In 2013 the council set a vision to improve people’s lives through the provision of the best affordable services. To do this we need to ensure that we focus on the customer and the city’s business community.

This digital strategy is the Council’s response to a changing world where digital interaction is the norm for many customers, citizens and businesses.

People who use digital services do so for reasons of speed and convenience. In a Government survey the most frequent reasons people gave for choosing to use digital transactions were:

- it saved me a lot of time (85%)
- the site was clear and easy to use (62%)
- I could do it outside office hours (61%).

It is imperative that we meet the needs of our communities and their preferences. In doing so we must ensure that the most advantageous channel for the customer or business is available. Where that contact is non-mediated the application will need to be smart, intuitive and fast. This will assist in moving citizens and businesses from dependence on face to face contact to the independence that they seek through digital interaction.

Research shows that 79% of adults in Wales use the internet, and of those, 83% had accessed public service websites within the last 12 months. However, a recent local government survey identified that only 28% of the public felt that their council had fully embraced digital and many would prefer to see more services online. The Office for National Statistics recent published survey showed the number of people who have ‘ever’ used the internet in Newport as 87%. Customer insight profiling data indicates that 50% of Newport households use the internet every day or most days.

We will focus on customer, business and citizen needs in order to deliver outcomes that matter to them

If we get this transition right there will be a reduction in the number of entry points to council services. However this will be an evolving process as we develop the digital offering and as our customers, citizens and businesses make the progression from face to face to more cost effective online and non-mediated channels.

In time there may be associated savings through step changes in the business processes; this is particularly relevant as our organisation is reducing in size in response to the growing financial challenges. However it is important that we continue to support those who cannot make the transition and we will continue to engage with community groups and the voluntary sector in doing this.

Local Government will save money if demand for higher cost channels decreases. A 2012 SOCITM study across 120 local councils estimated that the cost of contact for face to face transactions averages £8.62, for phone £2.83, but for web only 15 pence

The move to online service provision in Newport is not new as around 57% of customer interactions are through digital means – website, on-line forms, automated switchboard and payment machines – in line with our ‘save time go online’ campaign, but we can do more. In fact we have to do more if we are to meet the expectations that our citizens, customers and businesses are placing on us.

The opportunities that the digital age gives us are huge and in the delivery of this strategy we will look to further engage with the community by using them as the ‘eyes and ears’ of the city to assist in prompt response to service requests. Smart technology, where a citizen can let us know if a street light is out, or a bin needs emptying, will assist in our service delivery. Increasing internet connectivity through superfast and ultrafast broadband and expanding our CCTV and Wi-Fi networks are other areas where we will look to exploit the digital age.

Ray Truman
Deputy Leader
October 2015
Introduction

Times are changing. With rapid growth and uptake of mobile devices, social media, high speed broadband and open data, there are extensive opportunities for the council to respond to the changing digital world.

In order to keep pace with the advances in technology, we need to have a clear strategy for how we will enable internet connectivity across the city and how we will use technology to increase avenues for access to council services, to improve service delivery and respond to the expectations of our citizens for the provision of a 24/7 council.

The wider use and availability of data will improve decision making and increase transparency – the shift to a more digitally inclusive Newport will ensure that we are improving people's lives with the best affordable services.

Newport – a digital city which empowers its citizens, customers and businesses through the innovative use of digital services

The current technologies in use are not fit for purpose for the digital by design strategy. They would need significant investment in an overarching solution that would bring together all the relevant data from the back office systems; this would both be costly and add additional complexity. The challenge and cost is further increased due to there being over 200 applications currently in use across the council services.

A move to cloud based solutions, which provide flexibility and the ability to customise the functionality in a phased approach, will give Newport a scalable and robust answer to the digital question. Developments such as hand-held devices to enable live updating of information and improved information provision will support the transition to a more digitally enabled council.

By placing the customer, citizen or business at the centre of service delivery and developing a single version of the truth for each person or business will lead to a seamless end to end experience; Newport will become a digitally engaged council.

[Central] government where possible must become a digital organisation. These days the best service organisations deliver online everything that can be delivered online. This cuts their costs dramatically and allows access to information and services at times and in ways convenient to the users rather than the providers.

Foreword to the Civil Service Reform plan, Minister for the Cabinet Office Francis Maude

The council does not stand alone and in the wider context of potential local government reorganisation or regionalisation any solutions put in place now must be cost-effective and flexible enough to support these agendas and enable us to continue to work with our partners.

It is imperative however that we do move forward with the digital changes needed to meet the needs of our citizens. Both the Welsh Government** and Central Government*** have already published their own digital strategies which place clear expectations on local authority delivery.
Digital Newport covers the whole community: citizens, public services, third sector, community groups and businesses small and large, and we will collaborate with partners and across the education spectrum in driving forward digital inclusion.

In line with the Welsh Government Digital First Strategy “Putting people at the heart of public service development and design”, our key principle is to put the citizen, customer or business at the centre of what we do. We will design services in a digital manner, across the whole sphere of service delivery and across our staff base whilst also recognising the requirements of the Welsh Language Act.

We will move to a networked approach of service provision enabled through collaborative working, where the community can be supported with access to information and data that can be used and shared to make local decisions. We will move towards live updating of information and service requests, along with the provision of superfast and ultrafast broadband and internet connectivity for businesses, visitors and citizens. To enable this step change, we will move to a more cloud based approach which will give us a more simplified and resilient infrastructure.

However, we continue to recognise that not everyone may be able to make the switch; whether this is due to lack of skills or non-availability of technology. In these cases we will continue to support contact through other means such as the Information Station, face to face or via telephone and will also promote digital inclusion with and through our partners.

We will look to ensure that this change does not create or exacerbate digital exclusion, and focus will be given to supporting those harder to reach within the community and also those for whom English is not the first language.
Our approach

The approach we will take will be to focus on the service being delivered rather than on the technologies, team or department that underpin that service. In doing so, we will redefine all customer-facing service activities in line with a core customer relationship management (CRM) system, therefore removing the siloed approach and delivering a seamless customer journey with better outcomes. This approach will future proof our service delivery model by giving us capacity to develop, modify and expand the CRM to incorporate a line of business applications, that is other bespoke systems, to deliver more appropriate digitally-based services.

**Better online services**
- Digital by design
- Compelling to use
- Straightforward
- Intuitive
- Convenient

**More services online**
- Meet customer and business needs
- Customer and business portal
- Secure accounts
- Enhanced location based information

**Increased take up of online services**
- Targeted communications
- Promotion of online services
- Stimulate demand
- Wi-Fi availability
- Newport Community Cloud

**Better support for digitally excluded**
- Superfast Cymru
- Supported transition to online
- Education and training
- Superfast and Ultrafast Broadband

**Unlocking savings**
- Whole service redesign
- Digital end to end customer journey
- Targeted high value human intervention, e.g safeguarding services
- Staff trained and equipped
What will success look like? 

The citizen of the future will be able to access the services that they need through the most appropriate channel. Routine transactions will be conducted via self service, including online and voice recognition technology. Customers will have the choice of authenticating to their own public services ‘account’ to pay parking fines, check on their council tax balance and check on the progress of street works such as pot holes.

They will be supported by public sector staff who have access to and are able to use technology to find the information they need, supported by streamlined processes and new ways of working. Technology will be harnessed to automate as much routine and transactional activity as possible, allowing staff to focus on actions that add value to the City and its residents.

Working and living in a city where connectivity is the norm through a combination of public sector points of access and public services Wi-Fi. Citizens and businesses will have access to high speed, broadband across the city, supported by a strong culture of digital skills.
Delivering the Digital Strategy in line with the Single Integrated Plan

Single Integrated Plan for Newport

*Working together to create a proud and prosperous city with opportunities for all*

**People in Newport achieve their full potential**
- Technology in schools / digital curriculum / digital learning platform
- Community learning with digital inclusion; community hubs
- Increased STEM provision
- Open data readily available
- Support and training across communities via digital libraries

**People in Newport are healthy and thriving**
- Integration of services putting the citizen at the centre
- Resolution at first point of contact wherever possible
- Secure information sharing portal including health and social care
- Tell us once approach to service delivery

**Newport has a prosperous and thriving economy**
- Superfast broadband vouchers and Superfast Cymru exploitation
- Free public Wi-Fi through Newport Community Cloud and on buses
- Online payments and bookings
- Revenue and e-commerce opportunities
- Single secure customer and business accounts

**People in Newport live in a safe and cohesive community**
- Support to those not able to make digital shift
- Education and training for staff
- Community safety network
- Customer insight to target service delivery to those most in need and support demand management
- Consultation and engagement for future service delivery

**Newport is a distinctive and vibrant city**
- Open democracy, open data and intuitive digital services
- My Newport and My Nearest
- Maximising engagement through better use of social media
- Free city centre Wi-Fi cloud
- Smart technology in buildings
- Collaboration on a national scale
Strategy roadmap

Delivery in 2015/16

- Develop core customer information base
- Focus service delivery using customer insight
- Expand agile working
- Enable secure business portal
- Continuation of security and compliance

Delivery in 2016/17

- Stimulate high quality, next generation internet
- Enable citizen portal
- Develop digital skills and pathways to employment
- Extend digital democracy and decision making

Delivery beyond 2017

- Deliver business applications in the cloud or alternative hosting methods
- Harness opportunities from open data
- Introduce smart technologies in buildings
- Rationalise applications
- Continuation of security and compliance
The Digital Strategy in Detail

2015-2020

- Digital by design
- City-wide approach to digital skills
- Digitally empowered workforce
- Using and securing data
- Simplified and resilient infrastructure
- Citizen and business at the centre

NEWPORT Digital city
The council will move to a principle of ‘Digital by Design’ across all services and key strategic areas. This will be achieved through innovative new ways of working to deliver services through the channels that customers and businesses want to use and are most appropriate to their enquiry and this will be through a combination of options. For the majority of transactional contact, self-service options (including digital) will be available. These channels will reduce the need for contact with the council, creating capacity for complex enquiries from customers to be supported as needed. Consideration will be given to the end to end customer journey to identify when and why a customer contacts us, acknowledging that different customers have different needs.

However, if we want more people to use our digital services we need to make sure they are intuitive, easy to access, readily available and designed around the customer; internet connectivity across the city is also vital.

The move to digital by design will ensure that the council is a 24/7 service, therefore helping the local economy through connectivity, speed of service, introduction of business accounts and availability of information.

We will also look at how we interact with our supply chain and ensure that we further expand our digital reach – through electronic purchase orders to paperless invoicing, automated payments and online tendering, we will ensure that we respond to the way SME’s and other organisations wish to interact with us.

What we will do

- We will have an innovative approach to information and technology services including exploitation of mobile technologies as a delivery channel and as an enabler for internal agility and flexibility
- We will increase the use of on-line provision as the primary method for service delivery, supplier engagement and supply chain management, supporting collaboration
- Expand superfast connectivity across the city through the provision of superfast broadband vouchers and the provision of free Wi-Fi across the city in public buildings, the city centre and beyond
- Increase proactive use of social media, our website and on-line transactions by pro-actively sharing information and providing automated feedback – giving the citizen the confidence that their issue is being remedied without the need to contact the Council
- Intuitive online services, using customer insight to support the transition for particular services and citizen profiles and, if appropriate, supporting incentives for the switch
- Ongoing development of the public safety network to enable a smart city centre and use of smart technology such as energy and light efficient buildings
Service improvement will place the customer, citizen or business at the heart of our processes, ensuring that as far as possible the service request is resolved at the first point of contact.

We will consult and engage with our residents to ensure that we are responding wherever possible to what the customer needs and not what we think the customer wants; this will mean end to end system redesigns that cross the boundaries of service departments and follows the customer journey with the council.

We will achieve this through developing new solutions that integrate services across functional and geographical boundaries rather than restricted to departmental reach.

Working with the SME community and wider businesses across the city, we will harness the opportunities arising from location based data and services to promote local businesses and attractions.

**What we will do**

- We will use customer insight / business intelligence to focus our improvement activity on areas of highest interactions therefore using our limited resources in the areas of most impact
- We will join up data across our services to develop one version of the truth for property, business and citizen records
- We will establish citizen and business portals that give the user a view of their interactions with the council whilst adopting a principle of ‘tell us once’
- We will ensure a focussed move from face to face / telephone contact onto digitally enabled channels – digital inclusion
- Priority will be across place based services to allow efficiencies through more integrated services, robust website, on-line forms, customer and business portals for the services that are delivered locally and less likely to be subject to regionalisation
- However there will be a consideration across people based services too ensuring that a streamlined customer service is deliverable wherever possible
- We will identify opportunities to promote on-line and digital activities across the city through targeted marketing campaigns and better use of social media
- We will identify how we can better engage with the citizens of Newport to enhance the decision making of the council
All key activities and policies will integrate with the ‘digital by design’ ambition of the council therefore developing digital skills in schools, higher and further education and for citizens and the business sector more generally.

By ensuring that young people have the skills necessary for the digital challenges that any future employment will bring and / or are prepared for careers in the digital sector, we will further enhance Newport’s position as a digital city. Furthermore as the move to more on-line service delivery takes place by the council and other sectors, citizens and businesses that are able to make the transition need to be supported in the move.

What we will do

• Work with schools to ensure that technology is seen as part of everyday life and that young learners are encouraged in its use both at home and in school

• For young people, yet to enter the labour market, working with Coleg Gwent and University of South Wales we will increase the number involved formally or informally in digital learning with excellent science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) foundations

• Utilise employers from the local digital cluster to support schools, curriculum and young people in the labour market; this will continue to support previous work around STEM with partner institutions

• We will be reskilling working age residents in work by increasing the number of adult learners to ensure the ongoing development of relevant skills

• We will be developing life skills and employment for working-age residents not in work by inspiring them to develop the relevant skills to apply for jobs, enjoy the benefits of life online, and potentially progress a career in the creative digital sector

• Use of customer insight to inform the plans set out above, and support partners including the Local Service Board
We need staff to have easy access to ICT and digital resources, with the appropriate capability and experience, who are committed to meeting and exceeding the needs of our organisations and its customers.

This approach will ensure staff development across technology and information core competencies; also assisting work life balance for staff. The 2020 Vision and delivery of the change programme will see work practices changing across the organisation and this will need changes in the delivery of information, collaboration and the use of services (such as social media) and technology.

Continued development of an agile workforce can bring service improvements and allow rationalisation of buildings and back office functions and increase productivity through new ways of working.

**What we will do**

- Continue the roll out of appropriate agile devices with associated training in their use, therefore assuring that staff have the right equipment to do their jobs
- Further explore agile working to improve services to the customer, better utilise buildings, support the staff travel plan and also enable a work / life balance for staff
- Explore alternative technologies and devices – for example, bring your own device
- Continue the move to paperless offices with the exploitation of functionality of existing systems through new ways of working
- Reduce print outputs through a move to automated responses, improved web information, introduction of customer portal and other digital methods
- Ensure secure information sharing, enabling prompt and safe collaboration with partner agencies
- Build capacity within the workplace to ensure that we adequately explore new technologies and have the right capability for successful implementation
We will ensure robust information is used in our decision making process and we will make all relevant information available to staff, when and where they need it, to ensure improved service delivery. However, readily available information can have risks so we will ensure the protection of privacy through effective information management and data sharing and robust information security to protect business and citizen data from threats, loss or misuse.

We will explore the advantages of open data and look to make more information and data sets readily available on-line. We will also use business analytics techniques to assist in the planning and evaluation of services and to drive business improvement.

What we will do

• We will make sure that there is an array of information readily available on-line for citizens to resolve their enquiry themselves, having due regard for the Welsh Language Act

• We will make all relevant information available to staff, members and partners, wherever they are, to ensure robust decision making

• Ensure one version of the truth for property, business and citizen records with clear data ownership and management

• Continue with our robust approach to information sharing through clear procedures, integrated systems and privacy impact assessments for new / changed systems

• Ensure compliance with data protection act and freedom of information legislation, including the development of open data

• We will consider a move to protective marking of data in line with emerging government policies

• Continue education and awareness raising for staff around information integrity, use, sharing and online threats

• Invest in security measures to ensure compliance with data and information security standards plus safe processing of payments from businesses and residents

• Use a variety of data sources to help us address complex challenges and better inform us of the needs of customer, demand prediction / management and service planning
The council will move to open / wider integrated systems resulting in the rationalisation of applications and the streamlining of key data sets.

Ongoing provision will evaluate a move to alternative delivery options which include cloud platforms, off-site hosting and in-house development therefore giving a more simplified and resilient IT infrastructure.

**What we will do**

- Reduce and consolidate IT systems within the council therefore saving costs, simplifying support and improving information sharing capability

- Move from the current position of a fully managed on-premise IT infrastructure service to a mix of on-site, off-site, cloud and other technologies; this will be a phased approach as core applications and service delivery applications are assessed

- Ensure that we have clear outcome focussed projects that measure the return on investment and demonstrate strong project management change processes

- Explore collaboration opportunities with other public sector bodies to ensure resilience and further develop business continuity across the council

- To support the changes needed for a new model of operation, central IT staff will be retrained and reskilled to support cloud based delivery

- Ensure effective procurement through the Gateway Process that means we buy it once, implement promptly, exploit all functionality and develop on a resilient and flexible platform

- Be mindful of the Williams Commission Report and any future local government reorganisation or regionalised service delivery models as we prioritise our actions to deliver this digital strategy

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* Central Government - Digital Landscape Research
** Welsh Government - Digital First
*** Cabinet Office - Government Digital Strategy