

**Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council**

**Digital Strategy 2018-2022**

**Smart and Connected**

## **Introduction**

A digital revolution is taking place across the world.

We want to make sure that our county borough takes full advantage of the benefits of new technologies.

This strategy sets out the next steps we intend to take to make our county borough smart and connected.

Cllr A.J. Taylor

Deputy Leader of Council

December 2018

## **Our Digital Ambition**

### Council Vision and Priorities

The Council's vision is for the county borough to be a place where everyone has an equal chance to get on in life – a place where people want to live, learn and work and bring up their family.

We want our beautiful natural environment, and our rich cultural and industrial heritage to be appreciated and protected for many future generations to enjoy. We also want to pursue new and existing opportunities for economic growth so we can sustain our diverse communities for many years to come.

The Council has set three well-being objectives in its Corporate Plan 2018-2022:

- All of our children and young people have the best start in life, so they can be the best they can be;
- Everyone participates fully in community life – socially and economically;
- The whole of Neath Port Talbot county borough will be a vibrant and healthy place to live, work and enjoy recreational time.

### Our Digital Ambition

A better everyday life for everyone in Neath Port Talbot by being smart and connected.

## What do we mean by being smart and connected?

**Smart** – able to connect, share and interact with the wider world

**Connected** – able to easily connect to the global Internet and to converse across the world reliably, safely and quickly

## Why is this important?

- ✓ There will be many new jobs created by the digital economy – we want Neath Port Talbot to benefit from this;
- ✓ Many existing jobs will be affected by the digital revolution. 90% of all jobs will require digital skills of one form or another - we want businesses, communities, and our residents (especially young people) to be able to anticipate this and to ensure they can adapt to the changes taking place;
- ✓ People live busy lives. Many people now expect to access services 24/7 and at a time, location and through a device of their choice – we want to extend the range of services and information we provide on-line to meet the changing expectations of our residents;
- ✓ Some people are not yet on-line – we want to make sure that everyone has the opportunity to get on-line so they can have the same benefits as people who are already on- line;
- ✓ Technology and the growth in data sciences are creating new ways of supporting the way we work, learn and live – we want to take advantage of these innovations to make the county borough an attractive place for businesses to invest and to support people in their everyday lives:

- ✓ Providing services on-line is cheaper than providing services in traditional ways – we want to use technology to reduce the cost of services as this will help us protect services at a time when the money available for public services is shrinking;
- ✓ The rise in technology has also created a rise in new forms of crime – we want to make sure that our council, local people and businesses can protect themselves when on-line;
- ✓ Providing services on-line can help us reduce our carbon footprint, compared with more traditional ways of providing services – we want to ensure we exploit technology to protect our environment; and
- ✓ Collaborating with others effectively is essential in today's world, to ensure services work in a way that reflects how people live their lives, to share knowledge that can benefit our communities, or to be able to take part in the way technology itself is being organised by major IT companies – we want to be able to play a full part in collaborations that benefit our county borough to deliver the priorities that are set out in our corporate plan.

## **Our Digital Priorities**

### Priorities

**Priority 1** – transforming the way we deliver our functions/services and increasing use of the Council’s on-line functions/services by residents;

**Priority 2** – contributing to the development of favourable conditions for economic growth in the county borough; and

**Priority 3** – embracing a “digital first” approach to the way we support our workforce.

### Principles

#### *People*

- ✚ Digital thinking will be embedded across the whole Council – we will adopt an approach which is “digital first” significantly reducing reliance on more traditional processes and ways of working;
- ✚ Digital services will be co-designed with users – our approach will be customer-centric;
- ✚ We will embrace collaboration as a means of giving users better experiences of dealing with us – external collaboration, including cross-sectoral collaboration, will help us become more efficient and productive;
- ✚ We will work to remove the barriers to digital participation for those who are digitally excluded.

## *Data*

- + We will maximise the value of data and analytics to drive service change and innovation;
- + Our approach will be open by default;
- + We will ensure data is secure to gain trust and confidence in our digital programmes, with access to data controlled to ensure data is only accessed and shared appropriately;
- + Data will only be held as long as is relevant.

## *Technology*

- + ICT will continue to be an enabler of service change and innovation not just a curator of the ICT infrastructure;
- + Our infrastructure will be fit for the digital age and future ICT investment decisions will take full account of the rapid changes taking place across the ICT and digital sectors;
- + Testing, learning and iterating will be the way we will approach new developments, ensuring that we can prototype and innovate as a matter of course;
- + We will adopt open data and open source policies to support collaboration and to stimulate innovation.

## *Place*

- + We will work to ensure broadband and wi fi infrastructure is available to an acceptable standard in all parts of the county borough;

- ✚ We will work to address the barriers people and organisations face to participate on-line;
- ✚ We will work with our schools and our partners to ensure that all residents of the county borough can develop the skills and confidence they need to benefit from the digital revolution; and
- ✚ We will test our proposals for change thoroughly to ensure that the benefits we want to deliver are sustainable and directly support the Council's well-being objectives.



## Our Digital Programme 2018-2022

This document provides a high level statement of the direction we intend to take in extending our digital strategy. The strategy will be underpinned by a detailed delivery programme, supported by a dedicated change management capability. The delivery programme will be refreshed on an annual basis and updated to ensure it remains aligned with the Council's broader priorities, new opportunities and challenges and take account of the capacity/resources available in the next programme period. Early actions that will feature in the delivery programme are set out under each priority:

**Priority 1** – transforming the way we deliver our functions/services and increasing use of the Council's on-line functions/services by residents;

Key Actions:

- ✚ Establish a citizen account to help people use the Council's on-line services and to ensure the Council has a better insight into the way people use Council services;
- ✚ Extend the range of Council services and information available on-line based on a thorough understanding of what matters to residents;
- ✚ Actively encourage residents to use the Council's on-line services and information as their preferred choice – promote "Digital First" in all Council communications;
- ✚ Conduct more detailed research into the appetite amongst local people to use digital technologies to help more people participate in the democratic process;
- ✚ Increase the time available to research, explore and test new technologies that have the potential to help us

achieve our digital ambition. Introduce small scale prototyping and testing to demonstrate how the adoption of new approaches could benefit local citizens; and

- ✚ Invest in a data science function to improve the Council's understanding of residents' needs and preferences and use the data products to inform and stimulate new innovations in service delivery.

#### Outcomes Expected:

- ✚ Improved understanding of resident/customer demand and needs;
- ✚ More effective service and policy responses to resident/customer demand and need;
- ✚ Improved well-being for local people;
- ✚ Lower unit costs of meeting demand/need;
- ✚ Improved resident satisfaction with the Council;

**Priority 2** – contributing to the development of favourable conditions for economic growth in the county borough;

#### Key Actions:

- ✚ Ensure all young people are equipped with the digital knowledge, skills and confidence to fully participate in a global economy. Promote equal participation in STEM subjects to boys and girls;
- ✚ Ensure adults are able to access the learning and development needed to fully participate in the global economy and to reduce inequality in access to services;

- + Maximise the benefits of the Swansea Bay City Deal, helping to create a fully connected region which is at the forefront of digital innovation;
- + Support businesses at all stages of their development to successfully operate within a digital economy to include the use of digital technologies to transform the processes through which organisations transact with the Council;
- + Support the voluntary and community sector to develop their digital capability, both in terms of the services and support they offer to the community and in sustaining their own organisations;
- + Consider how planning powers can be used to ensure digital infrastructure is available, affordable and accessible to everyone;
- + Secure the commitment of Public Services Board partners to address digital inclusion as part of their wider digital programmes; and
- + Promote an open data and systems approach.

#### Outcomes Expected:

- + State of the art digital infrastructure and next generation wireless connectivity;
- + Creation of new digital commercial opportunities;
- + Creation of smart manufacturing capabilities;
- + Improved digital skills base;
- + New employment opportunities for local people;

- + Wider economic growth;
- + Reduction in energy costs;
- + Alleviation of fuel poverty;
- + Improved well-being;
- + Greater equality in service access and outcomes;
- + Reduced carbon footprint;
- + Fewer people digitally excluded;

**Priority 3 – embracing a “digital first” approach to all internal functions and activities within the Council**

**Key Actions:**

- + Transform internal processes/services through a prioritised programme of digital change to shift work activities onto digital, self-service platforms. Create all new internally-focused services and processes on a digital only platform;
- + Ensure agile working is fully embedded across the Council so that staff can choose how, where and when to work;
- + Establish effective change management support to ensure the delivery of this Strategy benefits from strong, corporate leadership where the workforce is fully supported and engaged in the change;
- + Establish digital leadership and digital literacy as a core requirement for all Council jobs. Create and implement a Digital Skills Strategy;

- + Ensure employment policies enable and support the development of the Council's digital agenda; and
- + Embed the digital strategy into the Council's performance management framework to ensure everyone is accountable for their role in implementing this Strategy.

#### Outcomes Expected:

- + Lower transaction costs for internal services leading to lower overhead;
- + Improved employee insight and engagement;
- + Improved teamwork and collaboration;
- + Faster and more inclusive provision of services and information to the workforce;
- + Improved work-life balance;
- + Self-determination leading to improved employee well-being;
- + Increased job satisfaction and productivity;
- + Cost savings through reduced travel time and facilities;
- + Enhanced ability to recruit and retain employees;
- + Improved digital skills base;
- + Rapid development and deployment of digital innovation

## Planned Investments

The following investments are currently planned across the Council's budgets:

Budget line	18/19 £'000s	19/20 £'000s	20/21 £'000s	21/22 £'000s
ICT Gross Budget	4,908	4,837	4,584	4,434
ICT Planned Reserve Movements	462	409	583	81
City Region contributions	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Digital skills support	50	50	50	50
Digital inclusion support post	31	31		

The case for new investment will be made out through business cases, based on the principle of invest to save.

## Programme Delivery and Monitoring

The Deputy Leader will be responsible and accountable for the implementation of this Strategy.

Progress in delivering this Strategy and its associated delivery plan will be reported annually, with the programme for the ensuing period updated in light of progress achieved and any new considerations that impact upon the Strategy.

Scrutiny of the delivery programme will be vested in the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee.