

Contents

- Introduction 2
- What has changed in updated the strategy 3
- Wider strategic context..... 3
 - Digital Strategy for Wales 4
 - Local Digital Declaration 4
 - Digital Standards..... 5
- Links with Other Strategies..... 6
 - Future Generations..... 6
- Socio Economic Duty 8
- Digital Flintshire: The Vision..... 8
- Digital Customer..... 9
- Digital Workforce..... 10
- Digital Business and Connectivity 11
- Digital Partnership..... 12
- Information and Data Management..... 14
- Digital Delivery 16
- Digital Inclusion: 18
- Digital Learning and Culture..... 19
- Governance Arrangements 20

Digital Strategy **2021-2026**

Introduction

The Council adopted “Digital Flintshire” in 2017. Since that time much has changed within the Council and the wider world. At the time the strategy marked a change of direction and ownership; from a document being solely about the IT Services’ plans to a wider statement of the whole Council’s ambitions in the digital arena. As the Council’s understanding of what is digitally possible has grown, so too has the acceptance and demand for digital services, particularly following the imposition of different levels of lock down in response to the coronavirus pandemic. It is now an appropriate time to review and revise the strategy in light of those changes and our experience.

In the four years since adopting the first iteration of Digital Flintshire the Council has made solid progress in delivering the aims and ambitions within that document. For example it has:

- Updated our website and developed our own Customer relationship Management System (CRM) which has seen us process almost 200,000 electronic forms from customers over the past 3 years, many of which have integrated directly into our business systems providing an end to end digital experience.
- Developed a customer account to enable customers to securely access services personal to them. These services have included school admissions, planning applications, garden waste schemes and a range of services for council tenants. To date we have in excess of 17,500 customers signed up for this service.
- Implemented modern and up to date infrastructures within schools aligned to agreed national digital standards as part of the Welsh Government HWB programme, ensuring they meet the needs of schools and provide a solid foundation for the delivery of the curriculum.

Our partners and other public sector bodies have made progress in delivering their ambitions that affect or support our own digital ambitions, for example, the North Wales Economic Ambition Board has been successful in securing government grant to improve broadband connection speeds within the region.

The Council’s delivery of digital services accelerated during and as a result of the physical restrictions imposed to contain the coronavirus pandemic. With an already agile workforce, the Council was well placed for its employees to work from home wherever possible. The legislation governing Council committee and Cabinet meetings was swiftly amended and all meetings now take place virtually, which has opened up

access to meetings that previously were little seen despite being open to the public. The widespread adoption of video conferencing, to complement existing agile technologies, has also had significant benefits in terms of reducing travel and the consequent carbon emissions whilst improving productivity and work life balance for employees. It has also further supported the council's asset rationalization programme.

The demand for digital services has accelerated within the council and those who use its services. Our experiences of what is now possible and acceptable has lifted our ambition and the Council has refreshed its long term ambitions in light of that experience, allocated additional resources to support the delivery of the action plan and recognise that further resourcing will be critical for the success of the strategy moving forward.

The strategic context for digital has developed within Wales. Welsh Government has published its own digital strategy and digital standards which set out expectations for local government on the digital transformation of services. We have built those standards into this document and signed up to the Local Digital Declaration to ensure that the Council keeps pace with other organisations in the public sector.

The Council's own policy context has also changed. The Council Plan has always had a strong emphasis on tackling the effects of poverty and exclusion, but the 2021/22 plan saw the inclusion of a specific theme on tackling digital poverty to ensure that no one is excluded by a lack of skills or access to digital technology. This has carried through into a new wrap-around theme within the digital strategy to ensure that digital inclusion is addressed as a consideration in all projects we undertake.

What has changed in updated the strategy

The Council has:

- removed those aspirations or milestones that have been completed and updated its ambitions and long term aims
- for the first time been able to include a clear action plan showing the timescale for project delivery
- shown how the digital strategy delivers the aims and ways of working mandated under the Well Being of Future Generations Act
- separated out some themes to give them greater clarity and reframed/refocused its aims around education, learning, culture and the arts
- set out clear digital standards that all projects must meet if they are to be supported and delivered by IT Services

Wider strategic context

Digital Strategy for Wales

Since the first iteration of Digital Flintshire, Welsh Government has published its own [Digital Strategy for Wales](#), which sets out its vision for a consistent standard of digital public service. It contains 6 missions below which clearly overlap with the aims in this updated strategy:

Mission 1: digital services

Deliver and modernise services so that they are designed around user needs and are simple, secure and convenient.

Mission 2: digital inclusion

Equip people with the motivation, access, skills and confidence to engage with an increasingly digital world, based on their needs.

Mission 3: digital skills

Create a workforce that has the digital skills, capability and confidence to excel in the workplace and in everyday life.

Mission 4: digital economy

Drive economic prosperity and resilience by embracing and exploiting digital innovation.

Mission 5: digital connectivity

Services are supported by fast and reliable infrastructure.

Mission 6: data and collaboration

Services are improved by working together, with data and knowledge being used and shared.

Local Digital Declaration

UK Government has also created a vision for the delivery of digital services called the [Local Digital Declaration](#). Signing the declaration is statement of intent to follow a common approach to delivering digital services, which will facilitate and increase collaboration and connections between different public bodies.

The 5 principles of the Local Digital Declaration are set out below and Flintshire will adopt these as its preferred way of working to deliver the ambitions and projects within Digital Flintshire:

1. We will go even further to redesign our services around the needs of the people using them. This means continuing to prioritise citizen and user needs above professional, organisational and technological silos.
2. We will 'fix our plumbing' to break our dependence on inflexible and expensive technology that doesn't join up effectively. This means insisting on modular building blocks for the IT we rely on, and open standards to give a common structure to the data we create.
3. We will design safe, secure and useful ways of sharing information to build trust among our partners and citizens, to better support the most vulnerable members of our communities, and to target our resources more effectively.
4. We will demonstrate digital leadership, creating the conditions for genuine organisational transformation to happen, and challenging all those we work with to embrace this Local Digital Declaration.
5. We will embed an open culture that values, incentivises and expects digital ways of working from every member of our workforce. This means working in the open wherever we can, sharing our plans and experience, working collaboratively with other organisations, and reusing good practice.

Digital Standards

National digital standards serve to provide a set minimum design principles for digital services, specifying criteria that all digital services developed by public services must meet. Scotland has published its [Digital First Service Standard](#), which sets 22 different criteria that each project meet to ensure that it is contributing to the vision created by the Scottish Government. As stated within the document

“The standard has 3 themes:

- user needs - focus on what your users want to do rather than the organisation's objectives or the mechanics of delivering your service
- technology - how you've built your service
- business capability and capacity - having the right team with enough time to maintain the service

The standard aims to make sure that services in Scotland are continually improving and that users are always the focus.”

Welsh Government has not yet published a similar standard for digital projects in Wales. However, learning from the Scottish standard, Digital Flintshire contains 12 maturity points for consideration which ensure that any project undertaken within the Council will help to achieve the aims and objectives of the overall policy. These are:

Usability and Accessibility

1. Website content and online service

2. Relationship with 'My Account'
3. Omni-channel
4. Online payments
5. Online bookings
6. eSignatures

Data

7. Reporting – Management Information and Business Information
8. Data strategy links
9. Document management

Technology

10. Hosting – cloud or on premise?
11. Integration requirements
12. Mobile working

Links with Other Strategies

Digital Flintshire touches upon the work of the whole Council and needs to both influence and be influenced in turn by other corporate strategies if it is to be successfully delivered. The links and interdependencies with other strategies are as follows:

- HR Strategy – Digital Flintshire contains a specific theme on delivering digital processes for its employees. In turn it relies upon employee development, in accordance with the HR Strategy, to build/recruit digital skills within the workforce;
- Customer Strategy – the Customer Strategy revolves around providing effective services at the first point of contact and enabling customers to self-serve wherever possible. Close integration between digital services provided on the website and the Council's own customer relationship management software enables employees in the Contact Centre to support customers if required
- Environmental Strategy – the Council has set the goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2030. Digital services remove the need for officers/residents to travel in order to deliver/access services thereby reducing the council's carbon footprint. Increased data usage has its own carbon cost which is in turn mitigated by purchasing, or generating our own, green energy.

Future Generations

This strategy will contribute towards progressing the well-being goals. Embracing digital innovation and improving access to faster broadband can lead to greater economic opportunities and the strategy has a theme directed to this end, thereby creating a more

prosperous and resilient society. Equipping people with the digital skills they need and designing services around the user will also improve social cohesion, create a healthier and more equal society with well-connected communities and contribute to a thriving Welsh language.

Through supporting remote working, designing public services effectively, using data smartly and modernising the technology we use we can support our ambition to reduce carbon usage (noting that through purchasing, or even generating our own, “green energy” this can offset the carbon cost of increased data usage).

Achieving real digital transformation of public services provides an opportunity to support the ways of working described in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act. Digital services join up and integrate departments for residents so they can seamlessly conclude their request for service in a single process. Good engagement supports the design of user-facing services that prevent inefficiencies and inconsistent experience for the citizen. Designing services in an iterative, agile and user-focused way will ensure services are designed for the long-term.

Some examples of how the strategy is taking forward the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act:

Long term	Recognising that our population is aging and becoming more diverse, digital services mean more focus can be given to supporting those more in need of support. Recognising the threat of climate change, more flexible working practices mean less journeys impacting on Co2 emissions and air quality.
Preventative	Easy access to information and ability to easily manage day-to-day tasks digitally can help people to be self-reliant and prevent loss of independence.
Involvement	Consultation results have underpinned the strategy and ongoing programmes of learning from feedback from citizens and users will inform future development.
Integration	Benefits across the wellbeing goals from improved digital services e.g. an equal Wales. Working with our partners to deliver digital services that enable Health and Social Care Integration e.g. Single Point of Access (SPOA).
Collaboration	Working with schools to ensure children are equipped to thrive in a digital world. Working with partners to help build skills within the community and ensure access to digital services
A prosperous Wales	Improving local infrastructure to support developing businesses. Helping local people gaining relevant skills.

A resilient Wales	Changing working practices and developing skills for more resilient services and communities as the population and climate changes in the long-term.
A healthier Wales	Timely access to information to ensure support can be provided promptly preventing further deterioration, supported by real time information.
A more equal Wales	Flexible services, responsive to the needs of the most vulnerable.
A Wales of Cohesive communities	Supporting improved internet connectivity so that information is easily and reliably available to enable all communities to be well-connected, informed and involved in their local area.
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving	Ensuring all services and information are provided bilingually.
A globally responsive Wales	More digital services reduces the need for journeys and resources such as fuel and paper, reducing Co2 emissions and use of resources.

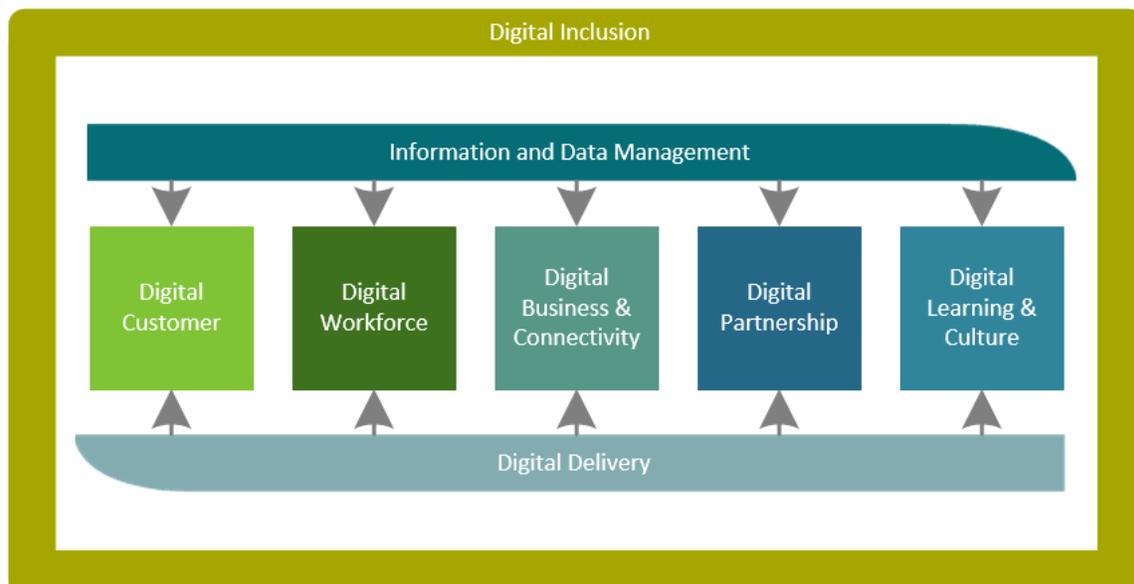
Socio Economic Duty

The Council recognises that inability to access digital services can disproportionately impact people from lower socio economic groups, perpetuating or even exacerbating the disadvantages they face. This revised strategy seeks to tackle these issues through very theme, and also includes a theme aimed at specifically targeting these challenges.

Digital Flintshire: The Vision

This digital strategy sets out how the Council will embrace the opportunities that digital technologies, innovation and information offer to ensure the effective delivery of modern, efficient public services by adopting the following principles:

- Using technology to offer customers increased flexibility in when and how they access our services
- Ensuring our customers have the access, skills and confidence to engage with an increasingly digital world, based on their needs - no one is left behind
- Providing and promoting accessible and inclusive digital services that are simple, secure and convenient enabling people to use the Welsh Language on a day-to-day basis
- Creation of a workforce which is efficient, informed, and able to interact confidently and effectively in a digital world
- Demonstrating digital leadership, creating conditions for genuine organisational transformation to take place and challenging those we work with to embrace this culture
- Working with and supporting our businesses to maximize and exploit opportunities that digital technology and innovation offers
- Using digital technology to work and collaborate with our partners efficiently and securely, including the effective sharing and use of data
- Ensuring that we treat Information as a key corporate asset ensuring it is compliant, accurate, relevant and secure so that we can use it to design and deliver more effective and efficient services
- Delivering a secure, reliable, resilient and cost effective digital infrastructure that is responsive to the needs of the Council and its customer



Digital Customer

“Empowering customers to use digital channels to access information, engage and complete a transaction”

Principles:

- Our services will be modern, efficient and streamlined to meet the needs of customers.
- Digital services will be simple, secure and convenient
- Our residents will be able to access high quality services in Welsh and English because they are designed bilingually from the outset
- Our services will have a consistent user experience and design.
- Services that can be online will be available online and other channels will be available where they are needed
- People will choose to use digital services, increasing self-service interactions between customers and services
- No person is left behind as we embrace a digital services, keeping digital inclusion at the heart of all we do

High Level Actions to Support Delivery:

1. Continue to develop modern, efficient and secure digital services
2. Ensure bilingual user experience in service design and delivery
3. Modernise online payment facilities
4. Create a Digital Hub for information, resources and support to help people to use digital services
5. Develop the use of social media as a channel to support service delivery
6. Develop the Customer Relationship Management system to enable a single view of the customer

Digital Workforce

“Equipping our workforce with the digital skills, capability and confidence required to deliver ‘digital first’ services”

Principles:

- We will ensure our employees have the digital tools and skills required to deliver services effectively and efficiently
- We will support changes in working practices that enable employees to work more transparently and flexibly.
- Unify our offline and online communications by keeping employees connected through their mobile devices to provide anywhere, anytime access to business tools and information
- Continue to support virtual work environments that allow employees to stay connected in virtual workplaces while balancing business needs and operational risks.
- We will help to minimize spending and enhance productivity by providing employees with the right tools and right information at the right time
- We will support our employees to adopt digital change
- Ensuring we accelerate the move to digital delivery where possible

High Level Actions to Support Delivery:

1. Continued implementation and development of agile and mobile technologies to enable employees to access business systems and information from any location
2. Development of mobile working to support service delivery
3. Implementation of collaboration and document management technologies
4. Appropriate workforce training to support use of digital technologies and systems
5. Undertake a Digital Workforce Skills Assessment for all existing and new employees
6. Extended provision of wireless in Council buildings
7. Development of e-learning modules to support workforce development in use of new and existing technologies and to promote compliance with information management legislation
8. Implementation of a new intranet with ability for whole workforce access
9. Continued development and rollout of self-service systems across workforce and schools e.g. HR and Payroll

Digital Business and Connectivity

“Working with and supporting our businesses to maximize and exploit opportunities that digital technology and innovation offers”

Principles:

- We will promote and deliver projects that increase ultra-fast broadband and mobile coverage, enabling our businesses to access new markets and our residents to access employment, education and services
- We will promote and deliver projects that facilitate Internet of Things deployment by public services and businesses
- We will promote and deliver projects that facilitate Internet of Things deployment by public services and businesses

High Level Actions to Support Delivery:

1. Participate in North Wales Growth Deal project to create 5G infrastructure along strategic transport corridors and at key employment sites.
2. Contribute to the development of a more streamlined policy framework for North Wales that makes it more cost effective for telecoms infrastructure companies to make investments.
3. Participate in North Wales Growth Deal project to expand rural broadband coverage.
4. Complete installation of fibre connectivity to public buildings through Local Full Fibre Network project.
5. Provide officer resource to support rural households in identifying solutions to connectivity issues and to promote community broadband projects.
6. Develop projects to improve connectivity at community facilities.
7. Develop monitoring infrastructure in town centres to provide data to inform management and investment.
8. Compile IoT (Internet of Things) use cases for public sector and businesses.

Digital Partnership

“Digital technology will enable people and organisations to work together to design and deliver improved services”

Principles:

- Digital technology will enable partners to deliver better, seamless, services and outcomes
- Appropriate data and knowledge will be shared and used by partners to develop and improve services
- There will be open and agile ways of working across partnerships, enabling co-located services
- We will maximise technologies which support and enable collaborative service delivery such as cloud and open systems
- We will work with partners to develop and procure established technology ensuring best value for money
- We will explore opportunities for alternative service delivery models with other public, private and third sector organisations

High Level Actions to Support Delivery:

1. Establish a set of ‘digital commitments’ with our key partners to align our strategic direction, timelines and capacity, improving outcomes
Our ambition will include:
 - the NHS and North Wales Police
 - schools and higher and further education organisations
 - Newydd and Aura (Alternative Delivery Models)
2. Identify opportunities to work together on digital initiatives to get the most out of our data:
 - develop consistency by agreeing and adopting common data and architecture standards and using platforms that will support the re-use of data and collaboration more generally
 - work with partners to identify data sources that can help create a rich and inclusive picture of society to inform service development and commissioning intentions
3. Explore how Sharepoint, or other technology, can be effectively deployed to support partnership working and outcomes whilst ensuring compliance to data and information governance standards.
4. Develop a Blueprint for co-located services, and the associated infrastructure (e.g. telephony), to facilitate partnership working and seamless services for

citizens. This will include co-location with Health, Police and 3rd sector organisations.

5. Promotion and collaboration on regional and nation projects including:
 - Phase 2 of All Wales Library Management System
 - Replacement of social care client and finance systems
 - Work to move to digital solutions for court work
 - Replacement system for schools
 - Procurement

Information and Data Management

“We can improve the services provided to the public by working together and ensuring that our information and data is used effectively, well organised, protected and gets to where it needs to go”

Principles:

- People and organisations will have full confidence that their data is being treated responsibly, securely and ethically, in line with appropriate Information and Records Management legislation and by following industry best practice around Information Management and Security.
- We will deliver better, seamless, services with improved outcomes due to data being used effectively and innovatively.
- We will limit the amount of times citizens need to provide the same information by developing improved data mapping across the council to support easy and secure use and reuse of data to deliver joined-up services
- We will make our data available so that it can be accessed by people and organisations that need it, when they need it, in a format that is easy to use.
- We will design safe, secure and useful ways of sharing information to build trust among our partners and citizens, to better support the most vulnerable members of our communities, and to target our resources more effectively.
- We will treat information as a key corporate asset to support improved decision making and best use of resources.

High Level Actions to Support Delivery:

1. Develop an Information and Data Management Strategy that considers the needs of our citizens, demands of the business, industry best practice and changes in technology and legislation.
2. Ensure that we meet our legislative and ethical obligations in the way that we manage our information, building the trust of our citizens and partners e.g.:
 - Data Protection Legislation
 - Freedom of Information Act 2000.
 - Environmental Information Regulations 2004.
 - Public Services Network (PSN) Accreditation.
 - Cyber Essentials Accreditation.
3. Reduce both the physical and financial burden of information and data storage on the council whilst maintaining compliance:
 - Contracts review for storage and destruction.

- Review of corporate fileshare as part of O365 migration.
 - Maximise opportunities for the re-use of information.
 - Reduce duplication of information.
4. Use of technology to enable more efficient management and information sharing within the council and with its partners:
 - Implementation of SharePoint and associated technologies to support improved records management and information sharing
 - Develop a strategic framework for information sharing
 5. Maximise the potential that improved information management offers in terms of improving business efficiency, resource planning and reduction of failure demand:
 - Improved data standards
 - System consolidation and integration
 - Wider use of data mapping to reduce duplication
 - Review of information lifecycles from collection through to destruction or archive
 - Use of business intelligence technologies to support improved decision making and resource planning.
 - Continued development of single view of customer
 6. Ensure that the councils leadership team, members and officers understand both their legal obligations and opportunities for improving service delivery through improved information management:
 - Policy review, promotion and awareness.
 - Targeted training and further development of e-learning

Digital Delivery

“Digital Delivery enables the provision of resilient, robust and cost effective IT infrastructure and systems to underpin service delivery and facilitate organisational change”

Principles:

- We will deliver reliable, secure and resilient IT infrastructure and systems to ensure continuity of service provision.
- Ensure that our investment in technology is aligned with the priorities for the organisation
- Achieving best value from investments made in existing infrastructure by ensuring compliance with industry best practice.
- We will harness new and emerging technologies where they can deliver increased efficiency and improved service delivery
- Working to reduce the number of business systems and improving integration in order to standardise and simplify business processes

High Level Actions to Support Delivery:

1. Develop and maintain Cloud and Datacentre strategies to define the Council’s “Cloud First” policy and inform the Council’s Asset Rationalisation Plan.
2. Undertake infrastructure upgrades to ensure there is sufficient capacity to support service provision.
3. Ensure infrastructure software is up to date to ensure licensing compliance, provision of a secure infrastructure and platforms capable of running the latest business applications.
4. Implementation of cloud technologies:-
 - Microsoft Office 365
 - Microsoft Teams
 - Microsoft SharePoint
5. Support the implementation of new or upgraded business systems
6. Consolidation of Business Systems:-
 - Review 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 license reduction and system management overheads

7. To ensure that we have a clear picture of all the corporate IT assets, their value, relevant contract and license information and warranty and replacement schedules. This will assist with financial asset management planning.
8. Support the Councils Asset rationalisation programme
9. Facilitate the use of Welsh Language through the use of technology
10. Support the delivery of projects within other workstreams in the programme through the provision of technology, systems and resources.

Digital Inclusion:

“To bring the Council closer to residents by equipping people with the motivation, access, skills and confidence to engage with an increasingly digital world, based on their needs.”

Principles:

- We will promote introduce and develop digital for people in a way that benefits them; helping them do things they care about and can only do online
- Make it easier for our residents to stay safe online by providing simple and straightforward advice and tools
- Working with our partners to maximise expertise, experience and resources to better meet user needs.
- Supporting people with access to appropriate connectivity and equipment to enable access to digital services
- We will identify wider outcomes that can be delivered by helping people become independently confident online

High Level Actions to Support Delivery:

1. Work with our partners to develop and promote a volunteer programme to support people to get online
2. Support and enable access to the internet and devices to ensure people are not excluded from a digital world
3. Develop digital services that are accessible and responsive
4. Continue to work with 3rd sector and other partners to identify opportunities to improve digital literacy within communities and small businesses
5. Promote initiatives to help people to use digital technology now and in the future
6. Highlight initiatives that support people's health and wellbeing through participation in digital activities

Digital Learning and Culture

“We want learners of all ages to be able to engage with what it means to be a conscientious digital citizen who engages with and contributes positively to the digital world around them.”

Principles:

- We will work with other organisations to promote and develop inclusive opportunities for digital accessibility, participation and culture growing sustainable communities
- Provide the most effective digital infrastructure and services for education and youth providers, embedding technology in the classroom
- Continue to explore and develop digital channels to provide learning opportunities throughout Flintshire
- Enhance the digital capability and skills of learners of all ages by:
 - Working with schools, partners and the workforce to ensure they are equipped to deliver digital opportunities for learners as part of the curriculum for Wales
 - Supporting the evolving digital requirements of adult learning as part of Digital 2030

High Level Actions to Support Delivery:

1. Continued provision of digital services and support to schools through the Council’s service delivery model for Schools IT support
2. Work in partnership with the Regional School Improvement Service (GwE) to provide training and support for schools in delivering the Digital Competency Framework and embedding this within Curriculum Wales 2022
3. Work with Welsh Government to deliver and develop school IT infrastructure to align with agreed digital standards and design
4. Support schools and the workforce to maximise the use of HWB, a bilingual platform hosting a national collection of tools and resources to support education in Wales
5. Work with the adult learning partnership (North East Wales) to identify opportunities to improve digital literacy within communities
6. Provide ongoing professional development for Education and Youth Services to ensure that they are able to take full advantage of modern communication channels and emerging technology to communicate and work with young people
7. Create a cultural hub via NEWA (North East Wales Archives) improving accessibility and engagement with all sectors of the community

Governance Arrangements

The Digital Strategy Board is responsible for overseeing and ensuring the effective delivery of the Digital Strategy. It will provide a mechanism to monitor and evaluate progress and resolve any resource, capacity and prioritisation issues which could occur across the range of priorities and actions to be delivered.

- The Digital Strategy will be included in the Improvement Plan for the council and the Board will therefore be required to report on progress through the appropriate channels
- Any bids for resources to deliver actions which support the delivery of the Strategy need to be approved and ranked by the relevant Senior Management Team prior to the development of a business case for submission to the Board
- The Board will utilise a set of defined criteria for assessing and prioritizing business cases ensuring that these are aligned with the Council's Digital Strategy priorities and ambitions
- The Board are responsible for highlighting and securing organisational acceptance of the risks associated with each selected priority, ensuring that they are managed appropriately through identified mitigation

Delivery

- The Board is made up of a number of representatives to include all areas within the organization
- Each priority within the Digital Strategy is led by a Senior Manager who will sit on the Board in order to report progress against their particular priority
- Lead officers will be responsible for assisting in prioritizing work and will be supported by officers and partners with the appropriate knowledge and skills throughout the organization