RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

17th OCTOBER 2019

THE DIGITAL WORK PROGRAMME - UPDATE

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND DIGITAL SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER (CLLR NORRIS)

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide an update on the Digital Work Programme which underpins the objectives stated in the Council's Digital Strategy 2020.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

2.1 Note the progress of the actions within the Digital Work Programme to deliver the Council's Digital Strategy 2020; and

2.2 Agrees to receive a future report that brings forward a new Digital Strategy for 2020 and beyond, as well as recommendations for further delivery actions as part of a next phase of the Digital Work Programme.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 To ensure that Cabinet Members are fully briefed on the progress to date against the delivery actions of the Digital Work Programme.

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; with its 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 Cabinet at its meeting on 21st June 2018, agreed a report that recommended an initial phase of the Digital Work Programme (link below) to support the ongoing delivery of the Council's Digital Strategy.
https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/CouncillorsCommitteesandMeetings/Meetings/Cabinet/2018/06/21/Reports/AgendaItem7DigitalStrategyWorkProgrammeRequirements.pdf

4.3 Overview & Scrutiny at its meeting on 5th February 2019, received and considered a report on the Digital Work Programme and acknowledged the adequacy of progress against the programme actions, alongside the governance arrangements that were in place.
https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/CouncillorsCommitteesandMeetings/Meetings/OverviewandScrutinyCommittee/2019/02/05/Reports/AgendaItem4DigitalWorkProgrammeReport.pdf

4.4 Cabinet at its meeting on 21st March 2019 agreed, as a key action within the Digital Work Programme, the relocation of the Council's Datacentre from Ty Bronwydd to Rhondda Fach Leisure Centre.
https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/CouncillorsCommitteesandMeetings/Meetings/Cabinet/2019/03/21/Reports/Item5DigitalStrategyWorkProgrammeDatacentreRelocation.pdf

5. UPDATE ON PROGRESS ON THE DIGITAL WORK PROGRAMME

5.1 Since the work programme was approved in June 2018, the Council has made positive progress in implementing the actions in line with its Digital Strategy and put a number of building blocks in place to better position itself over the medium to longer term.

The progress updates against these actions are detailed below in line with our Digital Strategy Themes.

5.2 **Digital Resident** – on-line services are being redesigned providing news, information and transactions that are bilingual, easy to use and convenient on any device (24/7). The shift toward digital services has accelerated, enabled by an active Social Media presence, timely communications, multiple 'report/request/apply' features, and dedicated customer websites.

The approach is to offer an on-line service for all. This helps to free up resources to meet the needs of more vulnerable customers. The same principle is applied to internal customers (staff) by promoting self-service opportunities via the Council's intranet 'Inform'.

Table 1 demonstrates customer demand and take up of on-line services in 2018/19

Corp Plan Objective	2018-19 Data
By 2020 the majority of customer interaction with the Council will be via the web and other self-service channels which will be quicker, bilingual and more flexible.	**Interactions: 87.8% via website vs other channels**
	Transactions: 464,878 on-line - 62% of total

5.2.1   During 2018/19 and into 2019/20 we have improved and increased on-line services through the Council's Website. Improvements include the introduction of High Street Rate Relief Applications, Sports Club Mapping Information, Planning Enforcement Requests, Waste 'sign-up' schemes and Leisure Calculator. Future on-line initiatives for this year include Nappy Scheme, Registrations, Empty Property Grant Applications, Taxi Licensing and Drainage applications.

5.2.2   Self-service (kiosk) opportunities are being developed and improved at public access points including the provision of a self 'check in' point for One4aLL appointments in Porth Plaza, a 'report it' kiosk in Canolfan Pennar. In 2018/19, the Council's payment kiosks took payments totalling over £1.3M via 13,868 transactions. These kiosks are being upgraded to enable contactless payments and receipt of the new style £20 notes. In addition, a new payment kiosk will be installed at the new Llys Cadwyn development to allow customers to make payments outside of One4aLL/Library opening hours.

5.2.3   A procurement exercise has recently been concluded and a supplier appointed for the replacement of the Council's Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, which plays a significant role in managing and improving the customer experience from initial contact through to service delivery. During 2019/20 and 2020/21 the new system will be implemented enabling the processing of high-volume requests and the ability to manage customer enquires requested through multiple channels in a seamless manner.

5.2.4   During Qtrs 3&4 2019/20 a review will be undertaken on options required to upgrade the existing contact centre telephony platform.

5.2.5 The Council has bid and been awarded funding from the Integrated Care Fund to further enable the deployment of digital Assistive Technology to support vulnerable clients and independent living.

The funding will allow an increase in equipment, expanded monitoring and response services from January 2020. This will support digital solutions to those clients who are in need of immediate assistance and help avoid crisis.

5.3 **Digital Skills** - work continues through a range of initiatives to support the improvement of digital skills. This includes:

5.3.1 Supporting schools in delivering digital requirements of the curriculum and competency framework, progressing the 21st Century schools programme of work and the Microsoft Imagine Academy to enable teacher and learner developments.

5.3.2 Continuing to support to our residents to develop and utilise digital skills as part of Digital Fridays. Weekly two-hour sessions are being delivered from venues across the County Borough, helping with a range of digital activities from setting up email accounts, use of social media to more specific areas such as assistance with on-line services.

5.3.3 Digital skills courses have also continued to be delivered by the Council's Adult Education Services that include Computers for Beginners, IPads & Tablet tutorials and pre-employment courses. During this year 48 courses have been run, with over 380 enrolments.

5.3.4 A pilot project involving the use of tablets with customers who use the @homelibraryservice is being finalised. The project will enable customers to download the books they require, when they need them rather than waiting for the monthly visit from the community librarian. The pilot is due to commence in December 2019 with a review to be undertaken, prior to any potential wider roll-out from March 2020.

5.3.5 Investment in new equipment and facilities to support the development of digital skills has also been made with the opening of the Hwb at Ferndale which includes a new training room, IT equipment and the development of a digital skills training room at Canolfan Pennar.

5.3.6 From a strategic perspective, the Welsh Government is initiating a Schools medium term transformation programme for improving the use of digital technology for teaching and learning in schools. It has also launched Digital 2030 - a framework for digital learning in the post-16 sector that covers further education, work-based and adult learning in Wales. Capital funding of £50m and £5m respectively has been allocated across Wales during 2019/20 for these initiatives which we will seek to maximise to the benefit of the County Borough.

5.4   ***Digital Workplace*** – our drive toward creating a new digital working environment to undertake day to day duties has continued aligned closely with the Council's accommodation strategy. Our workplace objectives have been focused around the delivery of agile working throughout the organisation and the digital tools required to enable this.

To ensure sufficient pace has been maintained, prioritisation has been given to mobilisation, whereby officers have been provisioned with devices such as laptops and tablets; this provides them with the ability to work from any location, support more efficient working practices and also ensures the timely realisation of accommodation efficiencies within the Council.

Following mobilisation, a secondary digitisation phase will be initiated designed to provide a clear emphasis in driving digital processes and improvements within the workplace. For example, through the use of digital forms, Apps and workflow to reduce the need for paper, re-keying and enable greater field working.

5.4.1   As part of Agile Working, key accommodation moves have been enabled and realised a desk reduction of circa 50% within Children's Services, 40% in Public Health & Protection and 30% in Education. A more recent approach of implementation on a site by site basis continues to meet at least a 30% reduction target.

There are now approximately 1,200 officers who are mobilised and able to work from a variety of locations as part of Agile Working. Work continues with project initiation at Ty Sardis, followed by Ty Glantaff (plus depots) and Clydach Vale. Implementations are targeted for completion by 31st March 2020.

5.4.2   To further support our Agile working agenda the Council is driving forward digital working 'in the field' through Mobile Apps and other initiatives.

To date, the Food Hygiene Service has been digitised to allow staff to capture information digitally through a tablet device whilst at a customer location, removing the need for the same information to be manually collected on traditional paper forms and reducing administration. Work is nearing completion (Qtr3 2019/20) to implement the solution more widely within Pollution, Trading Standards, Housing and other key areas in Public Health and Protection that will enable circa 100 staff.

Work is being finalised with Catering Services, to provide an App to enable officers to undertake kitchen assessments in all Schools. This will

digitise some existing manual processes and provide a more efficient system.   This is planned to be launched during October 2019.

A Mobile App is in the process of being developed with Social Care that enables service providers and service users to access disparate information on one collaborative digital platform. The Orb Mobile App allows key information to be digitally organised in conjunction with on-line services to support specific needs of users.

Opportunities within other service areas for example Highways, are being scoped for the use with field work Mobile Apps and will form part of an implementation plan that will be developed in Q4.

5.4.3   Microsoft Office 365 (O365) was procured in May 2019 as a suite of productivity & collaboration tools to assist services to further drive digital improvement in the workplace. The tools provide opportunities for cloud file storage, document sharing, instant messaging, resource planning, voice/video conferencing and the controlled ability to create digital forms, apps and workflows.

Between May and September 2019 a series of O365 pilots have been initiated across the Council to better understand the benefits and to learn lessons that will inform further service implementations. Over 230 staff have been part of the pilots that have included teams within Finance & Digital Services, Children's Services, Public Health & Protection, Human Resources and Public Relations/Communications.

Early feedback has been positive and demonstrated benefits of using O365 tools. Following greater assessment of this learning it is planned to commence Council wide adoption during Qtr 3 2019/20.

5.4.4   In addition there have been several other digital projects supported or delivered over the recent period, these include:

- Digital Meeting Room Improvements
- Text Help - Text to Speech functionality
- Hybrid Mail
- Intelligent Scanning
- Coroner System
- Client Finance System
- HR & Payroll System
- Wales Community Care Information System (WCCIS)

5.5   ***Digital Business*** – Following on from the completion and approval of Prosperity & Development's Business Engagement Strategy, an action plan has been formulated to improve the way our services engage with and support businesses; primarily through greater digitisation.

5.5.1   Work is underway to identify services and methods of engagement which can be fully digitised for the benefit of the Council and business user. In order to make progress on the consolidation and better use of business data to improve business support, staff are currently being provided with advanced training in Data Analytics to provide current and future opportunities to maximise the use of data.

5.5.2   We are piloting digital platforms consistently to share news on programmes, initiatives and new sources of funding, and continuing to support Superfast Business Wales in publicising events and workshops to improve businesses' digital skills. This also provides support to Cardiff University and Welsh Government in publicising their partnership Digital Maturity Strategy, which assesses the health of the Welsh digital-business landscape.

5.6   ***Infrastructure*** - Underpinning all the activity in the Digital Work Programme, the Council's digital infrastructure continues to be refreshed and improved. This will provide greater capability, resilience and capacity to enable a more sustainable platform for wider improvement.

5.6.1   The investment programme has enabled several infrastructure modernisation upgrades that include:

- Refresh and updates of 'End of life' servers and increase storage capacity to be completed October 2019.
- Integrated local Council systems to Cloud technology to allow for current and future transition.
- Firewalls installed (key enabler for use of Cloud technology e.g. O365).
- Council Desktop PCs and Laptops updated and refreshed to support workplace Digital Initiatives.
- New WiFi access points at key Council sites to provide greater capacity and resilience. A new simplified WiFi configuration for ease of access is being implemented during October & November 2019.
- Telephony Systems being modernised in line with Agile Working, Accommodation Strategy and 21st Century Schools.
- Broadband upgraded to a minimum of 100mb at all Schools.

5.6.2 Plans are now in place for the relocation of the Council's Datacentre, alongside ICT & Digital staff to Rhondda Fach Leisure Centre. This move will also support future plans for the Ty Bronwydd site.

The staff offices have been completed with a phased migration of staff commenced to coincide with the Datacentre facility move. To date approximately a third of all staff have relocated with all staff planned for movement by end of Qtr3.

Work has commenced on the new Datacentre, with the completed facility scheduled to be handed over to the Council in early November. Services are in the process of being engaged to agree the physical migration dates for business applications during November and December, with a target of all systems to be migrated to Rhondda Fach by the end of December 2019.

5.6.3 In April 2019 a delegated decision was made to implement free to use public access WiFi to designated town centres to enhance the experience for our residents and visitors. Following a collaborative procurement process (alongside CCTV provision) free to access WiFi is being implemented to seven town centres. The first two towns of Aberdare and Mountain Ash are being launched in October 2019. The remaining towns of Ferndale, Pontypridd, Porth, Tonypandy and Treorchy will be completed in Q3 2019/20.

5.7 *Information & Data* - Significant work has been undertaken with regards to safeguarding, securing, processing and managing Council information and data, specifically to ensure compliance with the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) that came into force in May 2018. Work continues to provide ongoing corporate assurance alongside a high level of improvement activity with our Schools.

5.7.1 A comprehensive review of organisational data management arrangements was undertaken between November 2018 and February 2019. One of the key recommendations from this review was to make better use and exploit our data, whereby we continue to evolve more towards a data-driven, decision-making organisation and realise the full potential of the data assets.

5.7.2 Following this recommendation, a pilot is being undertaken within Adult Services to understand how better data analytics and detailed customer insight could potentially improve future service provision. The work includes profiling certain spend within Social Care, overviews of client volumes and an analysis of residential care admissions. The pilot is due to be completed Qtr 3, with recommendations for any next steps to be made following this.

5.8 **Digital Strategy 2020 onward** - The current Digital Strategy sets out our direction to the 31st March 2020 however to ensure we continue the positive digital progress made to date, it is proposed that the Service Director for ICT & Digital, in conjunction with key officers, brings forward a proposed new strategy that sets out our ambitions and aspirations beyond 2020.

6 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

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

7 CONSULTATION

7.1 Consultation with key stakeholders with regard to the programme has been undertaken. Further engagement will be undertaken with stakeholders in the delivery of all the projects.

8 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

8.1 The programme of work is being delivered in line with the resources allocated. Close monitoring will continue to ensure the Council makes best use of the investment allocated to this area.

9 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS *OR* LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

9.1 There are no legal implications as a result of the recommendations set out in this report.

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

10.1 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.

11 <u>CONCLUSION</u>

11.1 This report sets out an update on the Digital Work Programme and demonstrates positive progress against its key actions that will support the ongoing transformation of Digital Services at Rhondda Cynon Taf.

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