability at its core.

5.1 The Annual Digital Report has strong links with Wellbeing Objectives 1, 2 and 4.

8. Background Papers

- [The Essentials - Wellbeing of Future Generation Act \(Wales\)](#)
- [Corporate Plan 2022-27](#)
- [Digital Strategy 2022-27](#)
- [Information Risk Report 2022-23](#)
- [Shared Resource Service Monitoring Update 2022](#)

Report Completed: August 2023

Annual Digital Report 2022/23

Created by	Mark Bleazard
Date	24/04/23
Reviewed by	Digital Services
Date	

Document Control

Version	Date	Author	Notes / changes
V0.1	19/4/23	Mark Bleazard	Initial draft
V0.2	10/8/23	Mark Bleazard	Updated draft
V0.3	15/8/23	Mark Bleazard	Updated draft
V0.4	24/8/23	Mark Bleazard	Updates following Scrutiny briefing
V0.5	29/8/23	Mark Bleazard	Updated draft
V0.6	1/9/23	Mark Bleazard	Final update for Scrutiny meeting

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Executive Summary

Digital Strategy

- **The development of the Digital Strategy 2022-27 represents an important step for the council**, supporting the Corporate Plan
- The strategy is based on important principles and has **four themes**:
 - **Digital Transformation** - we will transform services by the innovative use of digital technology that is effective, easy to use and designed around user needs
 - **Digital Skills and Inclusion** - we will develop the digital skills of our citizens, employees and members plus support improved access to digital technology
 - **Data and Collaboration** - we will improve service delivery by better use of data and increased collaboration built on secure systems and processes
 - **Digital Infrastructure and Connectivity** - we will drive excellent digital infrastructure and connectivity for the city and for the council
- Various activities have already commenced that contribute to the delivery of outcomes identified in the Digital Strategy 2022-27. This is the first report to include progress on activities and outcomes associated with the strategy and the format of the report has been revised accordingly

Organisation and Governance

- **The report highlights the importance of the Shared Resource Service (SRS), the council's Digital team and Service Areas in improving IT provision and the impact on service delivery**
- The governance for the Shared Resource Service is included as Appendix 1
- Groups are in place to support schools in strategic developments and deliver the "EdTech" project funded by Welsh Government

IT Service (Shared Resource Service - SRS) Performance

- **The SRS exceeded its targets for three of the four performance targets for Newport**
- Performance has been above its target consistently good in terms of calls resolved against SLA during the last four financial years. The performance for customer satisfaction and calls resolved at first point of target also exceeded their targets. The time to answer calls did not meet its target but it has improved considerably from previous years

Funding

- Spend on IT/digital is incurred in various areas - majority of this is with the Shared Resource Service (SRS) although the council has a number of retained budgets
- Additional funding was provided for three years which made a positive impact. Working with SRS, the council has identified significant savings in 23/24 in light of budget challenges
- Schools fund their own IT provision from their own budgets, supplemented by Welsh Government "EdTech" funding

Digital Strategy Progress

Digital Transformation

- **The web site redevelopment project has gained momentum with an implementation partner procured to implement Local Government Drupal**
- The finance system replacement project is due to go live in the third quarter of 23/24
- The council migrated to the Microsoft Always On VPN (Virtual Private Network) solution
- The council agreed to roll out the Microsoft Teams Phone solution in 23/24
- 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. A room/desk booking system was developed and implemented in partnership with the SRS
- A council "Smart Home" pilot has been launched, led by adult services to promote the use and availability of assistive technologies for independent living

- Robotic Process Automation (RPA) technology is designed to automate repetitive tasks to reduce data entry and streamline routine tasks such as migration of e-mails and for “Cost of Living” payment processes.

Digital Skills and Inclusion

- Several cohorts of the council ‘Get Connected’ free digital skills course were run and the council needs to consider a sustainable delivery model
- The council’s Adult Community Learning team delivered a range of fully accredited ICT and Digital Skills courses and from Sept 2023 digital skills courses and Computers Don’t Bite will be free
- Community Connectors, Libraries and community hub teams signpost the availability of digital skills sessions and can assist with basic digital queries
- All Newport City Council libraries provide free public access to internet enabled PCs
- The council provides a free public Wi-Fi service in over 50 public buildings in the city. This service is being reviewed to remove duplication whilst continuing to provide an important service
- The City Centre Wi-Fi is provided as a concession and this serves the area around the city centre
- Free Wi-Fi on Newport buses is provided in partnership with 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

Data and Collaboration

- Audit Wales acknowledged that overall considerable progress had been achieved by the council with the need to ensure that the council continues to take a ‘whole organisation approach’ to effectively using evidence and data to inform decision-making through use of the Newport Intelligence Hub services
- Newport’s Intelligence Hub have continued to provide support to regional collaboration including the Public Service Board and other partnerships
- Full details of the information risk management arrangements are reported in the [Annual Information Risk Report](#), Information and Cyber Security are also reported in the Corporate Risk register currently
- **PSN accreditation was challenging but was achieved in June 2023**
- **Newport City Council satisfied the requirements of the Payment Card Industry (PCI) Data Security Standards in July 2022 with the assistance of SRS**
- During 22/23 Audit Wales carried out reviews of cyber security arrangements of the council, evidence based decision making and on the digital strategy development
- The council continues to provide training to staff using Microsoft Teams to provide the most interaction possible and improved learning
- There was good attendance during the year for both corporate and Social Services. E-learning is also required for new starters
- **The information management team provided two training sessions for councillors in June 2023.** 32 out of 51 members attended the courses which will be repeated this year
- The implementation of a Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) system and Security Operations Centre (SOC) with SRS was implemented to monitor potential cyber attacks and provide improved preventative measures
- Freedom of Information performance for 2022/23 was 91.0% of requests responded to within 20 working days, above the target of 88%
- The council narrowly missed its performance target for dealing with Subject Access Requests. 70.9% of requests were responded to within the deadline, against a target of 75%

Digital Infrastructure and Connectivity

- **Newport City Council was successful with a bid to Welsh Government’s Local Broadband Fund (LBF)** to improve full fibre connectivity and provide in-building assistive technology and telecare services to three council managed adult residential care homes
- The project is progressing well with delivery during 23/24

- The council recognises the importance of the digital infrastructure of the city and welcomes developments to improve the city's digital infrastructure. As well as larger communications providers, two smaller suppliers have plans to roll out "full fibre" connectivity in parts or of across Newport. Full fibre or fibre to the premises broadband offers the highest theoretical speeds possible
- 5G networks are starting to be rolled out by mobile operators across the UK. 5G is available outdoors from 3 different network operators in Newport. However, the coverage is less than for 4G services
- **A major project led by the SRS to move all SRS partners to a new data centre was completed in April 2023.** This is a major milestone for the SRS partnership with all partners now sharing infrastructure in the Vantage Data Centre
 - This will provide better resilience, availability and reductions in costs.
 - This has already resulted in energy consumption and associated costs
- **In addition to the data centre move during 22/23 three major IT systems were migrated to the cloud** with two more in progress
- The Community Safety Network used for CCTV needs to be reviewed and a solution identified
- The council continues to pilot an Internet of Things (IoT) network that includes trialling sensors connected to the network for various purposes.

1. Background and Purpose

Technology plays a critically important role in effective and efficient service delivery for organisations. Newport City Council relies hugely on its IT systems for effective day to day operation. Effective service delivery during and after the pandemic, with greatly increased home working, has demonstrated the robustness of IT systems. However, the organisation needs to improve its use of technology further. 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 development of the council's [Digital Strategy 2022-27](#) is an important development that is detailed further within this report.

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. This is the fourth Annual Digital Report designed to complement the Annual Information Risk Report which is now in its eleventh year. It is now the primary means of reporting on the [Digital Strategy 2022-27](#) and is the first report to do this and introduce its themes.

The benefits of the report are as follows:

- To provide an overview of the council's IT and digital services
- To highlight the importance of digital services to the organisation especially given the impact of the pandemic, the opportunities they provide and the risks of under-investment
- To compare performance with previous years with the aim of continuous improvement
- To report progress on the Digital Strategy by theme and do so annually in this report
- To 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

As detailed in last year's report, work has been undertaken to replace the previous Digital Strategy. Following extensive public and staff consultation a [Digital Strategy 2022 - 27](#) was developed and this was approved by Cabinet in April 2023. The new digital strategy defines the digital aspirations for the city over the next five years. An extract of the Digital Strategy is included in Appendix 3

The strategy is guided by important principles:-

- Innovation
- Data driven
- User centred
- Inclusive
- Collaborative
- Secure
- Green

The strategy is based on four key themes:-

1. Digital Transformation
2. Digital Skills and Inclusion
3. Data and Collaboration
4. Digital Infrastructure and Connectivity



It will support and improve the wellbeing of residents and employees, as well as enabling businesses to thrive in the city. The strategy sets out how the council will use technology to transform the delivery of its services. This represents an ambitious digital vision that embraces innovation delivered in partnership with the Shared Resource Service and other key partners.

Various activities have already commenced that contribute to the delivery of outcomes identified in the [Digital Strategy 2022 - 27](#). This is the first annual Digital Report that will report on activities and outcomes associated with the strategy and the format of the report has been revised to reflect this.

2.2. Organisation and Governance

There have been no major changes to the organisation and governance arrangements for the council and the Shared Resource Service (SRS) partnership. Some information is provided below with more detail included in Appendix 1 for reference.

IT Service – Shared Resource Service (SRS)

The IT Service became a partner in the Shared Resource Service (SRS) on 1/4/2017 so Newport City council has been a partner for six 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 Board, Information Governance Group and project boards. 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.

Digital Services

The Digital team sits in the People, Policy and Transformation service area and is complemented by the existing Information Management team and Complaints team to form Digital Services.

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 2022-27](#). It has an important part to play in the Digital Board and contributed to various project boards. 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. This provides improved service delivery and a better funding model.

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. The Digital team has worked with Service Areas in a more proactive migration of IT systems to the cloud. The development of the [Digital Strategy 2022-27](#) has included a large amount of engagement with internal stakeholders to incorporate their priorities in the strategy and future plans.

Groups

Digital Board

This officer board provides and supports the strategic direction for the Council on digital matters. The role of the board has been reviewed, its terms of reference updated and membership revised. The role of the board is primarily now to oversee the implementation of the [Digital Strategy 2022-27](#). When necessary the role of the board is to prioritise large scale projects. The Board is chaired by Head of People, Policy and Transformation and comprises representatives from areas across the organisation and SRS.

“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 pandemic. This was with a view to recognising benefits identified during the pandemic and incorporating this into future plans for service delivery going forward. The planned outcomes of this work have now been completed and reported to Cabinet. This Board has now ended.

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 internet filtering migration, web browser compatibility, Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) for mobile devices, desk booking application testing etc. The intention is to enhance the role of council digital champions to improve support for employees.

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. IT Service (SRS) 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.

SRS performance is reported annually to Performance Scrutiny Committee – Partnerships. The [last report was presented on 7th December 2022](#).

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)

Performance for the last 4 years is detailed below.

Year	Percentage of Calls Resolved Against Service Level Agreement (SLA)	Target
2022/2023	96.1%	85%
2021/2022	94.9%	85%
2020/2021	91.8%	85%
2019/2020	93.0%	85%

The performance for the year 22/23 is 96.1%. This represents excellent performance for reactive calls for 22/23, over 10% above the target of 85%. This represents the best performance against SLA of any year. Performance has been consistently above target in each of the 4 years. 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 95% to 98%.

Customer Satisfaction

Performance for the last 4 years is detailed below.

Year	Customer Satisfaction	Target
2022/2023	91.2%	70%
2021/2022	78.0%	70%
2020/2021	64.7%	70%
2019/2020	76.0%	70%

The customer satisfaction performance for the year 22/23 is 91.2%. This represents performance well over the target of 70%. This is based on 793 completed surveys which is above the 680 surveys completed in 21/22. Performance by month ranges from 70% to 98% during the year that represents quite a variation.

Calls Resolved at First Point of Contact

Performance for the last 4 years is detailed below.

Year	Calls Resolved at First Point of Contact	Target
2022/2023	89.2%	70%
2021/2022	78.8%	70%
2020/2021	58.8%	70%
2019/2020	60.5%	70%

The calls resolved at first point of contact performance for the year 22/23 is 89.2%. This performance is considerably above the target of 70%. This equates to 11,003 calls out of 12,335 that were resolved at first point of contact. 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. Performance by month ranges from 86% to 92% which is very good and consistent.

Average Call Response time

Performance for the last 4 years is detailed below.

Year	Average Call Response time	Target
2022/2023	2 minutes 14 seconds	90 seconds
2021/2022	Unavailable but missed target	90 seconds
2020/2021	5 minutes 27 seconds	90 seconds
2019/2020	5 minutes 31 seconds	90 seconds

The average call response time performance for the year 22/23 is 2 minutes 14 seconds. This remains worse than the target but is considerably better than in previous years and represents a positive improvement.

Of the four performance measures, SRS has exceeded the target for three performance measures and missed the target for one performance measure (average call response time). In terms of these four measures this is the same as last year but performance in all those measures is better than 21/22. In addition, this represents improvement from 20/21 and 19/20 when three measures were below target and one exceeded the target.

Projects

Most of the more significant work detailed in the Digital Strategy Progress section below are categorised as projects which include SRS as a key delivery partner. SRS works with the Digital team to schedule and prioritise project and other types of work. Whilst the key performance indicators for SRS are detailed in the Performance Information above, the successful delivery of projects is a very important part of the service provided as a whole.

Core Planned

As well as larger time-limited projects, there are required pieces of work 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. Some of this work can be quite small but it can also be more significant despite not being as large as a project. Some of the more important core planned work for 22/23 is detailed below:-

- Electronic Document Management System (EDMS) upgrades
- Hybrid mail system upgrade
- Office relocations
- Tree database system implementation
- Windmill Farm Childrens Residential Home internet access
- Schools Corporate email to HWB mail migration
- Telephony work for schools
- Upgrade of Windows 10 versions
- NCC Website accessibility updates
- Welsh Government childcare offer
- Non-SLA schools corporate access

Most of this work requires some element of downtime that is identified by SRS, the system provider and Digital Services. Downtime is agreed and scheduled to minimise impact but in a timely manner.

Reactive

IT systems don't always work as they should and therefore the IT service needs to respond to incidents reactively. 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. Details of the performance in relation to reactive incidents are included in the wider performance information section above.

During 22/23 SRS migrated to a new Service Desk system and this is expected to bring various benefits to the SRS and users. Now this is live, self-service logging of incidents will be promoted as this is often most effective for SRS and users.

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.

2.4. Funding

As detailed in the organisation section above, spend on IT/digital is incurred in various areas. Most 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. The council 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 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.

Additional funding over the years 2019-2022 has made a positive difference. Various improvements have been made including the PC replacement budget, cloud funding, cyber security improvements, innovation and development fund, Robotic Process Automation (RPA) system and digital team resources.

Working with SRS, the council has identified collective savings of approximately £560,000 p.a. in 23/24. This was possible due to large contract savings as a result of the SRS data centre move, Digital contracts review and service re-design.

3. Digital Strategy Progress

3.1. Digital Transformation

Financial System Replacement

Following procurement, the implementation of an improved, cloud based financial system for the council progressed well during 22/23. This is expected to improve facilities and streamline financial process. This is a large implementation project that is currently planned to go live in quarter 3 of 23/24.

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. This was identified as an area for improvement in the development of the digital strategy. This project was subject to delays through technology, business need and skill changes and restarted in quarter one of 23/24. It was identified that the current technical solution could be improved upon and that a new solution could provide a more sustainable delivery model. Following analysis of options, it was agreed to implement the [Local Government Drupal solution](#) used by 37 councils at time of writing this report. According to its web site, *'LocalGov Drupal is a publicly owned asset that delivers a better digital experience for citizens.'* It was agreed that the council and SRS would procure an implementation partner to deliver the new web site during 23/24. Procurement took place and an agreed partner was approved in July 2023 with delivery by the first quarter of 24/25.

Microsoft 365

Following a successful pilot, the Always On VPN (Virtual Private Network) solution was implemented and completed in April 2022. This provides a secure, remote access solution for people working remotely. This was a successful roll out and has been positively received. The solution also facilitate various security improvements includes updates to Windows to keep them up to date. The use of personal mobile phones, known as bring Your Own Device (BYOD, for secure access to e-mail and Microsoft Teams has been successfully tested and implemented.

Microsoft Teams Phone

The need for a new telephony solution was identified to support more home and flexible working as the current solution relies on a telephone handset or redirection to a work or personal mobile phone or landline. The solution enables users to make and receive calls on a work issued device (laptop primarily but also mobile devices) without any physical telephone handset or diversion to a work or personal mobile/landline. This feature is not available in the current system and integrates with the Microsoft Teams application. Following a successful pilot and the development of a business case, the council agreed to roll out the Microsoft Teams Phone solution. This solution will be rolled out during 23/24 and is anticipated to make savings for the council.

New Normal

The council's New Normal Programme Board worked on the council's response to the pandemic and future operations. 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. SRS completed development of a room/desk booking system and this was implemented. As detailed above, the board led on the development of a new telephony system. 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 previously installed in Committee Rooms and meeting rooms have worked well since installation that enables Microsoft Teams meetings for those in the building as well as enabling people to join remotely. Screens have camera, speaker and microphones to facilitate hybrid meetings.

The Council Chamber has enhanced facilities that were implemented as part of a successful Digital Democracy fund bid. There are plans to review the video and audio facilities in Committee Room 1 with further rooms to be considered as appropriate.

“Smart Home” Pilot

A council “Smart Home” pilot has been launched, led by the Occupational Therapy team in social services supported by the council’s Digital team. This Smart Home is open to the public to promote the use and availability of assistive technologies for independent living. It is located upstairs in Newport Market and can be visited on an appointment basis. The Occupational Therapy team take people through demonstrations of a variety of assistive technology products and services that have the potential to make a positive impact for more independent living.

Climate Change

The council’s Climate Change Plan 2022-2027 includes a digital element and Digital is represented on one of the internal groups progressing council plans. This is an extremely important plan for the council and digital will play its part in some of the initiatives. The [Digital Strategy 2022-27](#) recognises its importance and the need for digital to make a positive contribution including:--

- Actively considering climate change and associated actions
- Support 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
- 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) 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

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 as well as on-going tasks. RPA was used successfully for the migration of e-mails stored in the “Archive Manager” solution into the core Microsoft 365 e-mail system. It was also used for part of the “Cost of Living” payment processes administered by the council on behalf of the UK Government. This is a technology that can improve the council’s effectiveness and efficiency so further opportunities for its use are being investigated.

“EdTech”

The digital work with schools involved the spend of £567,000 of “EdTech” funding allocated to the local authority for 22/23. This is to support individual schools and pupils to develop their digital and learning practice. In 22/23 the following were ordered:

- 924 digital devices including laptops, PCs, Chromebooks, iPads, Macbooks and iMacs
- 156 projectors, with 98 of these being laser projectors
- 165 digital screens
- 144 sets of speakers
- 89 webcams
- 344 class sets of headphones

Over the last 3 years, not only has the EdTech funding provided schools with an updated digital infrastructure that meets national standards, but schools have also received:

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

3.2. Digital Skills and Inclusion

Digital Skills

During 22/23 several cohorts of the council 'Get Connected' free digital skills course were run. These 6 week courses were delivered by Digital Communities Wales tutors at venues across the city. The course content is based on the essential skills framework which is recognised nationally. The framework sets out the digital skills most Internet users would need to make the most of day-to-day online activities, from shopping online to starting a video call with a friend or colleague.

The council needs to consider a sustainable delivery model of the 'Get Connected' course as the delivery model adopted by Digital Communities Wales is a "train the trainer" type.

The council's Adult Community Learning team have been delivering a range of fully accredited ICT and Digital Skills courses at St Julian's Community Learning & Library Centre and the East Neighbourhood Hub in Maesglas. These include: Computers Don't Bite, Stay In Touch – IT in Everyday Life, Stay Safe Online, Internet & E-Mail, Calendars & Forms, Stay In Touch using Tablets & Smartphones, Introduction to Word Processing, Introduction to Spreadsheets, ICDL Level 1 and ICDL Level 2. Most of these courses only cost £5 and from Sept 2023 digital skills courses and Computers Don't Bite will have no course fee.

Adult Community Learning also offer a range of bespoke courses for community organisations which can be informal, non-accredited sessions if required. This includes offering courses in community venues including residential homes and housing schemes using laptops and tablets. If a venue can be provided, then these courses are usually free of charge. In November and December 2022 free drop-in sessions were held at the University of South Wales (USW) City campus where citizens could have a free digital health check and receive assistance from students studying at the USW. This was a project part-funded through by the UK Government through the UK Community Renewal Fund and was delivered as a partnership with NCC, USW and WIDI.

Community Connectors, Libraries and community hub teams signpost the availability of digital skills sessions. First point of contact employees such as librarians and hub staff can assist with basic digital queries and signpost citizens. Libraries have undertaken a digital skills audit with Digital Communities Wales so as to identify training needs in respect of the NCC libraries workforce.

Digital Inclusion

The council continues its accreditation for the Digital Inclusion Charter with Digital Communities Wales to work towards delivering pledges in the Charter. Newport City Council is a member of the Digital Inclusion Alliance Wales and meets regularly with alliance members to share good practice and knowledge on the subject matter of digital inclusion. The Digital team work with teams in the Prevention and Inclusion service area to signpost and promote digital inclusion opportunities. Several teams across the council have registered as 'Online Centres' with the Good Things Foundation and are able to provide free data sims to those in need. Community connectors team raise awareness of digital inclusion support available to citizens. Digital inclusion information was shared at the "Cost of Living" events held in the city by the Prevention and Inclusion service area.

In October 2022 Newport held its first ever Get Online week as part of the national Get Online Week campaign by the Good Things Foundation. A week long timetable of digital inclusion activities were co-ordinated, bringing together partners across the city including Newport City Homes, Gwent Police, University of South Wales, Coleg Gwent and GAVO. The event held within Newport Market was free for citizens to attend to learn more about what can be accessed across the city. Activities were also held at the Coleg Gwent Campus, USW City Campus and council hubs.

Library Internet Access

All Newport City Council libraries [provide free public access to internet enabled PCs](#). PCs are available on a drop in basis or sessions can be booked in advance.

Public Building Wi-Fi

The council provides a free public Wi-Fi service in over 50 public buildings in the city. The pandemic highlighted the value of this service in digital inclusion and this is recognised in the digital strategy. This service is being reviewed to remove duplication with corporate connectivity and realise savings whilst continuing to provide an important service. As a result of this review, a number of sites were migrated to the new public Wi-Fi service from Welsh Government's PSBA following work by SRS to facilitate this.

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.

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.

3.3. Data and Collaboration

This is the first year of the new digital strategy. The majority of the work within this theme is currently included in more detail within the Annual Information Risk Report. Consideration will be given to how this work is reported in future given different stakeholder roles and interests. A summary of the most important aspects are detailed below.

Better Use of Data to Facilitate Decision Making

During 22/23 Audit Wales undertook a review of the council's arrangements to meet its Corporate Plan 2017-22 commitment to base its decisions upon data and evidence. Additionally, the review also looked as to whether the council's chosen actions are having the desired impact and its pledge to create and establish a one-stop-shop for data and intelligence to support evidence-based working. Audit Wales acknowledged that overall considerable progress had been achieved by the council with the need to ensure that the council continues to take a 'whole organisation approach' to effectively using evidence and data to inform decision-making through use of the Newport Intelligence Hub services.

Service Intelligence Packs (SIPs) have been developed to support the decision-making process in relation to several strategic transformation priorities, including Asset Rationalisation and Optimisation and forecasting of future demand in terms of school provisioning.

Significant work has been progressed in terms of improving readily available access to performance and management information reporting through extensive data integration to support operational, tactical and strategic decision-making through development and enhancement to the Council's interactive MI (Management Information) Hub.

Collaborative Working Support

Newport's Intelligence Hub have continued to provide support to regional collaboration regarding the Public Service Board and Serious Violence Duty through the development of the respective Well-being Assessments and Serious Violence needs assessments.

Newport Intelligence Hub's formal collaborative service delivery arrangements with Monmouthshire County Council are fully established and continue to provide mutual benefit through data and system expertise and knowledge sharing.

The council's Intelligence Hub and Infrastructure service have worked collaboratively and made significant progress in terms of providing highway and infrastructure asset data in support of the UK's National Underground Asset Register (NUAR) in conjunction with Wales and UK Government to improve the coordination, management and discharge of statutory highway and utility duties.

Compliance and Audit

The council is subject to accreditation to the Public Services Network (PSN) by the Cabinet Office. PSN accreditation was challenging during the year but was achieved in June 2023. The council needs to comply with the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standards (PCI-DSS) when handling customer card payments and it satisfied the requirements in July 2022. The council is audited by Audit Wales that during 22/23 carried out reviews of the council's cyber security arrangements, evidence based decision making and its digital strategy.

Organisation

The council has a number of roles and groups designed to ensure appropriate information risk management processes are in place with cyber security becoming increasingly important. The council has a Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) role, a senior officer responsible for information risks within the organisation who is the Head of Law and Standards. The council also has a Data Protection Officer (DPO) role as required by the Data Protection Act 2018. The council has an Information Governance Group where strategic information governance issues are discussed.

Communications and Awareness Raising

Employees are often the weakest link in terms of causing incidents and the information security incidents section reflects this. Regular reminders of good practice were provided in the staff bulletin and on the intranet. The council continues to provide classroom style training to staff via Microsoft Teams to provide the most interaction possible and improved learning experience. There was good attendance during the year for both corporate and Social Services. E-learning is also required for new starters.

Detailed information security training for members was provided via two training sessions in June 2023. 32 out of 51 members attended the courses which represents good attendance.

The council procured the MetaCompliance solution to deliver cyber security related content to users that complements existing training. It includes a suite of security awareness training capabilities including security awareness training, policy management and phishing simulation.

Other important aspects are the development and updating of policies. The council also maintains and Information Asset Register and Information Risk Register.

Information Security Incidents

All information security incidents are reported, logged and investigated. Information security incidents range from lost phones/other devices, password issues to data breaches where data is lost or passed to the incorrect recipient. Lessons need to be learned from these incidents to improve practice in future to minimise the risk of recurrence. Serious incidents that meet certain criteria must be communicated to the ICO within 72 hours and data subjects informed without delay.

Information Sharing

Partnership and collaborative working drives sharing of increased amounts of information between the council and other organisations. The Wales Accord on the Sharing of Personal Information (WASPI) requires public sector organisations to follow agreed guidance in the development of Information Sharing Protocols (ISP's). The Information Management team leads on this work and has developed a number of ISP's with services and other organisations.

Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) solution and a Security Operations Centre (SOC)

The implementation of a Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) system and Security Operations Centre (SOC) with SRS is designed to monitor potential cyber attacks and provide improved preventative measures as a result. This has now been implemented and complements existing solutions.

Business Continuity

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 should be improved by the data centre move that was completed in May 2023. Improvements to backups have also been made to provide greater resilience as this is vitally important in the event of cyber incidents including ransomware.

Records and Data Management

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

Document Services

Whilst the intention of the organisation is to use digital methods, there remains a need for handling paper documents. The Document Services team carries out this important function and manages mail, print, scanning and paper document storage. It has a central print room with digital equipment for printing internal documents, leaflets etc. and carries out central scanning for a large number of services using the EDMS system. The council has a fleet of multi-function devices (MFD's) across sites that provide printing, copying and scanning facilities. The council also has a hybrid mail solution to simplify and streamline the processes for out-going mail. The proportion of documents going through this system is increasing that reduces costs of sending mail.

Freedom of Information and Subject Access Requests

Freedom of Information

As a public authority, the council also handles requests for information. The number of requests received in 2022/23 was 992 which is an increase from last year (953). Performance for 2022/23 was 91.0% of requests responded to within 20 working days. This was above the target of 88% of requests. The council has met its target for ten of the last twelve years including each of the last six years.

Subject Access Requests

Subject Access Requests (SAR's) are requests for personal information requested by the data subject. The council narrowly missed its performance target for dealing with Subject Access Requests. 70.9% of requests were responded to within the deadline, against a target of 75%.

3.4. Digital Infrastructure and Connectivity

Local Broadband Fund (LBF) Bid

Newport City Council submitted a bid to Welsh Government's Local Broadband Fund (LBF) bid in December 2021. The council was advised in April 2022 that it was successful in its bid.

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
- A care management IT solution to improve the service provided to residents

Once the bid was approved, the council went out to tender for a supplier for the complete solution. Whilst there were some delays due to the availability of network equipment, the project is progressing well with delivery during 23/24.

Broadband

Other than projects like the Local Broadband Fund designed to make a small contribution to the broadband availability in the city, the council has limited influence on broadband roll out including enhanced speed or availability. However, the council recognises the importance of the digital infrastructure of the city and welcomes developments to improve the city's digital infrastructure. OFCOM provides a [guide to broadband basics](#). As well as larger communications providers, two smaller suppliers have plans to roll out "full fibre" connectivity in parts or of across Newport. Full fibre or fibre to the premises broadband offers the highest theoretical speeds possible.

Mobile Networks and 5G

[5G networks](#) are starting to be rolled out by mobile operators across the UK. 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. Whilst there may be some planning considerations when mobile operators want to change their infrastructure, the council has limited influence on the roll out of such networks or general mobile networks. According to [OFCOM's mobile and broadband checker](#), 5G is available outdoors from 3 different network operators in Newport. However, the coverage is less than for 4G services.

Infrastructure and Cloud

Devices and Operating Systems

Numerous technical solutions are in place and these are included as Appendix 2. During the year the default browser was changed to Microsoft Edge.

Data Centre Move

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, Newport specifically the [business case was agreed by Cabinet in October 2020](#). Newport was the last scheduled SRS partner to migrate due to different drivers in different partners. This project was completed for Newport in April 2023 with the vast majority of work taking place out of hours with minimal impact. This was much earlier than planned in the original business case and a very positive step. The council's capital programme was used to pay for the required infrastructure in the new data centre.

This is a major milestone for the SRS partnership with all partners now sharing infrastructure in the Vantage Data Centre. This will provide better resilience, availability and reductions in costs. Some local network equipment in council buildings remains. This has already resulted in energy consumption and associated costs in the Civic Centre. Energy costs are already included in the data centre model and are proportionately less due to shared infrastructure and more efficient cooling given the scale of the data centre operation.

Cloud Migrations

In addition to the data centre move, more systems have been moved to the cloud. 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 disadvantage is that of additional cost this needs 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
- Mayrise (highways, cleansing etc.)
- Social Services system, WCCIS an all Wales cloud hosted system
- iTrent HR/Payroll system is in a cloud environment.
- Web site and "A-Z" (primary council web site plus customer services knowledge base)
- Home Care scheduling system
- Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system
- Payment solution
- Income management system.
- iShare web mapping solution
- SharePoint online (intranet)
- Modern.gov (democratic process management and documents)

New Cloud Migrations for 22/23 onwards

- As detailed above, the project to replace the existing financial system to the Technology One solution is well progressed with migration to the cloud currently expected as the third quarter of 23/24.
- The Paygate BACS system was migrated and went live in June 2022
- The Capita One education management system was migrated and went live in March 2023.
- The IDOX Uniform public protection system is well progressed with a likely go live date of the third quarter of 23/24
- The Legal case management system was also migrated and is now live

Capital Programme

The council holds a budget for its capital programme of major IT infrastructure. The capital programme is developed by the SRS working with the council's Digital team.

Community Safety Network

The council has a network that provides its CCTV service. This contract needs to be reviewed and a suitable solution identified.

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. Opportunities for further use of this technology will be considered whenever possible and they do have the potential to contribute to measuring information relating to climate change.

4. Conclusions

1.1. Digital Strategy

The development of the Digital Strategy 2022-27 represents an important step for the council, supporting the Corporate Plan. The strategy is based on important principles and has four themes. The development of the strategy means that the structure of this report has been changed, including specific progress against the four themes. This report provides the primary means of reporting progress on the strategy from now on.

1.2. Organisation and Governance

The report 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 Boards are more joined up and effective with details included in Appendix 1.

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.

1.1. IT Service (SRS) Performance

The SRS exceeded its targets for three of the four performance targets for Newport. Performance has been consistently good in terms of calls resolved against SLA during the last four financial years where performance has been significantly above the target. The performance for customer satisfaction and calls resolved at first point of target both exceeded their targets. The time to answer calls did not meet its target but it has reduced considerably from previous years and represents positive improvement. The Digital team plays a key role to monitor performance and work with the SRS for the programming and prioritisation of projects, core planned and reactive work.

1.1. Funding

Spend on IT/digital is incurred in various areas. The majority of the funding is provided to the Shared Resource Service (SRS) although the council has a number of budgets including for major systems known as "retained contracts", capital programme and equipment spend. Schools fund their own IT provision from their own budgets, supplemented by Welsh Government "EdTech" funding.

Additional funding was provided for three years and this made a positive impact. Working with SRS, the council has identified significant savings in 23/24 in light of budget challenges. This was possible due to large contract savings as a result of the SRS data centre move, Digital contracts and service re-design. The council continues to look to rationalise systems wherever possible.

1.2. Digital Strategy Progress

Digital Transformation

There has been very good progress made in this theme of the digital strategy. This includes the finance system replacement project that is due to go live in the third quarter of 23/24. Following initial delays, the web site redevelopment project has gained momentum with an implementation partner procured to implement [Local Government Drupal](#).

The council migrated to the Microsoft Always On VPN (Virtual Private Network) solution. This was a successful roll out and has been positively received. Following a successful pilot and the development of a business case, the council agreed to roll out the Microsoft Teams Phone solution. This solution will be rolled out during 23/24. 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. SRS completed development of a room/desk booking system and this was implemented.

The council's Climate Change Plan 2022-2027 includes a digital element and digital will play its part in some of the initiatives.

The "Smart Home" pilot aims to promote the possibilities of assistive technologies to support more independent living and the potential it has to make a positive difference.

Robotic Process Automation (RPA) technology is designed to automate repetitive tasks to reduce data entry and streamline routine tasks. RPA was used successfully for the migration of e-mails stored in the "Archive Manager" solution into the core Microsoft 365 e-mail system. It was also used for part of the "Cost of Living" payment processes. Further opportunities for its use are being investigated. The greatest benefits are realised for processes with time-consuming manual data entry and large numbers of transactions.

Welsh Government "EdTech" funding has provided a very positive improvement to the infrastructure and digital facilities for schools and has been implemented successfully by SRS, Education and Digital Services working with schools.

Digital Skills and Inclusion

Several cohorts of the council 'Get Connected' free digital skills course were run and this is positive development. However, the council needs to consider a sustainable delivery model of the 'Get Connected' course. The council's Adult Community Learning team delivered a range of fully accredited ICT and Digital Skills courses. Most of these courses only cost £5 and from Sept 2023 digital skills courses and Computers Don't Bite will have no course fee. Adult Community Learning also offer a range of bespoke courses for community organisations.

Community Connectors, Libraries and community hub teams signpost the availability of digital skills sessions. First point of contact employees such as librarians and hub staff can assist with basic digital queries and signpost citizens. Libraries have undertaken a digital skills audit with Digital Communities Wales so as to identify training needs in respect of the NCC libraries workforce.

All Newport City Council libraries [provide free public access to internet enabled PCs](#). PCs are available on a drop in basis or sessions can be booked in advance.

The council provides a free public Wi-Fi service in over 50 public buildings in the city. This service is being reviewed to remove duplication with corporate connectivity and realise savings whilst continuing to provide an important service. The City Centre Wi-Fi is provided as a concession with a company and this serves the area around the city centre only. 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.

Data and Collaboration

Audit Wales undertook a review of the council's arrangements to base its decisions upon data and evidence. It acknowledged that overall considerable progress had been achieved by the council with the need to ensure that the council continues to take a 'whole organisation approach' to effectively using evidence and data to inform decision-making through use of the Newport Intelligence Hub services. Service Intelligence Packs (SIPs) have been developed to support the decision-making process. Significant work has been progressed in terms of improving readily available access to performance and management information reporting.

Newport's Intelligence Hub have continued to provide support to regional collaboration regarding the Public Service Board and Serious Violence Duty through the development of the respective Well-being Assessments and Serious Violence needs assessments.

Further details of the items below are provided in the Annual Information Risk Report. PSN compliance was challenging but was achieved in June 2023. Newport City Council met the requirements of the Payment Card Industry (PCI) Data Security Standards in July 2022.

The council has a number of roles and groups designed to ensure appropriate information risk management processes are in place with cyber security becoming increasingly important. All information security incidents are reported, logged and investigated.

Employees are often the weakest link in terms of causing incidents. Regular reminders of good practice were provided in the staff bulletin and on the intranet. The council continues to provide classroom style training to staff with was good attendance for both corporate and Social Services.

The information management team provided two training sessions for members in June 2023. 32 out of 51 members attended the courses which represents good attendance.

The council procured the MetaCompliance Solution to deliver cyber security related content to users. The Information Management team leads on information sharing and has developed a number of ISP's with services and other organisations.

The implementation of a Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) system and Security Operations Centre (SOC) has now been implemented and complements existing solutions.

There is an ever-increasing reliance on digital technology to support business activities. The council is committed to ensuring robust and effective business continuity management.

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.

Freedom of Information performance for 2022/23 was 91.0% of requests responded to within 20 working days, above the target of 88%. The council narrowly missed its performance target for dealing with Subject Access Requests. 70.9% of requests were responded to within the deadline, against a target of 75%.

Digital Infrastructure and Connectivity

Newport City Council was successful with a bid to Welsh Government's Local Broadband Fund (LBF). 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. Work commenced on the project following the tender. The project is progressing well with delivery during 23/24.

The council has limited influence on broadband roll out including enhanced speed or availability. However, the council recognises the importance of the digital infrastructure of the city and welcomes developments to improve the city's digital infrastructure. As well as larger communications providers, two smaller suppliers have plans to roll out "full fibre" connectivity in parts or of across Newport. Full fibre or fibre to the premises broadband offers the highest theoretical speeds possible.

[5G networks](#) are starting to be rolled out by mobile operators across the UK. According to [OFCOM's mobile and broadband checker](#), 5G is available outdoors from 3 different network operators in Newport. However, the coverage is less than for 4G services.

A major project led by the SRS commenced in 20/21 to move all SRS partners to a new data centre. This project was completed for Newport in April 2023. This was much earlier than planned in the original business case and a very positive step. This is a major milestone for the SRS partnership with all partners now sharing infrastructure in the Vantage Data Centre.

This will provide better resilience, availability and reductions in costs. Some local network equipment in council buildings remains. This has already resulted in energy consumption and associated costs in the Civic Centre.

In addition to the data centre move, more systems have been moved to the cloud. A number of advantages are expected from the migration of systems to the cloud including access from any device/location, improved resilience and improved support from suppliers. These benefits have been realised in migrations to date. During 22/23 three major IT systems were migrated to the cloud with two more in progress due to complete in 23/24, most notably the council's primary finance system. The council will proactively look to migrate systems to the cloud as the preferred option when practical and affordable.

Work has commenced to review the Community Safety Network provision that provides the council's CCTV service.

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. Opportunities for further use of this technology will be considered whenever possible and they do have the potential to contribute to measuring information relating to climate change.

5. Actions Summary

1.3. Digital Strategy

The Digital Strategy needs to be communicated to all stakeholders to ensure it is understood. Relevant ownership for delivering the intended outcomes and associated actions needs to be identified. The Digital Board will oversee the implementation of the Digital Strategy with the Digital team leading operationally with SRS and services. Progress against the Digital Strategy will be reported annually in this Annual Digital Report.

1.4. 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 partner in 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.

1.5. IT Service (SRS) Performance

Whilst the SRS has performed consistently well against its Service Level Agreements (SLA's) its performance needs to be monitored regularly and any issues reviewed for appropriate action by SRS/Digital as appropriate. As the new Service Desk system is now live, self-service logging of incidents will be promoted. The Digital team will continue to develop relationship between council and SRS especially in relation to the delivery of anticipated outcomes and actions in the new Digital Strategy. The Digital team will continue to work with the SRS for the programming and prioritisation of projects, core planned and reactive work.

1.6. Funding

Spend on IT/digital is incurred in various areas and this is generally expected to bring about positive benefits in service delivery. However, budget challenges mean that opportunities to rationalise systems, infrastructure and licences need to be reviewed on an on-going basis to ensure the continued best use of available funding.

1.7. Digital Strategy Progress

Digital Transformation

The council's finance system is due to be migrated to a new cloud based system in the third quarter of 23/24. The council has commenced the implementation of Local Government Drupal for the redevelopment of the council web site by the first quarter of 24/25. The Microsoft Teams Phone solution will be rolled out during 23/24. The council will continue development of Microsoft 365 solution working with SRS. Lessons from the “Smart Home” pilot need to be established to understand wider potential for these technologies and the council's role. Further opportunities for the use of Robotic Process Automation (RPA) need to be considered.

Digital Skills and Inclusion

The council needs to consider an approach to the “Get Connected” courses in future. Council libraries will continue to provide free public access to internet enabled PCs. The council will continue to review its free public building Wi-Fi service to remove duplication with corporate connectivity and realise savings whilst continuing to provide an important service. Free Wi-Fi on Newport buses is provided, funded by the council and Newport Transport. Plans for a suitable Tablet Loan Scheme are to be developed for roll out in libraries.

Data and Collaboration

The council needs to continue to take a ‘whole organisation approach’ to effectively using evidence and data to inform decision-making through use of the Newport Intelligence Hub services. Further details of information governance items are provided in the Annual information Risk Report. Actions are included in that report.

Digital Infrastructure and Connectivity

The Local Broadband Fund (LBF) project has commenced with implementation to be completed during 23/24. Two more system cloud migrations are in progress due to complete in 23/24, most notably the council's primary finance system. The council will proactively look to migrate systems to the cloud as the preferred option when practical and affordable. The council needs to review its Community Safety Network that provides its CCTV service. The council continues to pilot an Internet of Things (IoT) network. Opportunities for further use of this technology will be considered whenever possible.

6. 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	Digital Strategy 2022-27 developed and will be kept under constant review in terms of outcomes and actions. Progress will be reported to Digital Board that provides the governance to support the Review and update Digital Strategy with stakeholders	Digital Services Manager (DSM) and Digital Projects Managers 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 more flexible working		M	L	Additional funding now allocated to areas of need. Innovation and development fund enables new technologies to be tested	Digital Services Manager (DSM) and Digital Projects Managers 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 Managers in conjunction with Head of PPT/ SRS management
Critical IT systems are not available to services		H	L	Data centre migration completed. Move of systems to the cloud will provide improved availability and resilience. Review business continuity business impact assessments	Digital Services Manager and Digital Projects Managers in conjunction with SRS and services
Appropriate devices and operating systems are not available		M	L	Laptops remain the standard and Digital will consider future needs. Windows 10 updates to take place for devices	Digital Services Manager (DSM) and Digital Projects Managers in conjunction with in conjunction with SRS

7. Action Plan

Action	Deadline
Digital Strategy	
Communication - Digital Strategy to be communicated to all stakeholders	Sep 23
Strategic Management - Digital Board to provide strategic management of the strategy and its progress	On-going
Ownership of Outcomes - allocation of ownership for intended outcomes and associated actions	Sep 23
Progress Monitoring - progress against the strategy outcomes and actions managed by the Digital team and to be reported in future Annual Digital Reports	Sep 24
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 delivery of anticipated outcomes and actions in the new Digital Strategy.	On-going
Programming/Prioritisation of Work - continue to work with the SRS for the programming and prioritisation of projects, core planned and reactive work	On-going
“EdTech” Project - work with Education service and SRS in delivery of Welsh Government “Edtech” funding for 23/24	Mar 24
Education/Schools Support – support Education service, schools and SRS in application of technology for schools in Newport	On-going
Digital Team Engagement - Digital team engagement with services and contribution to other plans and strategies throughout the organisation	On-going
IT Service (SRS) Performance	
Performance Management - monitor and manage performance between SRS and Digital team	On-going
SRS Report - SRS Report to Partnership Scrutiny Committee	Oct 23
Self Service Promotion - promote logging of calls via self-service	Oct 23
Funding	
Best Use of Available Funding - opportunities to rationalise systems, infrastructure and licences need to be reviewed to ensure the continued best use of available funding	On-going
Digital Strategy Progress	
Digital Transformation	
Finance System Migration - the council’s finance system is due to be migrated to a new cloud based system	Dec 23
Web Site Redevelopment - implementation of the Local Government Drupal solution for the redevelopment of the council’s web site	June 24
Microsoft Teams Phone - the Microsoft Teams Phone solution will be rolled out during 23/24	Mar 23
Microsoft 365 - continued development of Microsoft 365 solution	On-going
Climate Change Digital Elements – develop and progress digital elements of the council’s climate change plan	On-going
”Smart Home” - lessons from the pilot need to be established to understand wider potential for these technologies and the council’s role	Mar 24
Robotic Process Automation (RPA) - further opportunities for the use of Robotic Process Automation (RPA) need to be considered	On-going
Digital Skills and Inclusion	
Digital Skills courses – consider a sustainable delivery model for Get Connected courses	Dec 23
Library PC Access - council libraries will continue to provide free public access to internet enabled PCs	On-going

Free Public Building Wi-Fi Review - free public building Wi-Fi service to remove duplication with corporate connectivity and realise savings whilst continuing to provide an important service	On-going
Bus Wi-Fi - provide free Wi-Fi on Newport buses funded by the council and Newport Transport	On-going
Tablet Loan Scheme – develop a suitable scheme for roll out across libraries	Mar 24
Digital Champions - enhance the role of council digital champions to improve support for employees	Dec 23
Data and Collaboration	
Better Use of Data to Facilitate Decision Making - continue to take a 'whole organisation approach' to effectively using evidence and data to inform decision-making through use of the Newport Intelligence Hub services	On-going
Collaborative Working Support - Newport's Intelligence Hub's support to regional collaboration regarding the Public Service Board	On-going
Digital Strategy Updates - Progress against the strategy outcomes and actions managed by the Digital team and to be reported in future Annual Information Risk Reports with important aspects summarised in Annual Digital Report	Sep 24
Annual Information Risk Report actions – these are included in that report	Various
Digital Infrastructure and Connectivity	
Local Broadband Fund (LBF) - project implementation across three adult residential care homes	Mar 24
Cloud Migrations - two more in progress due to complete in 23/24, most notably the council's primary finance system	Dec 23
Cloud Services – the council will proactively look to migrate systems to the cloud as the preferred option when practical and affordable	On-going
Capital Programme – development of capital programme for major infrastructure	On-going
Community Safety Network – this contract needs to be reviewed and a suitable solution identified	Dec 23
Internet of Things (IoT) Network - opportunities for further use of this technology will be considered whenever possible	On-going

Appendix 1 – Shared Resource Service (SRS) Organisation and Governance

SRS Governance Arrangements

The SRS continues with three boards. 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.

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.

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.

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.

Information Security Leadership Board

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

Appendix 2 – Technology Solutions

Devices

The council now almost exclusively uses laptops for flexibility and mobility and this has been useful for increased flexible working over the last few years. Laptops will always be issued unless there is a specific reason that a desktop device is required in very limited scenarios. Windows 10 is deployed to all devices with regular updates required.

Microsoft 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. Other security standards for e-mail system hygiene have also been implemented.

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. 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.

Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) system and Security Operations Centre (SOC)

The implementation of a Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) system and Security Operations Centre (SOC) with SRS is designed to monitor potential cyber attacks and provide improved preventative measures as a result. This has now been implemented and complements existing solutions.

Devices for Members

Members have tablets and, in combination with laptop devices, provide a comprehensive solution for their role. The refresh of member laptop devices is included within the wider laptop refresh cycle so where new devices are required they are provided. Following local government elections in May 2022 tablets and mobile phones were re-issued or new devices provided where necessary.

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 of new infrastructure as part of the data centre move and other developments.

Remote Access Virtual Private Network (VPN) Solution

The council now uses the Microsoft Always On VPN solution. This enables all staff who need to work from home to do so. It provides the ability to carry out password resets and Windows updates due to its “always on” connection type enhancing security. Staff are able to work from anywhere where a wireless network is available (subject to geographical restrictions), 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. An upgrade took place to the software that supports Multi-Function Devices (printer/copier/scanner).

Secure/Large File transfer solution

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 Digital team.

Wireless Staff Access

Wireless Access points are provided in many council buildings. This includes appropriate security controls in place. Following the completion of the data centre move new infrastructure will be implemented to improve Wi-Fi at key sites.

Wireless Public Access

Public Wi-Fi is available in the city centre (Newport City Connect), over 50 public buildings (Newport Community Cloud) and on buses.

Physical Security

Major buildings are limited to staff with physical access cards 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

The 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, Teams 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.

Appendix 3 – Digital Strategy

Full strategy at www.newport.gov.uk/digitalstrategy



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

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

PRINCIPLES

The strategy is guided by important principles:-

- **Innovative** – embrace new ways of working and technology
- **Data driven** - decisions are made based on sound evidence
- **User centred** – users are at the centre of what we do
- **Inclusive** – services are available to meet individual needs
- **Collaborative** – collaboration internally and externally
- **Secure** – systems and data are protected
- **Green** – digital technology supports the council's net zero aspirations

These principles are closely aligned to the council's Corporate Plan principles of *Fair and Inclusive, Empowering, A listening council* and *Citizen Focussed*.

THEMES

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 & INCLUSION

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

3 DATA & COLLABORATION

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

4 DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE & CONNECTIVITY

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



Scrutiny Report

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

Part 1

Date: August 2023

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. Committee’s Work Programme:

Consider the Committee’s Forward Work Programme Update (**Appendix 2**):

- *Are there any amendments to the topics scheduled to be considered at the next Committee meeting?*
- *Are there any additional invitees that the Committee requires to fully consider the topics?*
- *Is there any additional information that the Committee would like to request?*

2 Context

Background

Action Sheet

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.

Forward Work Programme

- 2.3 Attached at **Appendix 2** is the Draft Forward Work Programme for the year 2023-24.
- 2.4 The purpose of a Forward Work Programme is to help ensure Councillors achieve organisation and focus in the undertaking of enquiries through the Overview and Scrutiny function. Effective work programming is essential to ensure that the work of Overview and Scrutiny makes a positive impact upon the Council's delivery of services.
- 2.4 Further information about the work programming process, including the procedures for referring new business to the programme, can be found in our Scrutiny Handbook on the Council's Scrutiny webpages (www.newport.gov.uk/scrutiny).
- 2.5 The Centre for Public Scrutiny's Good Scrutiny Guide recognises the importance of the forward work programme. In order to 'lead and own the process', it states that Councillors should have ownership of their Committee's work programme, and be involved in developing, monitoring and evaluating it. The Good Scrutiny Guide also states that, in order to make an impact, the scrutiny workload should be co-ordinated and integrated into corporate processes, to ensure that it contributes to the delivery of corporate objectives, and that work can be undertaken in a timely and well-planned manner.

3 Information Submitted to the Committee

- 3.1 The following information is attached:

Appendix 1: Action Sheet from Previous Meetings;

Appendix 2: Draft Forward Work Programme

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.

- **Draft Forward Work Programme - Appendix 2**

Consider:

 - Are there any amendments to the topics scheduled to be considered at the next Committee meeting?
 - Are there any additional invitees that the Committee requires to fully consider the topics?
 - Is there any additional information that the Committee would like to request?

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 Actions from Committee’s which 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 Objective	1 – Economy, Education and Skills	2 – Newport’s Environment and Infrastructure	3 – Preventative and Equitable Community and Social Care	4 – An Inclusive, Fair and Sustainable Council
Aims:	Newport is a thriving and growing city that offers excellent education and aspires to provide opportunities for all.	A city that seeks to protect and enhance our environment whilst reducing our carbon footprint and preparing for a sustainable and digital future.	Newport is a supportive city where communities and care are at the heart of what we do.	Newport City Council is an inclusive organisation that places social value, fairness and sustainability at its core.

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 2022-2027](#)
- The Corporate Assessment and [follow up assessment](#).

Report Completed: August 2023

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
ACTION SHEET**

	Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	Outcome
1	Conclusion of Committee reports	Send comments and recommendations to officers	Samantha Schanzer	COMPLETE
2	Minutes of the Previous Meeting	Chase a response from the University	Samantha Schanzer	Strategic Director advised Committee that he would take ownership for this action – 28.07.23
3	Information Risk Report	Provide articles on cases of ICO action	Tracy McKim/Samantha Schanzer	COMPELTE
4	Information Risk Report	Provide a summary of the Audit Wales Report	Tracy McKim/Samantha Schanzer	COMPLETE

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Scrutiny

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee Draft Work Programme: June 2023 to May 2024

Meeting	Agenda Items
02/06/2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Safeguarding Annual Report • EV Charging Strategy • Consultation Update (Information only)
23/06/2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welsh Language Annual Report
28/07/2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information Risk Report • Climate Change Annual Report
08/09/2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Digital Strategy Report
09/10/2023 1pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Annual Corporate Wellbeing Self Assessment ▪ Strategic Equalities Plan Annual Report
27/10/2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Transformation Plan / Budget Consultation Plans / Development of MTFP ▪ Air Quality Action Plan
01/12/2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutiny Annual Report
19/01/2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MTFP and Revenue Budget – Consultee Meeting
08/03/2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBD
26/04/2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBD

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