



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

28th June 2023

Report of the Chief Digital Officer

Wards Affected: All Wards

Matter for Decision

Neath Port Talbot Digital Data and Technology Strategy

Purpose of the Report:

1. To present the Neath Port Talbot Council's new Digital Data and Technology Strategy to Members and seek approval to commend the strategy to Council for adoption on 12th July.

Executive Summary:

2. The new Digital Data and Technology (DDaT) strategy aims to build on the foundations put in place by our previous digital strategy ([Smart and Connected 2018 - 2022](#)).
3. This strategy sets out our strategic vision, aims and delivery themes, demonstrating how we will embrace new approaches and emerging technologies to provide our users with the best value, user-centred products and services.

4. The strategy has been developed as a fully accessible digital web-presence and can be accessed via this link - [Digital, Data and Technology Strategy - Neath Port Talbot Council \(npt.gov.uk\)](https://www.npt.gov.uk/digital-data-technology-strategy)

Background

5. Digital, Data and Technology (DDaT) is fundamental to the successful delivery of council services. Neath Port Talbot Council are committed to adopting the best DDaT to transform the services we provide to our residents, businesses, elected members, staff and visitors.
6. Our previous Digital Strategy, Smart and Connected 2018-2022, was developed to ensure that the council took full advantage of the benefits of existing and new technologies.
7. Despite the unavoidable Covid19 interruptions, the strategy delivered the vast majority of its proposed actions. These have included key areas such as the Social Care 'Track My Request' project and completing council tax forms online. Full details can be found under the '[Building on our Smart and Connected foundations](#)' section within the new strategy.
8. We recognise that DDaT is now integrated into every resident's life - irrespective of whether they directly engage and consume digital services themselves or not. From engaging with your GP, to keeping in touch with friends and family, having your shopping delivered or booking a bulky waste collection, these are all examples of the range of digital services that many now take for granted.
9. As a council, we remain fully committed to helping our digitally excluded people access the benefits of being online. We understand that there are a wide range of reasons why people may find it hard or impossible to stay connected with family and friends (including skills, affordability, availability of broadband

connectivity, personal choice etc.), recognising that this also prevents them from being able to benefit from accessing key services from government channels to online shopping.

10. During the pandemic, we experienced an unprecedented increase in the dependency on Digital Services to support the organisation in maintaining service delivery. From underpinning a transition to hybrid working for all office-based workers, to developing complex online grant payment forms for businesses and residents, through the effective use of DDaT we have consistently delivered innovative ways of supporting the organisation in meeting its aims and objectives, through the most challenging of times.
11. The extreme pressures that public sector budgets are under is well documented, however we recognise the key opportunities that DDaT presents to support this organisational challenge. Through the effective use of DDaT, we will continue to drive value and service improvement across service areas, whilst delivering efficiencies and savings. We will also ensure there is alignment with the Medium Term Financial Plan.
12. The importance digital services continues to play in service delivery, transformation and efficiency is clear. Through this new strategy, we remain committed to continually investing in the council's DDaT capabilities to ensure we can successfully meet our current and future challenges.

Financial Impacts:

13. There are no direct financial impacts associated with the new strategy.
14. Additional investment in Digital Services revenue budget has previously been agreed as follows:

15. Cabinet – 24th November 2021 – Item 5 Monthly Budget Monitoring Report 2021/22 – Support for Digital Services in dealing with significant backlog in terms of dealing with critical operational issues as a result of pandemic - £300,000
16. Council – 1st March 2022 – Item 5 Revenue Budget - Digital Services - additional funding required to support over 1,500 employees now working from home - £100,000
17. Cabinet – 19th January 2023 – Item 5 2023/24 Budget proposals for consultation - Increase in digital services budget to agreed target operating model (originally agreed during 21/22) - £100,000

Integrated Impact Assessment:

18. A full Integrated Impact Assessment has been completed and can be seen in Appendix 1

Valleys Communities Impacts:

19. There is no impacts

Workforce Impacts:

20. The principal areas of impact for the Council's workforce arrangements are as follows:
21. Change Management – as we progress through the strategy there may be changes in our ways of working, and the tools / skills we use to deliver services. It will be vital that the Management of Change in Partnership Policy is fully embraced so that those affected can be clearly identified, and the

appropriate steps taken to ensure all parties are engaged throughout the change process.

22. Job Content –the implementation of this Strategy may change some job roles and create new ones. The Council’s Workforce Plan already recognises this and makes provision for creating a Digital Skills Strategy that should enable the Council to build a digitally capable workforce.

Legal Impacts:

23. This Strategy helps to discharge the duty to secure continuous improvement of the Council’s functions and related duties which are set out in the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009.

Risk Management Impacts:

24. There are a number of risks that this Strategy seeks to address:
25. Attracting and retaining people - with the continued implementation of the new Digital Services structure this risk is significantly reduced. Digital service has seen new people joining the council as well as the existing workforce taking advantage of upskilling opportunities.
26. Cyber security is a significant risk to any digital organisation. Along with the DDaT strategy digital services has an agreed Cyber security strategy and action plan in place.
27. The strategy will directly support the delivery of the council’s Medium Term Financial Plan and assists to deliver the well-being objectives set by the Council in the Corporate Plan.

Consultation:

28. There is no requirement for consultation on this item, however we have sought peer-review from officers in the Welsh Government, Welsh Local Government Association Digital Team and The Centre for Digital Public Services. Positive feedback has been received from each, along with constructive comments that have been actioned.

Recommendations:

29. That, subject to any amendments agreed at the meeting, Cabinet approves and commends the Digital, Data and Technology strategy to Council for adoption on 12th July 2023.

Reason for Decision:

30. To ensure that the Council's DDaT Strategy remains current and fit for purpose.

Implementation of Decision:

31. The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Integrated Impact Assessment

List of background papers: None

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Appendix 1

Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

This Integrated Impact Assessment considers the duties and requirements of the following legislation in order to inform and ensure effective decision making and compliance:

- Equality Act 2010
- Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015
- Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- Environment (Wales) Act 2016

Version Control

Version	Author	Job title	Date
Version 1	Alan Tottman	Head Digital Strategy and Governance	June 1 st , 2023

1. Details of the initiative

	Title of the Initiative: Digital, Data and Technology Strategy (DDaT)
1a	Service Area: Digital Services
1b	Directorate: Chief Executives

1c	Summary of the initiative: Adoption of the council's new DDaT strategy
1d	Is this a 'strategic decision'? Yes
1e	Who will be directly affected by this initiative? Residents, businesses, elected Members, staff, partners, and visitors
1f	When and how were people consulted? The new strategy builds on the previous digital strategy 'Smart and Connected', and reflects the requirements of our local communities captured through the 'Let's Talk' engagement campaign. Through a continued commitment to engage through the Let's Talk campaign with our communities, local businesses and partners, we will ensure the digital strategy is informed by and developed to continue to meet our stakeholder needs.
1g	What were the outcomes of the consultation? Building on the corporate "let's talk" initiative we have taken our lead from the corporate plan and will continue to assimilate feedback into the strategy and annual business plans as they develop.

2. Evidence

What evidence was used in assessing the initiative?

We have built on the foundations laid down through our previous digital strategy (Smart and Connected 2018 - 2022). Aims and objectives have been assessed against the current Corporate Plan, the digital inclusion charter, and Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

The strategy has also been peer reviewed with positive feedback received from the NPT Corporate Management Group, the Welsh Government, the Centre for Digital Public Services and Welsh Local Government Association.

3. Equalities

a) How does the initiative impact on people who share a **protected characteristic**?

Protected Characteristic	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this impact?
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Age	X		In a study by Tax Reform Group of The Chartered Institute of Taxation identifies age is the biggest factor leading to digital exclusion. The Strategy has digital inclusion and person centred design embedded in its makeup, from its aims to the strategic themes used to drive delivery.
Disability	X		In a study by Tax Reform Group of The Chartered Institute of Taxation identifies disability and illness as key factors leading to digital exclusion. The Strategy has digital inclusion and person centred design embedded in its makeup, from its aims to the themes used to drive delivery.
Gender reassignment		X	It is unclear whether gender re-assignment directly affected people's participation in the digital economy. As such, no research evidence has been identified to inform the development of the Strategy but will be considered through its ongoing development.
Marriage & civil partnership		X	It is unclear whether Marriage & civil partnership directly affected people's participation in the digital economy. As such, no research evidence has been identified to inform the development of the Strategy but will be considered through its ongoing development.
Pregnancy and maternity		X	It is unclear whether Pregnancy and maternity directly affected people's participation in the digital economy. As such, no research evidence has been identified to inform the development of the Strategy but will be considered through its ongoing development.
Race	X		In a study by Tax Reform Group of The Chartered Institute of Taxation identifies Race as a key factor leading to digital exclusion. The Strategy has digital inclusion and person centred design embedded in its makeup, from its aims to the themes used to drive delivery.
Religion or belief	X		In a study by Tax Reform Group of The Chartered Institute of Taxation identifies Religion or belief as a key factor leading to digital exclusion. The Strategy has digital inclusion and person centred design embedded in its makeup, from its aims to the themes used to drive delivery.
Sex	X		There is some evidence that females are slightly less likely to participate in the digital economy, however, age, economic circumstances and disability / ill-health are identified as more significant factors. By addressing digital inclusion this strategy should have a positive impact on people facing barriers to digital participation.
Sexual orientation		X	It is unclear whether sexual orientation directly affected people's participation in the digital economy. No such research evidence has been identified to inform the

				development of the Strategy and needs to be explored during the public consultation.
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What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?
By embedding digital inclusion and person-centred design, they will inform all planning, design and development activities proposed to deliver the Strategy

b) How will the initiative assist or inhibit the ability to meet the **Public Sector Equality Duty**?

Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this impact?
To eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation	X			The Strategy identifies secure by design in its themes and as part of its service standards and address ongoing cyber security as a priority. As part of the annual business plans continued education and awareness in cyber security is paramount. This will equip people with the ability to stay safe on-line and protect data and systems from nefarious activity
To advance equality of opportunity between different groups	X			The Strategy embeds digital inclusion and person-centred design at its core, encouraging participation in the digital economy from any group regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, or race. To this end the Strategy explicitly seeks to reduce / eliminate any inequalities.
To foster good relations between different groups			X	There is no identified contribution to fostering good relations or any negative impact on community relations that has been identified at this stage in the policy development process

What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?
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By embedding digital inclusion and person-centred design, they will inform all planning, design and development activities proposed to deliver the Strategy.

Addressing the ever-increasing cyber security identified risks and threats directly, there is a supporting Cyber security Strategy and associated ongoing action plan that has been approved by council.

4. Socio Economic Duty

Impact	Details of the impact/advantage/disadvantage
Positive/Advantage	The Strategy aims to addressing inequalities as a cross-cutting theme across all the priorities in the short, medium, and longer term. The strategy encourages opportunities to support our Socio-Economic duty
Negative/Disadvantage	
Neutral	

What action will be taken to reduce inequality of outcome

By embedding digital inclusion and person-centred design, they will inform all planning, design and development activities proposed to deliver the Strategy

5. Community Cohesion/Social Exclusion/Poverty

	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this impact?
Community Cohesion	X			In addition to digital inclusion and person-centred design, The Strategy aims to encourage third sector and SME organisations to secure the capability developing a thriving local digital economy

Social Exclusion	X			The Strategy identifies that those people who are socially excluded are often the people who are also digitally excluded. The work to address digital inclusion will relate to the wider work of the council to combat poverty and social exclusion.
Poverty	X			The Strategy identifies that those people who are socially excluded are often the people who are also digitally excluded. The work to address digital inclusion will relate to the wider work of the council to combat poverty and social exclusion.

What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?

By embedding digital inclusion and person-centred design, they will inform all planning, design and development activities proposed to deliver the Strategy

6. Welsh

	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this effect?
What effect does the initiative have on: – people’s opportunities to use the Welsh language	X			The Welsh Language Standards are underpinning aspects that will be fully integrated into the Strategy and its delivery. Digital technologies present opportunities to make available diverse ways for people to use the Welsh language
– treating the Welsh and English languages equally	X			The Welsh Language Standards are underpinning aspects that will be fully integrated into the Strategy and its delivery. New on-line services will be developed with Welsh Language standards built in.

What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?

The strategy will continue to evolve in line with stakeholder feedback, addressing any negative impacts.

7. Biodiversity

How will the initiative assist or inhibit the ability to meet the **Biodiversity Duty**?

Biodiversity Duty	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this impact?
To maintain and enhance biodiversity	X			The Strategy makes a commitment to Digital by Design to deliver changes that reduce the carbon footprint of the Council which will indirectly impact positively on biodiversity
To promote the resilience of ecosystems, i.e., supporting protection of the wider environment, such as air quality, flood alleviation, etc.	X			The Strategy makes a commitment to Digital by Design to deliver changes that reduce the carbon footprint of the Council which will indirectly impact positively on biodiversity

What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?

By embedding the themes “digital by design” and “using the right technology” in the strategy, these will inform all planning, design and development activities proposed to deliver an optimising the resources used thereby reducing the Carbon footprint

8. Well-being of Future Generations

How have the five ways of working been applied in the development of the initiative?

Ways of Working	Details
i. Long term – looking at least 10 years (and up to 25 years) ahead	The Strategy acknowledges that there are rapid changes taking place across the world. Collaboration, involvement, and integration are explicitly addressed in the Strategy.
ii. Prevention – preventing problems occurring or getting worse	The strategy seeks to build on the advances of recent years and acknowledge problems and issues from past endeavours. In doing so the Strategy and associated annual business plans aim to promote digital inclusion, provide future stable technology, and ensure a safe and secure digital environment.
iii. Collaboration – working with other services internal or external	The strategy promotes open data sharing, Digital's services has and will continue to have two-way communication with other authorities, Governments, and professional bodies. This mean sharing what we have learned and listening to the experiences of others and applying or changing as needed.
iv. Involvement – involving people, ensuring they reflect the diversity of the population	By embedding digital inclusion and person-centred design, they will inform all planning, design and development activities proposed to deliver the Strategy
v. Integration – making connections to maximise contribution to:	As part of the supporting infrastructure for this strategy there will be a Digital transformation board to control and review the effects and impacts of all incoming request for systems and services. The board will use this assessment as a foundational document for the selection and implementations going forward.
Council's well-being objectives	The strategy has been developed to support the Council's Corporate Plan 2022 - 2027 and associated well-being objectives

Other public bodies objectives	The strategy has been developed to support the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, Digital Strategy for Wales, and Cyber Action Plan for Wales.
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9. Monitoring Arrangements

Provide information on the monitoring arrangements to:

Monitor the impact of the initiative on Equalities, Community Cohesion, the Welsh Measure, Biodiversity Duty, and the Wellbeing Objectives.

The Strategy identifies a robust set of measures and metrics to ensure progress is tracked. These will include specific performance indicators in the delivery plan against each work stream, aligning as appropriate to quantitative and qualitative measures.

10. Assessment Conclusions

Please provide details of the conclusions reached in relation to each element of the assessment:

	Conclusion
Equalities	Strategy aligns to corporate aims
Socio Economic Disadvantage	Strategy aligns to corporate aims
Community Cohesion/ Social Exclusion/Poverty	Strategy aligns to corporate aims
Welsh	Strategy aligns to corporate aims
Biodiversity	Strategy aligns to corporate aims
Well-being of Future Generations	Strategy aligns to corporate aims

Overall Conclusion

Please indicate the conclusion reached:

- **Continue** - as planned as no problems and all opportunities have been maximised
- **Make adjustments** - as potential problems/missed opportunities/negative impacts have been identified along

with mitigating actions

- **Justification** - for continuing with the initiative even though there is a potential for negative impacts or missed opportunities
- **STOP** - redraft the initiative as actual or potential unlawful discrimination has been identified

Please provide details of the overall conclusion reached in relation to the initiative

This strategy is fully aligned to the Strategic Change Programme which has been initiated to support the council in achieving its purpose and vision. The Strategic Change Programme contains the following four well-being objectives.



The importance digital services continues to play in service delivery, transformation and efficiency is clear. NPT remains fully committed to continually investing in the council's DDaT capabilities to ensure we can successfully meet our current and future challenges.

11. Actions

What actions are required in relation to obtaining further data/information, to reduce or remove negative impacts or improve positive impacts?

Action	Who will be responsible for seeing it is done?	When will it be done by?	How will we know we have achieved our objective?

12. Sign off

	Name	Position	Signature	Date
Completed by	Alan Tottman	Head of Governance and Strategy		11/06/2023
Signed off by	Chris Owen	Chief Digital Officer		12/06/2023