

Digital Flintshire Review – Flintshire County Council

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Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg. This document is also available in Welsh.

The team who delivered the work comprised Gwilym Bury and Jeff Brown under the direction of Jeremy Evans.

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Summary report

Summary

What we reviewed and why

- 1 As part of the Auditor General's 2019-20 programme of audit work we undertook a diagnostic review to consider whether the Council is well placed to deliver on the ambitions in its Digital Strategy.
- 2 Given the pivotal role that digital has and will continue to have in delivering on the Council's current and future priorities, we sought to understand how well placed the Council's digital aspirations, planning and resourcing are to support these.
- 3 We undertook the review during the period January 2020 to April 2020.

Our approach

- 4 In January 2020 we held a joint meeting with the Chief Executive Officer and several other key officers from the Council's Digital Strategy Board (DSB) to discuss the scope of the work and to gain an overview of the Council's current digital landscape.
- 5 We reviewed a number of key documents to provide a context for this work, but our primary method for undertaking this review was through a facilitated workshop in March 2020 with key members of the Council's (DSB). The facilitated exercises included:
 - Assessing the Council's Digital Strategy against emerging best practice
 - Mapping the Digital Strategy actions to the Council's Corporate Themes
 - Identifying the allocation of resources to the Digital Strategy actions
- 6 The workshop provided a framework for discussion/challenge and an opportunity for the DSB members to self-reflect and identify risks and opportunities in delivering the Council's digital ambitions. Fieldwork was completed before the current Coronavirus crisis.

What we found

- 7 Our review sought to answer the question: 'Is the Council well placed to deliver on the ambitions in its Digital Strategy?'
- 8 More specifically, we considered whether the Council:
 - a. has digital ambitions that align with its long-term objectives and outcomes; and
 - b. has allocated resources and effectively planned actions to deliver its ambitions.
- 9 Overall, we found that: **The Council has a clearly defined digital ambition and recognises the opportunities to improve it further.** We reached this conclusion because:

- the Council recognised that its Digital Strategy could be further improved by building on emerging digital best practice;
- whilst overall the specific Digital Strategy Actions support the Council's Corporate Themes, further work is required to ensure these fully reflect the current digital landscape; and
- the Council has defined governance and planning arrangements around its digital ambition and whilst the Council determined that most digital actions were resourced, this will need to be kept under review as its Digital Strategy is refined.

Proposals for Improvement

Exhibit 1: Proposals for Improvement

The table below sets out the proposals for improvement that we have identified following this review.

Proposals for improvement	
P1	<p>The Council should take the opportunity to refresh its Digital Strategy to ensure that it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reflects the current national legislative context and emerging best practice including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the principles of the Well-being of Future Generations Act; – the principles of the Local Government digital declaration; and – the Scottish Government's Digital First Digital standards or the Welsh Government's Digital Standards, when these are published.
P2	<p>The Council should take the opportunity to update the Digital Strategy to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • its mapping of the digital actions to the Corporate Themes has not identified any unexpected gaps; • it includes a high level timeframe for the completion of the actions; • it removes actions that have now been completed or are no longer relevant; • it fully reflects the collaborative digital activity that is currently being undertaken with Health and the North Wales Economic Ambition Board;

Proposals for improvement

- it fully reflects the Council's approach to actions that will promote the embedding of a digital culture with both staff and citizens;
 - it updates the wording of the actions to reflect the current context and remove any repetition; and
 - it reflects any relevant lessons learnt from the Coronavirus crisis.
-

P3 The Council should ensure that the new actions identified during the workshop, such as those around embedding a digital culture and behaviours are integrated into its current digital resource planning and Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

Detailed report

The Council has a clearly defined digital ambition, and recognises the opportunities to improve it further

The Council recognised that its Digital Strategy could be further improved by building on emerging digital best practice

10 In reaching this conclusion we found that:

- the Council has a well-defined Digital Strategy which reflects much of the existing best/emerging practice around digital, information management and information technology.
- when self-reflecting against emerging best practice the Council recognised that the narrative for a number of areas within the current strategy could be more clearly defined, including:
 - the important part that culture and behaviours play in delivering on a digital ambition and the specific actions, activities and interventions that need to be in place to facilitate and promote this; and
 - strengthening the narrative around digital inclusion and the balance between delivering future services through digital channels whilst ensuring that vulnerable citizens' needs continue to be met.
- since the Digital Strategy was drafted in 2017 the wider regional and national context has evolved and therefore the current Strategy does not fully reflect the new and evolving externalities. In particular:
 - the Well-being of Future Generations Act legislation and the application of the Act's five ways of working;
 - some of the principles outlined within the Digital Declaration for Local Government, proposed as part of last year's Expert Panel Report for the Welsh Government on Digital across the Public sector – called 'System Reboot'; and
 - some of the domains within the Scottish Government's 'Digital First' Digital Standards and the proposed Welsh Government's Digital Standards, when published.

Whilst overall the specific Digital Strategy Actions support the Council's Corporate Themes, further work is required to ensure these fully reflect the current digital landscape

11 In reaching this conclusion we found that:

- the mapping of the Digital Strategy actions to the Council's Themes identified that:
 - overall there was a cross section of actions that supported the Council's Themes;
 - there were several Themes, such as 'Green Council' and 'Safe & Clean Council' where there were significantly less actions when compared to other Themes; and
 - the Themes with the most actions were a 'Caring Council' and a 'Serving Council'.
- since the Digital Strategy was drafted in 2017 the regional and national digital landscape has changed and therefore the current Strategy:
 - includes a number of actions that have now been completed or are no longer relevant;
 - does not fully reflect the collaborative digital activity that is currently being undertaken with Health and the North Wales Economic Ambition Board;
 - does not fully reflect the Council's approach to actions that will promote the embedding of a digital culture with both Staff and citizens; and
 - has a number of actions where the wording does not fully reflect the current context and in some cases is repetitive.
- whilst recognising that supporting the high level Digital Strategy there are more detailed programme plans, the current Digital Strategy does not include the high level timeframes over which it is anticipated actions will be completed.
- for the full details of the self-reflected mapping of the Digital Strategy actions to the Council's Corporate Themes see **Appendix 1** – this also includes the new actions/areas that were identified during Exercise 2 of the workshop.

The Council has defined governance and planning arrangements around its digital ambition and whilst the Council determined that most digital actions were resourced, this will need to be kept under review as its Digital Strategy is refined

12 In reaching this conclusion we found that:

- the Council has an established Digital Strategy Board with senior executive and non-executive representation, including the Chief Executive Officer and Cabinet Portfolio Member.
- the Council's Digital Strategy is underpinned by more detailed digital programme planning documents, although these were not reviewed in detail.
- due to the long-term absence of a key officer from the Digital Strategy Programme, the Council self-reflects that it had not made the progress that it would have hoped for on prioritising its digital projects.
- the Council have recently prioritised resource for a new post that will cover both the strategic lead on Digital Design and Communications, recognising the importance of integrating these two areas.
- the effort required to respond effectively to the Welsh Government's Schools Hywb Transformation Funding (IT for schools) was cited by the Council as negatively impacting the delivery of the wider digital programme due to its draw on a finite digital capacity.
- the workshop self-reflection exercise around resources identified that of the 36 live Digital Strategy actions, all but nine of them had been resourced or were the subject of a live resource bid.
- the workshop highlighted a number of new actions to support the Strategy, such as those around embedding a digital culture and behaviours. However, it was not clear if these actions had been fully resourced.
- for the full details of the self-reflected allocation of resources to the Digital Strategy Actions see **Appendix 2**.

Appendix 1

Mapping the Digital Strategy Actions to the Council's Corporate Themes

1. Actions ~~struck through~~ were classified as either completed or no longer relevant during the workshop
2. Boxes with a ✓ denote an action that is mapped to a 'Theme' – whilst blank boxes denote an action that does not map to a 'Theme'

3. Actions in red and prefixed with 'New' were added during the workshop discussion

Digital Strategy Theme	No	Action	Council Corporate Themes						
			Caring Council	Ambitious Council	Learning Council	Green Council	Safe & Clean Council	Connected Council	Serving Council
Digital Customer	1	Continued development of CRM to enable single view of the customer	✓				✓	✓	✓
Digital Customer	2	Development of customer self-service facilities on the Council's website	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓
Digital Customer	3	Effective signposting to information and online resources on the Council's website	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Digital Customer	4	Working with services to ensure a 'Digital First' approach to service delivery	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Digital Customer	5	Continue to move transactional services to more effective and efficient digital channels by maximizing self-service	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓

			Council Corporate Themes						
Digital Strategy Theme	No	Action	Caring Council	Ambitious Council	Learning Council	Green Council	Safe & Clean Council	Connected Council	Serving Council
Digital Customer	6	Working with local training providers, partners and 3rd sector to identify and deliver effective customer training to ensure take up of digital services and support Digital Inclusion		√	√			√	√
Digital Customer	7	Identify further opportunities for use of social media to support service delivery	√	√	√		√	√	√
Digital Workforce	1	Continued implementation and development of agile and mobile technologies to enable employees to access business systems and information from any location	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Digital Workforce	2	Development of mobile working to support service delivery							
Digital Workforce	3	Implementation of collaboration and document management technologies							
Digital Workforce	4	Appropriate workforce training to support use of digital technologies and systems			√			√	√
Digital Workforce	5	Implementation of technologies to support agile and mobile working	√	√		√	√	√	√
Digital Workforce	6	Extended provision of wireless in Council buildings	√	√		√	√		√
			Council Corporate Themes						
Digital Strategy Theme	No	Action	Caring Council	Ambitious Council	Learning Council	Green Council	Safe & Clean Council	Connected Council	Serving Council

Digital Workforce	7	E-learning – Development of e-learning modules to support workforce development in use of new and existing technologies and to promote compliance with information management legislation			√				√
Digital Workforce	8	Implementation of a new intranet with ability for whole workforce access							
Digital Workforce	9	Continued development and rollout of self-service systems across workforce and schools e.g. HR and Payroll	√					√	
Digital Business & Community	1	Provision and support of digital services to schools through the Council's new service delivery model for Schools IT support	√	√	√			√	
Digital Business & Community	2	Provision of training and support for school staff in delivering the Digital Competency Framework through access to Digital Leaders and the Regional Schools Improvement Service (GwE)			√			√	√
Digital Business & Community	3	Modernising public IT facilities in community settings including Libraries, Connects etc.	√	√		√		√	√

Digital Strategy Theme	No	Action	Council Corporate Themes						
			Caring Council	Ambitious Council	Learning Council	Green Council	Safe & Clean Council	Connected Council	Serving Council
Digital Business & Community	4	Support communities in the development and implementation of town based wireless schemes		√			√	√	√
Digital Business & Community	5	Lobbying telecommunication providers and Welsh Government to improve broadband coverage and speed		√					
Digital Business & Community	6	Work with the 3rd sector and other partners to identify opportunities to improve digital literacy within communities and small businesses						√	
Digital Business & Community	7	Provision of appropriate training for the Integrated Youth Provision Service (IYP) to ensure that they are able to take full advantage of modern communication channels and emerging technology to communicate and work with young people	√		√			√	√

Digital Strategy Theme	No	Action	Council Corporate Themes						
			Caring Council	Ambitious Council	Learning Council	Green Council	Safe & Clean Council	Connected Council	Serving Council
Digital Partnership	1	Enable the secure exchange of information with our partners	√	√				√	√
Digital Partnership	2	Working with partners to simplify the approach to identity management		√				√	√
Digital Partnership	3	Promotion of collaboration on regional and national projects e.g: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Wales/All Wales Public Services Directory • Welsh Community Care Information System (WCCIS) • All Wales Library Management System • North Wales Legal Case Management System • Capita ONE Hosted service • North Wales Councils Regional Emergency Planning Service • Procurement 	√	√			√	√	√
Information Management	1	Development and delivery of an information management strategy						√	√
Information Management	2	Development and implementation of Infrastructure and Information Security technologies • Secure email • Event and log management • Unified Threat Management							√

Digital Strategy Theme	No	Action	Council Corporate Themes						
			Caring Council	Ambitious Council	Learning Council	Green Council	Safe & Clean Council	Connected Council	Serving Council
Information Management	3	Evaluation of requirements of new General Data Protection Regulations and implementation of processes and procedures to ensure compliance							
Information Management	4	Review and development of Information Security Policies							√
Information Management	5	Development of systems and policies to support compliance with our legal obligations under Information and Records Management and Technology legislation, regulations, statutory guidance, accreditations and standards including; Data Protection Act 1998, Freedom of Information Act 2000, Environmental Information Regulations 2004, Re-Use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015 and Public Sector Network Accreditation	√		√			√	√
Information Management	6	Consider ways of reducing both the physical and financial burden of storage on the Council whilst ensuring compliance	√		√	√	√		√
Information Management	7	Use of technology to reduce duplication of data, to enable more efficient management of core council data and to help reduce the storage burden e.g. Electronic Document Management (EDM)	√			√			√

Digital Strategy Theme	No	Action	Council Corporate Themes						
			Caring Council	Ambitious Council	Learning Council	Green Council	Safe & Clean Council	Connected Council	Serving Council
Information Management	8	Maximise the potential that information offers in improving efficiency, resource planning and reducing failure demand by using data visualisation tools such as Geographical Information Systems (GIS)	√	√			√		√
Digital Delivery	1	Technology Roadmap (refresh of Technology Blueprint)							√
Digital Delivery	2	Development of improved governance arrangements						√	√
Digital Delivery	3	Facilitate the use of Welsh language through technology		√	√			√	√
Digital Delivery	4	Improved capacity management within the service						√	√
Digital Delivery	5	Effective prioritisation across the Council to ensure that resources are targeted to delivering solutions effectively and appropriately		√					√
Digital Delivery	6	Support for Asset rationalisation programme				√			√

			Council Corporate Themes						
Digital Strategy Theme	No	Action	Caring Council	Ambitious Council	Learning Council	Green Council	Safe & Clean Council	Connected Council	Serving Council
Digital Delivery	7	To ensure that we have a clear picture of all the corporate IT assets, their value, relevant contract and licence information and warranty and replacement schedules. This will ensure both licence compliance as we as assisting with financial asset management planning.							√
Digital Delivery	8	Implement Enterprise Unified Communications: • Microsoft Exchange • Skype for business • Integrated technology							√
Digital Delivery	9	Consolidation of Business Systems: • Removal of Lotus Notes • Review of business systems to ensure we are getting best value from investments in 3rd part software • Rationalisation of systems to see if we can reduce the number of business systems with the potential to make efficiencies from licence reduction and system management overheads							√
Digital Delivery	10	Implementation of Financial System to support Alternative Delivery Models (ADMs)							√
Digital Delivery	11	Review of Masterpiece financial system							√
Digital Delivery	12	Evaluation and implementation of cloud technologies; • Microsoft Office 365 • Microsoft Azure							√
			Council Corporate Themes						
Digital Strategy Theme	No	Action	Caring Council	Ambitious Council	Learning Council	Green Council	Safe & Clean Council	Connected Council	Serving Council

New		Delivery Actions on Adult and children services need to be included within the Action Plan	√						
New		Partnership Actions to be included for: Digital Health Collaborations and CRTs							√
New		Actions to be added around developing the digital culture within the Council and with citizens							√
New		Action to capture the digital work with Partners, (local and regional) Suppliers and in procurement (e.g. LFFN, CRTs Health etc)		√	√	√			
New		Action on Data centre rationalisation and the introduction of cloud as being impactful on the green Council ambitions				√			
New		Digital Delivery Action to be reworded – a number of these would then map to the Safe & Clean Theme					√		
New		Action to be included around embedding a digital Culture into the Council and its citizens			√			√	
New		Action to be included on ensuring that the digital strategy Maps to the Welsh Gov's or Scottish Gov's digital standards						√	
		Total number of Actions	20	17	17	13	12	27	40

Appendix 2

Self-reflected allocation of resources to the Digital Strategy Actions

1. Actions ~~struck through~~ were classified as either completed or no longer relevant during the workshop

Digital Strategy Theme	No	Action	Action fully resourced within 20-21 budget	Action indicatively resourced in MTFS	Current Bid for resources	Action not specifically resourced
Digital Customer	1	Continued development of CRM to enable single view of the customer	y		Y	
Digital Customer	2	Development of customer self-service facilities on the Council's website	y		Y	
Digital Customer	3	Effective signposting to information and online resources on the Council's website			Y	
Digital Customer	4	Working with services to ensure a 'Digital First' approach to service delivery	Y	Y	Y	
Digital Customer	5	Continue to move transactional services to more effective and efficient digital channels by maximizing self-service	Y (Partial)		Y	
Digital Customer	6	Working with local training providers, partners and 3rd sector to identify and deliver effective customer training to ensure take up of digital services and support Digital Inclusion	Y (Currently being Scoped)			
Digital Customer	7	Identify further opportunities for use of social media to support service delivery			Y	

Digital Strategy Theme	No	Action	Action fully resourced within 20-21 budget	Action indicatively resourced in MTFS	Current Bid for resources	Action not specifically resourced
Digital Workforce	1	Continued implementation and development of agile and mobile technologies to enable employees to access business systems and information from any location	Almost complete Y (Partial)			Social services not resourced as not yet requested.
Digital Workforce	2	Development of mobile working to support service delivery	(See 1 above)			
Digital Workforce	3	Implementation of collaboration and document management technologies	Y SharePoint to replace current solution	Y		
Digital Workforce	4	Appropriate workforce training to support use of digital technologies and systems	Y			
Digital Workforce	5	Implementation of technologies to support agile and mobile working	See 1 above			
Digital Workforce	6	Extended provision of wireless in Council buildings	Completed			
Digital Workforce	7	E-learning – Development of e-learning modules to support workforce development in use of new and existing technologies and to promote compliance with information management legislation	Y	Y		

Digital Strategy Theme	No	Action	Action fully resourced within 20-21 budget	Action indicatively resourced in MTFS	Current Bid for resources	Action not specifically resourced
Digital Workforce	8	Implementation of a new intranet with ability for whole workforce access	(Completed but limited take-up)			
Digital Workforce	9	Continued development and rollout of self-service systems across workforce and schools e.g. HR and Payroll				Y
Digital Business & Community	1	Provision and support of digital services to schools through the Council's new service delivery model for Schools IT support	Completed (but require additional action for HWB)			
Digital Business & Community	2	Provision of training and support for school staff in delivering the Digital Competency Framework through access to Digital Leaders and the Regional Schools Improvement Service (GwE)			Y	
Digital Business & Community	3	Modernising public IT facilities in community settings including Libraries, Connects etc.	Completed			
Digital Business & Community	4	Support communities in the development and implementation of town based wireless schemes				Y
Digital Business & Community	5	Lobbying telecommunication providers and Welsh Government to improve broadband coverage and speed	Y (need to add in LFFN)			

Digital Strategy Theme	No	Action	Action fully resourced within 20-21 budget	Action indicatively resourced in MTFS	Current Bid for resources	Action not specifically resourced
Digital Business & Community	6	Work with the 3rd sector and other partners to identify opportunities to improve digital literacy within communities and small businesses				Y
Digital Business & Community	7	Provision of appropriate training for the Integrated Youth Provision Service (IYP) to ensure that they are able to take full advantage of modern communication channels and emerging technology to communicate and work with young people.				y
Digital Partnership	1	Enable the secure exchange of information with our partners	Y (PARTIALLY RESOURCED)			
Digital Partnership	2	Working with partners to simplify the approach to identity management				y
Digital Partnership	3	<p>Promotion of collaboration on regional and national projects e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Wales/All Wales Public Services Directory • Welsh Community Care Information System (WCCIS) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Wales Library Management System • North Wales Legal Case Management System • Capita ONE Hosted service • North Wales Councils Regional Emergency Planning Service • Procurement 	<p>Y (Partial) FCC not signed up to WCCIS.</p> <p>Completed Completed Completed Completed Completed</p>			
Digital Strategy Theme	No	Action	Action fully resourced within 20-21 budget	Action indicatively resourced in MTFS	Current Bid for resources	Action not specifically resourced
Information Management	1	Development and delivery of an information management strategy	Y (Completed)			

Information Management	2	Development and implementation of Infrastructure and Information Security technologies • Secure email • Event and log management • Unified Threat Management	Y (Completed)			
Information Management	3	Evaluation of requirements of new General Data Protection Regulations and implementation of processes and procedures to ensure compliance	Y (Completed)			
Information Management	4	Review and development of Information Security Policies	Y			
Information Management	5	Development of systems and policies to support compliance with our legal obligations under Information and Records Management and Technology legislation, regulations, statutory guidance, accreditations and standards including; Data Protection Act 1998, Freedom of Information Act 2000, Environmental Information Regulations 2004, Re-Use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015 and Public Sector Network Accreditation.	Y			
Information Management	6	Consider ways of reducing both the physical and financial burden of storage on the Council whilst ensuring compliance	Y	Y		
Information Management	7	Use of technology to reduce duplication of data, to enable more efficient management of core council data and to help reduce the storage burden e.g. Electronic Document Management (EDM)				Y
Information Management	8	Maximise the potential that information offers in improving efficiency, resource planning and reducing failure demand by using data visualisation tools such as Geographical Information Systems (GIS)	Y (Partially resourced)			Y

Digital Strategy Theme	No	Action	Action fully resourced within 20-21 budget	Action indicatively resourced in MTFS	Current Bid for resources	Action not specifically resourced
Digital Delivery	1	Technology Roadmap (refresh of Technology Blueprint)	Y			
Digital Delivery	2	Development of improved governance arrangements	Y Completed			
Digital Delivery	3	Facilitate the use of Welsh language through technology	Y			
Digital Delivery	4	Improved capacity management within the service	Y		Y	
Digital Delivery	5	Effective prioritisation across the Council to ensure that resources are targeted to delivering solutions effectively and appropriately	Y			
Digital Delivery	6	Support for Asset rationalisation programme	Y		Y	
Digital Delivery	7	To ensure that we have a clear picture of all the corporate IT assets, their value, relevant contract and licence information and warranty and replacement schedules. This will ensure both licence compliance as we as assisting with financial asset management planning.	Y			
Digital Delivery	8	Implement Enterprise Unified Communications: • Microsoft Exchange • Skype for business • Integrated technology	Y Completed			
Digital Delivery	9	Consolidation of Business Systems: • Removal of Lotus Notes • Review of business systems to ensure we are getting best value from investments in 3rd party software • Rationalisation of systems to see if we can reduce the number of business systems with the potential to make efficiencies from licence reduction and system management overheads	Y (Action needs to be updated)		Y	
Digital Delivery	10	Implementation of Financial System to support Alternative Delivery Models (ADMs)	Y Completed			
Digital Delivery	11	Review of Masterpiece financial system				Y
Digital Delivery	12	Evaluation and implementation of cloud technologies; • Microsoft Office 365 • Microsoft Azure	Y			
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Summary stats

Actions fully completed	10	Actions that are the subject of a current bid for resources	10
Action fully resourced within 20-21 budget	27	Action not specifically resourced	9
Action indicatively resourced in MTFS	4		



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