



**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL  
MUNICIPAL YEAR 2018/19  
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**5th FEBRAURY 2019**

**UPDATE ON THE DIGITAL WORK PROGRAMME**

**REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR CORPORATE AND FRONTLINE  
SERVICES**

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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, its progress to date and the governance arrangements in place to support the ongoing delivery of the Council's Digital Strategy 2020.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 2.1 Consider the content of this report and determine the adequacy of progress against the work programme actions and the governance arrangements in place to support this.
- 2.2 Consider the requirement for further updates to Scrutiny.

**3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 The need to ensure that the Council is able to exploit the capabilities provided by digital and deliver improved services.

**4. BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 Overview and Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2018, considered a report in relation to the Digital Workplace, (link below) reviewing the progress made with the Council's Agile Working pathfinder projects and agreed the adequacy and appropriateness of the planned way forward.

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/CouncillorsCommitteesandMeetings/Meetings/OverviewandScrutinyCommittee/2018/01/22/Reports/AgendaItem6AgileWorkingOverviewScrutinyReportJan18.pdf>

- 4.2 Cabinet at its meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2018, agreed a report that recommended a Digital Work Programme (link below) to support the ongoing delivery of the Council's Digital Strategy 2020.

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/CouncillorsCommitteesandMeetings/Meetings/Cabinet/2018/06/21/Reports/AgendaItem7DigitalStrategyWorkProgrammeRequirements.pdf>

- 4.3 The Digital Work Programme actions are defined as a Phase 1 of projected multiple phases, with the first element covering a period from July 2018 to December 2019. Further phases of work are proposed to be identified and reported for approval in advance of any further work progressing.

## 5. **PROGRESS TO DATE**

- 5.1 During the last seven months, i.e. since the programme was approved in June 2018, the Council has made positive progress in implementing the Phase 1 actions in line with its Digital Strategy and put several building blocks in place to better position itself over the medium to longer term.

The progress updates against these actions have been grouped below in line with our Digital Strategy Themes.

- 5.2 **Digital Resident** – online services are being redesigned providing news, information and multiple transactions that are bilingual, easy to use and convenient on any device (24/7).

Over 105 separate online services have streamlined processes to ensure the customer's need is better allocated to the point of fulfilment efficiently.

The shift toward digital services has accelerated, enabled by an active Social Media presence, 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.

- 5.2.1 Use of the Council website has been increasing every year and stands at 2.3 million visits per annum; over 70% via a mobile device. Take up of on-line transactions has risen from 36% (2016/17) to 62% during 2018, website satisfaction is 86.7%; resolution 88.5%.

Improvements include:

- Waste and Recycling
  - Straightforward language e.g. waste allowance.
  - Find My collection day by postcode (all collections)

- Recycling look up' of "what can I recycle" with hundreds of items and a 'request to add'.
- Cross-promotions e.g. book a bulky/find Community Recycling Centre.
- In June 2018, 2,247 requests were received to join food and nappy recycling schemes of which 73% online.
- New services with ability to upload evidence to speed up decision e.g.
  - Over 60s Bus Pass December 2018 launch resulted in 50 applications without the need to make an appointment.
  - Free 30-hour childcare service designed on line as the policy was implemented, including an eligibility checker to inform applicants early on whether or not they should proceed to make the application.
  - Taxi Drivers can apply, pay and book an appointment for knowledge test.
  - On-line appointments to register a Birth.
- Improved Nos Galan Website – Route, Runner Allocation based on run times.
- Self-service is promoted through the contact centre e.g.
  - Providing web link to Students for Council Tax Exemption with 67% take up.
  - Providing web link via text to customers waiting in queue for Housing Benefit claim and reduced paper chain

5.2.2 Demand for on line services reflects changing customer behaviour, for example:-

- 83% of Welsh residents connect to the internet away from home. National Survey Wales. (NSW).
- 73% of Welsh residents make purchases online (NSW)
- 87.1% of RCT households have broadband (Mosaic)
- 71.8% of RCT residents used/accessed a smartphone (Mosaic)
- 69.9% of RCT residents use online banking (Mosaic)
- 68% of RCT residents surf the internet every day. (Mosaic)

5.2.3 The strategy also ensures alternative access continues through advisor services at the contact centre and One4aLL centres. As on line services and social media help contain the demand on advisors e.g. after Bank Holiday periods resources are 'freed up' to support more vulnerable customer's e.g. Blue Badge applicants.

Digital tools are also being deployed in these areas. e.g:-

- In One4aLL settings, payment kiosks have been well used for several years alongside web and touchtone payments, with 87% of payments processed via Customer Care being self-served.

- At Porth Plaza, a recent pilot self-check-in for customer appointments saw 80% of attendees using the device.
- Two new mobile library vehicles have on-board Wi-Fi provision to facilitate the use of digital technology in the community.

5.3 **Digital Skills** Work continues through a range of initiatives to support the improvement of digital skills. This includes supporting Schools in delivering the digital requirements of the curriculum and competency framework, progressing the 21<sup>st</sup> Century schools programme of work and implemented the Microsoft Imagine Academy to enable teacher and pupil developments.

5.3.1 Support to our residents continues to be provisioned to develop and utilise digital skills as part of Digital Fridays. Weekly two-hour sessions are being delivered from 14 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 online services. There have also been key events run focusing on learning from Universal credit.

5.3.2 An outline project brief is being developed with regards to Child Exploitation Online Protection (CEOP) to deliver a programme to a range of venues across the County Borough to better raise awareness and support our parents/children about keeping safe online.

5.3.3 Aligned to item 5.2.3 work has been undertaken to better support citizens that are housebound as part of the Library mobile services whereby tablet devices and support are taken directly into the community.

5.3.4 Early work is in progress between ICT and Human Resources to provide a clear plan to ensure that the Councils workforce and its elected members are effectively skilled to maximise the adoption and exploitation of new technology and digital productivity tools such as Office 365.

5.4 **Digital Workplace** – clearly aligned to the Council’s accommodation strategy the focus for workplace has centred on the delivery of Agile Working.

5.4.1 Progress includes.

- Implementation at Ty Trevithick to Children’s Services and Education. Estates are in the process of being scoped and planned to be completed in April. This work has enabled the key accommodation moves during 2018/19 and realised an accommodation reduction of approximately 50% within Children’s Services and 30% in Education.
- Financial Services and ICT based at Bronwydd has been initiated as part of engagement and scoping exercises.
- There are currently approximately 500 officers who are now working agile within the Council.

- 5.4.2 To assist services to further drive improvements in the workplace, the Council is deploying the Office365 productivity tool suite, initially as an extended pilot from March to June and subject to its learning, Council wide implementation from Qtr2 2019/20. These cloud based productivity and collaboration tools will further support our direction toward a digital workplace. The tools will provide improvements to file storage, document sharing, instant messaging, voice & video conferencing and the ability to create digital forms, apps and workflows.
- 5.4.3 A field working mobile App has been implemented within Public Health & Protection that allows 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. Following the successful pilot for the Food Hygiene team, the mobile App will be further considered as an opportunity to be scaled and exploited within wider service areas of the Council.
- 5.4.4 Work continues to extend the use of ModernGov to further adopt a more modern digital approach to all Committees of the Council. It is anticipated that by the Council's 2019 Annual General Meeting, the Council will make available a ModernGov approach for all Members.
- 5.4.5 The Council's Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system plays a significant role in managing and improving the customer's experience now and in the future, from the initial contact through to service delivery. Procurement of a new CRM is progressing well, a specification of requirements has been brought together using national case studies, and experience from other Councils' as well as engagement with suppliers.

Subject to the outcome of the procurement and implementation to replace and improve customer care processes, opportunities can be explored to identify other systems that may be able to be replaced by the CRM over the mid-term to consolidate overall systems across the Council and associated costs.

- 5.4.6 The Council has informed a technical specification for a Wales Contact Centre Systems Procurement Framework with an option for Rhondda Cynon Taf, along with any of the other 21 Councils in Wales to opt into that route.

As that progresses and costs become clear, the option to replace systems via that framework will be considered along with options to upgrade existing systems.

- 5.4.7 A Digital Improvement Office (DIO) has been established within the ICT department to provide the capacity and skills to actively engage with service areas across the Council to identify, understand and support the implementation of digital transformation opportunities.

Supporting all service areas across the Council, alongside elected members the team will focus on 3 key areas:

- Defining & Designing Digital Service Transformation Opportunities/Sharing Good Practice
- Centralised Programme & Project Management (Delivery & Implementation)
- Service Adoption/Improving Digital Skills, Change Management & Benefits Realisation.

5.5 **Digital Business** – A data consolidation and matching exercise has been undertaken to establish a single record of local businesses. This has then informed a baseline survey with local businesses to understand their current digital usage, including social media presence, e-commerce, access to broadband, etc.

This information will help inform future planning and the development of a business support plan.

5.6 **Infrastructure** - Underpinning all the above activity in Phase 1, the infrastructure theme has seen investment in the Council's digital infrastructure, which has included improved capacity; modernised systems and created a more sustainable platform that enables wider improvement.

5.6.1 In order to drive our digital improvements it is critical that our underlying infrastructure is robust, refreshed and improved. Progress includes:

- End of life server and storage implemented & migration in progress;
- Integrated Council systems to the Cloud to allow for future transition.
- Firewalls installed (key enabler for used of Cloud technology e.g. O365).
- Council Desktops updated to use Office 2016 as latest Microsoft version of Word, Excel, Powerpoint, Outlook).
- WiFi at key Council locations modernised for greater performance. Programme now in place to extend WiFi signal more widely within buildings by end March 2019.
- Telephony Systems being modernised in line with Agile Working, Accommodation Strategy and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools.
- Broadband upgraded to a minimum of 100mb at all Schools.
- Relocation of the Council's Data Centre from Bronwydd. An options appraisal is in the process of being finalised for recommendation to the Digital Leadership Group (DLG) & Senior Leadership Team (SLT) in February 2019.

5.7 **Information & Data** - Significant improvements have been undertaken with regards to safeguarding, securing, processing and managing Council information and data. Specifically to be compliant with the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) that came into force in May 2018.

5.7.1 There is a clear direction for the Council to make better use and exploit our data, whereby we continue to evolve more toward a data-driven, decision-making organisation and realise the full potential of the data assets we have. To achieve this goal we need to make further improvements to connecting multiple silos of data that are better cleansed and become consolidated datasets that maybe more easily analysed to create “business intelligence.”

5.7.2 A comprehensive review of organisational data management arrangements is nearing completion with the outcome findings and recommendations planned to be presented to the DLG in February 2019.

The key areas for improvement are likely to be:-

- Developing a roadmap for improvement and clear vision to maximise our data.
- Standards for Council adoption to support Master Data Management and single integrated views of our businesses, places, citizens and customers.
- Identify opportunities to better use our resources to remove duplication and focus more on data analysis

5.7.3 As part of the review over 80 staff were engaged and interviewed (121 and team sessions) that perform data capture, reporting or analytics duties to understand what is currently undertaken within their services. A number of strategic sessions were also undertaken with Directors and Heads of Service to understand service needs and information requirements.

## **6. GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS**

6.1 As part of Cabinet approval to the Councils Digital Strategy 2020, it was agreed to establish a Digital Leadership Group (DLG) to champion, challenge, monitor and ensure the delivery of the Strategy. The group membership consists of key officers from a range of services that provide senior Council wide representation.

6.2 The specific themes of Business, Resident, Skills, Visitor, Workplace, Data/Information Management & Infrastructure stated within the Council’s Digital Strategy are owned by a lead officer who oversees the delivery of respective actions. Project highlight reports are provided quarterly by each officer to the DLG for appraisal, challenge and discuss support or required action. Programme actions also form part of local Service Delivery Plans which are part of the Council’s performance management and reporting arrangements.

6.3 Reports and updates are further provided to Elected Members to allow for awareness, challenge, scrutiny and assurance. A variety of Digital reports have been reported to Cabinet, Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Audit and Democratic Services.

- 6.4 The DLG ensures alignment and effective communication with wider key stakeholder groups. For example the DLG Chair is also the Chair for the Councils Information Management Board and a substantive member of the Council's Senior Leadership Team. The Head of ICT represents the Council at the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal Digital Group and SOCITM (Society of ICT Managers) Cymru, which assists to inform Regional and National direction.
- 6.5 The DLG provides proactive communication Council wide to raise further awareness and encourage further engagement, most recently launching a new Digital Bulletin "Innovate RCT" which will be produced on a quarterly basis.

## **7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 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 this progress update and is for information purposes only.

## **9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

- 9.1 The Cabinet meeting of the 21<sup>st</sup> June 2018 approved a programme of work and associated investment (amounting to £1.886M) to support further digital improvements in line with the Council's Digital Strategy.

- 9.2 As part of the governance arrangements set out in Section 6, the financial updates reported to the Digital Leadership Group are demonstrating that 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

## **10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

- 10.1 There are no legal issues to highlight at this time.

**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 an update on the Digital work programme and its key actions that will support the ongoing transformation of Digital Services at Rhondda Cynon Taf, as well as the Council's supporting governance arrangements. The progress to date builds on the positive work completed to deliver the aspirations and planned outcomes stated in the Digital Strategy.

