



Title of Report:	Digital Strategy Update
Committee Report Submitted To:	Leisure & Development Committee
Date of Meeting	18th October 2022
For Decision or For Information	For Information

Linkage to Council Strategy (2019-23)	
Strategic Theme	Innovation & Transformation Accelerating our Economy and Contributing to Prosperity
Outcome	The Council will embrace new technologies and processes where they can bring about better experiences for citizens and visitors and work with partners to maximise investment funding opportunities from external sources. Promoting the Borough as an attractive place to live, work, invest and visit.
Lead Officer	Head of Prosperity & Place

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	N/A
Included in Current Year Estimates	N/A
Capital/Revenue	N/A
Code	N/A
Staffing Costs	N/A

Screening Requirements	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	No	Date:
	EQIA Required and Completed:	No	Date:
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	No	Date:
	RNA Required and Completed	No	Date:
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	No	Date:
	DPIA Required and Completed:	No	Date:

1.0 Purpose of Report/ Background

The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update in relation to the delivery of Council's Digital Strategy.

2.0 Background

In January 2021, Council endorsed the Digital Strategy for the Borough. The Digital Strategy provides a clear vision within the digital sector to drive, accelerate and sustain economic and social development throughout the Borough. It will also help support any potential digital initiatives which emerge as part of the Causeway Coast and Glens Growth Deal.

The Digital Strategy was developed in parallel with, and informed by, the Economic Development Strategy for Causeway Coast and Glens and takes into account a range of digital strategies, initiatives and developments from the UK and beyond that establish the context for development in the Borough.

The Digital Strategy specifically focuses on three key areas i.e.:

- a) **Digital Infrastructure** – To ensure current and emerging digital technologies are available and accessible to all.
- b) **Digital Sector (including businesses)** – To support digital transformation of key economic sectors to ensure their sustainability and growth.
- c) **Digital Skills** – To establish a digital skills ecosystem for the Borough – both directly within the Borough, and as a conduit for skills regionally and beyond.

3.0 Progress/Update

Progress on all elements of the Digital Strategy is outlined in the Outcome Based Analysis report attached as Appendix 1.

APPENDIX 1

Action 1: Improving digital infrastructure: ubiquitous broadband, support wireless infrastructure, reduce barriers to deployment and digital transformation in the Council.							
Indicators	Ubiquitous coverage of broadband across the Borough No. of premises covered by Project Stratum, FFNI & Project Gigabit No. of priority locations identified for Wi-Fi % of Borough that will be serviced by LoRaWan						
Theme	Aims & Description	Key Activities	Start Date	End Date	Resource or Cost Estimates	Performance Measures	Reporting Quarter
Digital Infrastructure	<p>Aim: Establish ubiquitous broadband</p> <p>Description: Council to assist with the rollout of FFNI, Project Stratum, Project Gigabit to ensure that no region within the Borough is left without a decent broadband connection.</p>	<p>Actively participate in FFNI Consortium meetings, assist with deployment requirements. Complete 47 installs at Council owned buildings.</p> <p>Participation on DfE NI Broadband Public Projects Working Group</p> <p>Support consultation associated with Project Stratum (Discrete Superfast Review).</p>	01/12/20	31/12/22	<p>Budget: Funded programmes</p> <p>Cost Breakdown:</p> <p>FFNI installs - £1,343,148.77</p> <p>Staff Resource</p>	<p>How much did we do?</p> <p>15 Operations Group meetings attended</p> <p>13 FFNI Checkpoint meetings attended</p> <p>3 NI Broadband Public Projects Working Group meetings attended</p> <p>47 installs completed</p> <p>3 different platforms utilised for consultation publicity (Facebook, Twitter & Council website)</p> <p>How well did we do it?</p>	1,2,3,4

						<p>100% attendance at meetings associated with ubiquitous broadband</p> <p>92% FFNI installs at sites identified (4 sites descoped)</p> <p>Is anyone better off? 100% of FFNI sites now have a more reliable full fibre connection</p>	
Digital Infrastructure	<p>Aim: Identify Wi-Fi priority locations</p> <p>Description; Determine the Wi-Fi specification to meet the requirements of the busiest locations in the Borough. Establish which towns and tourism locations should be equipped with Wi-Fi.</p>	<p>Appoint consultant to undertake feasibility study into the re-deployment of public Wi-Fi.</p> <p>Identity areas that would benefit most public Wi-Fi.</p>	01/04/21	31/03/22	<p>Cost Breakdown:</p> <p>Consultancy - £9,500</p> <p>Staff Resource</p>	<p>How much did we do? 1 consultancy agency appointed to undertake feasibility study</p> <p>2 Options identified as potential public Wi-Fi re-deployment opportunities</p> <p>1 revenue stream identified</p> <p>How well did we do it? 100% Appropriately qualified consultancy company appointed to undertake feasibility study</p> <p>100% two options identified if Councillors decide to re-introduce public Wi-Fi (significant costs would be incurred)</p> <p>100% revenue stream identified for Public Wi-Fi at specific locations.</p>	1,2,3,4

						<p>Is anyone better off? 0% Feasibility study identified costs associated with re-deploying public Wi-Fi. Funds .to implement viable options not yet secured.</p> <p>Identified revenue option not implemented.</p>	
Digital Infrastructure	<p>Aim: Reduce barriers to deployment</p> <p>Description: Engage with the DCMS 'Barrier Busting' Team and understand best practice for Council oversight of network roll-out.</p>	<p>Establish an implementation team to support the roll-out of the FFNI project.</p> <p>Secure wayleave approval for installations.</p> <p>Identify areas not included in FFNI, Project Stratum or Gigabit plans.</p> <p>Engage with DfE regarding Rathlin Island</p> <p>Identify and develop interventions for LoRaWAN 'not spots'</p>	01/12/20	31/03/22	<p>Cost Breakdown: Staff Resource</p>	<p>How much did we do? 5 Implementation team meetings</p> <p>24 wayleaves approved (Fibrus – 22, Openreach – 2)</p> <p>3 NI Broadband Public Projects Working Group meetings attended to try and establish intervention area gaps.</p> <p>How well did we do it? 100% attendance at implementation meetings</p> <p>92% FFNI installs at sites identified (4 sites descope)</p> <p>0% Unable to identify gaps until outcome of Project Stratum discrete review of superfast broadband intervention areas.</p> <p>50% DfE have confirmed that they are exploring options with Project Stratum provider regarding Rathlin Island – no proposed solutions confirmed as yet.</p>	1,2,3,4

						<p>0% interventions not yet identify for LoRaWAN 'not spots'</p> <p>Is anyone better off? FFNI project successfully delivered to 47 Council-owned sites.</p> <p>Project Stratum has commenced delivery to a number of areas within the Borough – roll-out is scheduled to continue until 2024/25.</p>	
Digital Infrastructure	<p>Aim: Digital Transformation in the Council</p> <p>Description: Conduct review of IT systems and implement changes to support better working practices.</p>	<p>Review of current IT systems.</p> <p>Adoption of remote working software.</p> <p>Introduction of new Finance system.</p> <p>WAN deployment on top of FFNI infrastructure to be completed by December 22 – this will futureproof Councils digital services.</p>	01/01/21	Ongoing	<p>Budget: ICT Dept.</p> <p>Cost Breakdown:</p> <p>MS Teams Licences</p> <p>Finance System</p> <p>Performance Improvement Data Management Software</p> <p>WAN Hardware/Software</p> <p>Staff Resource</p>	<p>How much did we do? ICT Dept continually review IT systems to ensure they are fit for purpose.</p> <p>How well did we do it? 100% of staff eligible to work from home provided with appropriate equipment/software</p> <p>90% Finance System currently at final testing stage. Training for relevant staff to be arranged.</p> <p>0% WAN deployment currently being designed and hardware/software order to be placed.</p> <p>Is anyone better off? 100% of eligible staff have adopted hybrid working.</p>	1,2,3,4

Action 2: Improving digital skills: basic, professional and advanced throughout the Borough

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Indicators		No. of schools offering digital qualifications and exposing pupils to digital career paths % of school leavers with a qualification in an ICT subject % of jobs created across the Borough requiring professional/advanced digital skills					
Theme	Aims & Description	Key Activities	Start Date	End Date	Resource or Cost Estimates	Performance Measures	Reporting Quarter
Digital Skills	<p>Aim: Contribute to improving basic digital skills</p> <p>Description: Council to undertake survey of Digital Skills Curriculum and Qualifications Framework and Digital Schools of Distinction Programme take-up in primary and secondary schools, review the availability of digital skills training and assist with increasing the availability of basic digital skills.</p>	<p>Conduct survey across all levels of educational organisations.</p> <p>Conduct surveys across the business sectors to identify digital needs.</p> <p>Review availability and access to digital training within the Borough.</p>	01/04/20	31/03/21	<p>Cost Breakdown:</p> <p>Educational Surveys - £7,335</p> <p>Business Surveys - £6,900</p> <p>Extended Interviews - £4,800</p> <p>LMP 100% Funded programme</p> <p>Staff Resource</p>	<p>How much did we do? 3 surveys conducted</p> <p>8 e-zines included promotion of digital courses</p> <p>Consultant reviewed training availability across the Borough in support of LMP Action Plan.</p> <p>How well did we do it? 100% identified needs across the business and educational sectors.</p> <p>LMP are developing programmes to target improving basic ICT skills within the long-term unemployed or economically inactive.</p> <p>Is anyone better off? Of the issues identified by the surveys, Council has limited scope to intervene. For example, within primary schools, teachers are not</p>	1,2,3,4

						adequately trained to provide digital lessons. LMP programme still under development.	
Digital Skills	<p>Aim: Support the development of professional/ advanced skills across the Borough</p> <p>Description: Develop programmes which will accelerate the uptake in professional/ advanced digital skills.</p>	<p>Engage with FE Colleges to develop engaging digital content for the tourism sector and more general digital apprenticeship schemes.</p> <p>Support coding initiatives throughout the Borough.</p> <p>Engage with the IET and BCS to deliver events in the digital hub(s).</p> <p>Develop and maintain networking opportunities.</p>	01/04/21	Ongoing	<p>Cost Breakdown:</p> <p>Staff Resource</p>	<p>How much did we do? 1 review of digital programmes currently being offered by FEs and Universities.</p> <p>8 e-zines included promotion of digital courses</p> <p>How well did we do it? 100% conducted review and promotion of digital courses.</p> <p>Is anyone better off? Unable to quantify how much people undertook digital courses as a direct result of Council promotion.</p>	1,2,3,4

Action 3: Support the digital sector via: creation of digital hubs, support for start-ups, industry specific and networking support

Theme	Aims & Description	Key Activities	Start Date	End Date	Resource or Cost Estimates	Performance Measures	Reporting Quarter	
Indicators	No. of hybrid working spaces situated throughout the Borough No. of incubation spaces available for start-ups No. of digital sector events taking place within the Borough No. smart technologies deployed to support local communities and improve business opportunities							
	Digital Sector	<p>Aim: Create Digital hubs</p> <p>Description: Develop Digital Hubs Business Plan including what features are essential, and some desirable features that make the offering more compelling.</p>	Develop Digital Hubs Business Plan Identify and secure location/ funding Market hubs	01/04/21	Ongoing	<p>Cost Breakdown:</p> Growth Deal development of business cases Staff Resource	<p>How much did we do? 2 projects identified by Growth Deal Executive Programme Board for business case development.</p> <p>How well did we do it? 100% Consultants appointed to develop business cases for both projects.</p> <p>Is anyone better off? Too early to quantify</p>	1,2,3,4
	Digital Sector	<p>Aim: Support start-ups</p> <p>Description: Develop incubation space in each hub location. Provide Business-</p>	Develop incubation hubs for variety of business sectors. Promote Business Support available through Council. - Digital Causeway	01/04/21	Ongoing	<p>Cost Breakdown:</p> Growth Deal development of business cases Staff Resource	<p>How much did we do? 2 incubation hub projects identified by Growth Deal Executive Programme Board for business case development.</p>	1,2,3,4

	related support for digital start-ups.	- Digital Surge Programme				<p>10 e-zines promoting Council's digital support programmes</p> <p>23 Social media posts promoting Council programmes</p> <p>How well did we do it? 50% Consultant appointed to develop business cases for one of the projects.</p> <p>1649 subscribers reached via e-zine</p> <p>1415 followers reached via Twitter</p> <p>1775 followers reached by Facebook</p> <p>Is anyone better off? Too early to quantify</p>	
Digital Sector	<p>Aim: Support key business sectors</p> <p>Description: Digital Transformation of the business sectors in Causeway Coast and Glens will be much more effective if done in collaboration with relevant stakeholders.</p>	<p>Build a consensus for action across sectors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tourism - Manufacturing - Agricultural - Public Services <p>Develop a business plan and secure funding.</p>	01/04/21	Ongoing	<p>Cost Breakdown:</p> <p>Digital Transformation Flexible Fund (DTFF) - £60,904 over next 3 years</p> <p>Film & TV database - £2,000 per annum</p>	<p>How much did we do?</p> <p>1 programme (DTFF) supported by the Business Development team.</p> <p>1 Film & TV database maintained</p> <p>Town & Village team explored potential for town apps, project determined to be unsuitable. Other town centre needs have been prioritised.</p>	1,2,3,4

		Establish need for sector specific digital platforms. Develop and maintain.				How well did we do it? 25% DTFF will service all industries, but more targeted support required. 195 locations included in the database Is anyone better off? Too early to quantify	
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