1.   PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1   The purpose of the report is to set out proposed work programme actions to support the ongoing delivery of the Council's Digital Strategy 2020.

2.   RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1   It is recommended that Cabinet:

   i.   Supports efforts to increase online and self service opportunities and agrees to establish self service pilot projects within Libraries, Leisure Centres and One4all Centres.

   ii.   Agrees to the upgrade and enhancement of the Council's Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system.

   iii.   Agrees to undertake a procurement exercise to replace the existing contact centre telephony system.

   iv.   Supports the extension of digital skill building opportunities for example through Digital Fridays, Child Exploitation Online Protection (CEOP) work and support to Library Service Housebound service users.

   v.   Agrees to an accelerated implementation programme for Agile Working, building on the success of the pilot projects completed and in line with the requirements of the Council's Accommodation Strategy.

vi. Agrees to procure and implement a suite of productivity and collaboration tools to support the delivery of more effective and efficient service delivery.

vii. Agrees to the development of a Digital Support Plan for businesses in Rhondda Cynon Taf and receive further reports as appropriate on outcomes being delivered.

viii. Agrees to the development of a technology investment programme to ensure that core digital infrastructure remains robust and sustainable into the medium term.

ix. Agrees to receive a future report in relation to the business case and options for relocating the Council's Data Centre facility in response to agreed future plans for Extra Care delivery at the Bronwydd Site.

x. Agrees to a review of data management arrangements at the Council to ensure consistency and security of data use and to procure and pilot the use of data analytical tools to support improved business intelligence.

xi. Agrees to support the financial commitments set out in Table 1 (paragraph 9.2) of the report and the outcome from the agreed procurement exercises and fund these through available resources, with the caveat that a further report is required should any additional funding commitments be identified.

xii. Agrees to receive further reports on the progress of current actions to deliver the Council's Digital Strategy, as well as updates on further phases of work and digital transformation opportunities as they arise.

3. **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 The Council's Digital Strategy sets out a programme of work over the medium term to help meet the changing needs and aspirations of residents, learners, visitors and businesses. The Strategy also aims to enable the Council workplace to become more efficient and support the delivery of wider strategy objectives as set out in the Corporate Plan.

3.2 Following consideration of work completed to date and proposed future actions, a case for further investment has been identified to enable the Council to continue its programme of improvement in this area.

4.   BACKGROUND

4.1   To ensure the Council is well placed to take maximum advantage of a continually expanding digital world, Cabinet agreed the Council's Digital Strategy at its meeting on 22nd June 2017. The Strategy aims to deliver transformational change across the five strategic digital strands of resident, skills, workplace, visitor and business, and with the intended outcomes aligned to the Corporate Plan priorities and at an all Wales level, support the Welsh Government's "Delivering a Digital Wales" strategy.

4.2   The Digital Strategy ambition includes the statement:

"We want to achieve real gain for our residents, learners, visitors and businesses. Our vision is for Rhondda Cynon Taf Council to be a leader, an organisation who uses digital to help transform our communities. We believe that we can exploit digital opportunities to improve the quality of life for people within our County"

4.3   Demand for digital services and people's expectations of our services are ever increasing with our residents, workers, businesses & visitors expecting the same levels of access and availability that they receive from major private sector organisations.

4.4   In addition, in times of austerity and an increased demand for services, there will be a requirement to fundamentally challenge our current service delivery and implement new models of working to sustain services. The greater adoption of digital technology will be a key enabler to the delivery of our new working models and better place us to transform services to become a more efficient and effective organisation.

4.5   A range of work has been undertaken over the past 12 months to support the delivery of the Strategy and Section 5 of the report sets out some examples in more detail.

4.6   In parallel with the above work, a review was undertaken in 2017/18 to identify and recommend digital improvements to further support service transformation. The review engaged with key stakeholders across all areas of the Council to update the current digital position, business drivers and opportunities alongside an assessment of the existing ICT infrastructure.

4.7 The outcome of this review has been used to inform a proposed future programme of work in line with the Council's Digital Strategy and is set out in more detail in Section 6.

5. <u>ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE</u>

5.1 During the last financial year, the Council has made positive progress in implementing actions in line with its Digital Strategy and has put in place a number of building blocks to better position itself over the medium to long term. Examples of progress made to date are set out below.

5.2 *Digital Resident* – online services are being redesigned for ease of use, providing news, information and multiple transactions that are bilingual, easy to use and convenient on any device (24/7). The shift toward 'digital first' services has accelerated, enabled by an active Social Media presence with timely communications, multiple 'report/request/apply' features, and dedicated sites for Leisure and Tourist attractions that help generate income, including an 'App' for Leisure users to easily check/book/cancel classes etc. Take up is high and feedback is consistently positive in terms of the user experience.

5.3 *Digital Skills* – delivering support to our residents to develop and utilise digital skills as part of Digital Fridays. Weekly two hour sessions are being delivered from 13 venues across the County Borough helping with a range of activities from setting up and the use of email accounts and social media through to more specific areas such as assistance with online services, creating CVs and applying for jobs.

5.4 *Digital Workplace* - undertook pathfinder agile working projects within Public Health & Protection (PHP) and Adult Services.

- PHP has been agile working via Hot Desks since February 2017 and has delivered significant and tangible benefits including:

  - A 30% reduction of office utilisation equating to 136m2 of floor space vacated at Ty Elai, providing enough space for an additional 30 members of staff;
  - A reduction in the requirements of physical assets or furniture required by the service (19 desks & chairs, 95 cupboards, 37 filing cabinets, 9 tables all now released, 139 bags of confidential waste disposed of during one month);
  - Improvement in staff efficiency, quality & responsiveness; and
  - Positive feedback and satisfaction as part of a staff survey.

In addition, in May of this year, the Service implemented a digital transformation programme that will facilitate field working via a Mobile App. This will allow staff to capture inspection and assessment information digitally through a tablet device at the time of an inspection, eradicating the need for the same information to be manually collected on traditional paper forms and reducing administration. The mobile App may be further scaled and exploited within wider service areas of the Council.

- Adult Services agile working was implemented in January 2018 to allow for remote working. Key findings from the first 4-5 months of operation include:

  o Short Term Care Management - high volume of referrals during the period would normally see a waiting list established for less urgent cases; however, despite typical high volumes no waiting lists have been developed;
  o Adaptations and Community Equipment (ACE) have experienced a reduction in waiting lists;
  o Sensory Service Team - this is a very small skilled team and has experienced a level of staff absence; however the waiting lists have continued to be managed; and
  o During the period of inclement snow weather and alongside accurate forecasting, agile workers remained fully functional during the period effectively planning their workload to undertake their visits for the non-snow day and then completed all their assessments and case notes remotely at home on the snow days. The flow of work was continuous over this period with managers able to effectively monitor productivity which ensured that there was no backlog of work during this period.

5.5 *Digital Visitor* - improved our web presence to enable on-line bookings for attractions, making it easier for our visitors and residents to book an activity, for example, the Welsh Mining Experience.

5.6 *Digital Business* - worked with Welsh Government & BT to assist the delivery of Superfast Cymru to increase the availability of broadband connectivity to businesses (and residents) within the County Borough with Superfast coverage at 98.4% as of March 2018.

5.7 Underpinning the above work has seen investment in the digital infrastructure, that has included improved broadband capacity; implementation of a new modernised telephony system in libraries, theatres and leisure centres; installation of additional Wi-Fi in a number

of Council buildings; and investment through 21st Century Schools to transform the learning experience of pupils.

6. **PROPOSED WAY FORWARD**

6.1 Section 5 of the report sets out the positive progress made to date in supporting the delivery of the Council's Digital Strategy and also the review work undertaken in 2017/18 to identify and recommend further digital improvements.

6.2 The lessons learned over the past 12 months has reinforced the Council's current approach of targeting resources to implement specific packages of work and using 'pilots' or 'pathfinder' projects to determine whether further roll-out is the right thing to do in terms of service improvements, benefits and supporting the delivery of service efficiencies in line with the Council's budget strategy. Continuing with this approach, it is proposed to progress with a phased programme of delivery and investment. Phase 1 is set out below covering a 12 to 18 month period.

6.3 Members will note that as part of the proposed programme, certain packages of work will require investment as set out in Section 9, whilst others will be delivered within existing resources.

6.4 **Digital Resident -** Further enabling residents to 'self-serve' through digital channels will be key to success, thereby reducing manual processes and freeing up resource to support our more vulnerable customers. We need to build upon our high take up by continuing to improve the customer experience. This will include- :

- Ongoing website improvements for information and transactions;
- Exploiting mapping functions for ease of reporting and resolution on the ground e.g. dog fouling control zones;
- Enabling evidence upload and approval to use e.g. Photo for Bus Pass, income evidence for Council Tax Discounts, 'driver/vehicle' evidence for Taxi licensing etc.; and
- Putting the Citizen in control of
  - E-mail address/language/message preferences (SMS, Twitter Facebook etc.).
  - Consent to provide e.g. reminders for green waste day/or advice appointment, or promotional messages targeted to 'interest' e.g. Lido customer 'early bird' offer.

6.4.1 The Council's multi-channel Customer Access provision plays a critical role in today's resident experience and both Contact Centre and CRM systems require modernisation to meet the expectations of customers

for improved digital services particularly in areas such as on line services, social media, web chat, video and also to meet compliancy. This will also support future capabilities such as a single citizen identity and view of interactions.

6.4.2 The use of technology to support vulnerable clients is already well established for 'Lifeline/Telecare' services and the Council operates a critical response service to support such residents. As this 'assistive technology' is rapidly evolving it presents further opportunities for Social Care services in regard to reassurance and preventative solutions. This is another building block that will actively support our residents

6.5 **Digital Skills**: Ensuring that everyone has an appropriate level of digital competence will be a cornerstone of our plans. Practically this means that we must provide opportunities for our residents, workforce and learners to attain the right digital skills.

6.5.1 As part of our proposed productivity tools implementation we would develop an associated adoption programme to better skill our workforce and for our resident, provide a range of activities to continue Digital Fridays, support parents/carers focusing on Child Exploitation Online Protection (CEOP) and safeguarding young people and pilot the delivery of skills support to Library Service Housebound customers. Discussions are taking place with Education colleagues to identify the support needed to enhance the digital skills of teachers, in line with Welsh Government's Digital Competency Framework, and in doing so, further improve the learners experience in our schools.

6.6 **Digital Workplace**: In line with the Council's Accommodation Strategy implement agile working as a mainstream activity prioritising work to services at Ty Trevithick, completing Ty Elai following on from the pathfinder projects within Adult Services and PHP and then at Ty Bronwydd.

6.6.1 It is envisaged the agile working initiative will involve:

- Adoption of team zones, shared desk usage, hot desks and digital meeting facilities within the existing office space setting a minimum target of 30% desk/space reduction;

- Implementing "virtual" desktop technology to improve productivity through seamless logon from any location and / or the provision of mobile computing devices to allow for the ability to access business systems and data whilst roaming or "in the field";

- Review of service processes to identify opportunities to redesign digitally and consider areas such as automated workflow; and

- Reduce the need for paper through the use of online forms and digitising records or appropriately dispose of paper in line with General Data Protection Requirements (GDPR).

6.6.2 To further enable modern working practices there are clear opportunities to provide more joined-up solutions to our workforce, enabling easier collaboration, communication and ability to develop digital processes.

6.6.3 Currently there is no overarching single approach to digitally share, collaborate, provide mobility and communicate effectively across services/partners with a range of solutions used. A more holistic approach would assist productivity across the Council and also better enable wider initiatives such as agile working.

6.6.4 A consistent set of cloud based productivity and collaboration tools would allow for the creation of a modern workplace experience by:

- Online Email being consistently available across a range of platforms and providing improved continuity which can be accessed from within or outside of the Council;
- Cloud file storage and document management accessible from any location that is easily shared and collaborated upon within or outside of the organisation;
- Tools to more effectively communicate, consult and engage with staff;
- Provide instant messaging, presence & voice conferencing and / or video collaboration; and
- Ability to create online forms and digital workflows.

6.6.5 Delivery of agile working and the deployment of effective tools across council services will improve productivity and support the achievement of ongoing efficiency targets into the medium term.

6.7 **Digital Business:** We will continue with the work already initiated that is surveying business needs and opportunities that may exist to support them, and subject to the outcomes, develop and promote a digital support plan for our businesses.

6.8 **Digital Visitor** – In the digital age there are opportunities to improve visitors experience to our key attractions and to encourage tourism to the region. We will focus upon our key attractions such as the Welsh Mining Experience, National LIDO and Dare Valley County Park, and also our Walking Trails to assess how we may effectively use technology such as apps and virtual reality to achieve our objectives.

6.9 **Digital Infrastructure**: We need to further build upon recent investments and sustain our work in this area. Approximately 50% of this is nearing an end of life position. Developing an ongoing refreshment programme will ensure service delivery and enable transformation whilst mitigating compliance risk and minimising the likelihood of adverse impact to Council business.

6.9.1 The key areas of our core infrastructure to be refreshed during this first phase are:

- End of life server and storage;
- As an enabler for agile working and the adoption of cloud services, refresh our building networks and extend our WIFI provision at the Council's administrative sites; and
- Modernisation of our telephony systems.

6.9.2 Cabinet at its meeting on 28th September 2017 provisionally approved the Ty Bronwydd site for Extracare housing. Members will note that the Ty Bronwydd site hosts the Council's Data Centre and this is the critical component of our infrastructure and enables the delivery of all ICT systems. A number of potential options are being explored with regard to its relocation and proposals will come forward in due course.

6.10 **Data & Information**: To achieve our stated goals we need to transition away from multiple silos of business data and information and towards cleansed and consolidated integrated datasets that may be more easily analysed to create "business intelligence" driving decision making.

6.10.1 Currently there are a range of data management, reporting and analysis approaches predicated upon departmental business systems. There is an opportunity to benefit from a more holistic overarching data approach that would move us toward the objective of a single view of the customer by using technology to incorporate and integrate the Council's systems/data.

6.10.2 It is proposed to deliver this via an initial 3-step approach:

- Undertake a data review to understand the Council wide approach to the use of data, its reporting and analysis to demonstrate the case for change;
- Pilot the use of Business Intelligence and Data Analytical tools to prove the concept and benefits within a Service Area; and
- Subject to the outcome of the review, widen the coverage and use as part of future phases.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 In developing these proposals, an Equality Impact Assessment screening has been undertaken to ensure that:

- The Council meets the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duties, and

- Due regard has been taken of the likely impact of the decision in terms of equality and discrimination.

7.2 A full Equality Impact assessment is not required as this was considered as part of the overarching Digital Strategy agreed previously by the Cabinet.

8. CONSULTATION

8.1 There are no formal consultation requirements in relation to these proposals. However, at regular stages, feedback from service users and key stakeholders is essential to help shape the Digital Programme going forward.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

9.1 To deliver the actions described in Section 6 of the report, a combination of existing and possible future resource commitments will be necessary linked to the phased nature of the Digital Work Programme.

9.2 As part of the first phase of this work, known commitments have been summarised below in Table 1:

Table 1: Phase 1 Financial Commitments (where final costs known)

Strategy Theme	£M	Comments
Digital Resident	0.209	Including deployment of self service kiosks at One4all Centres and investment / upgrade of the CRM system
Digital Skills	0.062	Including deployment of self service kiosks at libraries and initiatives such as Digital Fridays
Digital Workplace	0.965	Hardware and infrastructure costs associated with the roll out of agile working, plus additional temporary staffing capacity to support the programme of work
Digital Infrastructure	0.650	Including ongoing requirements to maintain infrastructure reliability and maintain / upgrade storage capability
Total	**1.886**	

9.3   In addition to those items listed in Table 1, it will also be necessary to undertake a procurement exercise specifically in relation to the purchase and deployment of new productivity and business intelligence tools across the Council and the required upgrade to the contact centre telephony system.

9.4   Resources have already been identified and set aside to support our digital priority and aspirations in this regard. It is anticipated that sufficient resources are already in place to fund the commitments set out in table 1 plus the business tools and telephony system procurement processes. Clearly if this is not the case, specifically in relation to the outcomes of the recommended procurement exercises, then a further report will be presented to Cabinet.

9.5   Phase 1 of the Digital Work Programme covers a period over the next 12 to 18 months. Further phases of work have been identified as part of the initial review undertaken and details of these in terms of actions and funding requirements will be reported through to Members for approval in advance of any further work progressing.

9.6   The financial implications highlighted within this report represent one off funding requirements as opposed to base budget commitments. Any base budget considerations will be built into the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan at the appropriate time.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS _OR_ LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

10.1 There are no legal issues to highlight at this time. The procurement processes would be undertaken in the most efficient manner if Cabinet decide to progress the proposal.

11. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT.

11.1 The proposals are aligned to the Council's Corporate Plan commitment of providing more flexible services through use of the web and self service channels to support increased user satisfaction. The proposals also support the Well-being of Future Generations Act in the following ways:

- The well-being goals of: 'a Wales of cohesive communities' by enabling residents, businesses and visitors to be digitally connected and 'a prosperous Wales' through the efficient use of resources and the development of skills and a well educated population; and

- The sustainable development principles of 'involvement' in helping us shape digital services and support in line with what stakeholders require and 'prevention' through supporting vulnerable clients.

12. CONCLUSION

12.1 This report sets out a programme of actions that will support the ongoing transformation of Digital Services at Rhondda Cynon Taf. The actions will build on the positive work completed to date and help deliver the aspirations and outcomes stated in the Council's agreed Digital Strategy. In addition to improving services for customers, actions identified will also allow the Council to improve productivity and deliver efficiency savings into the medium term.

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