![Telford & Wrekin Co-operative Council logo] **Protect, care and invest to create a better borough**

Borough of Telford and Wrekin

Cabinet

Thursday 7 November 2024

Telford & Wrekin Digital Strategy 2024

Cabinet Member:	Cllr Zona Hannington - Cabinet Member: Finance, Governance & Customer Services
Lead Director:	Michelle Brockway - Interim Director: Finance, HR & IDT
Service Area:	Finance, HR & IDT
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Wards Affected:	All Wards
Key Decision:	Key Decision
Forward Plan:	Yes - 9 August 2024
Report considered by:	SMT – 24 September 2024
	Business Briefing – 3 October 2024
	Cabinet – 7 November 2024

1.0   Recommendations for decision/noting:

1.1   That Cabinet approves the new Digital Strategy attached at Appendix A.

2.0   Purpose of Report

2.1   The purpose of this report is to seek approval for a new Digital Strategy (see Appendix A) from 2024 - 2027.

3.0   Background

3.1   Our customers who are made up of residents and stakeholders in the Borough, are at the heart of everything we do, and we want to make sure that we maximise the potential of digital technology in how we communicate and interact with our residents, customers and partner organisations through providing the right digital environment within communities.

3.2   Our vision is to create a better borough through digital innovation, providing seamless connectivity for all and encouraging more take-up of information and services online.

3.3   The strategy highlights the initial actions planned, our progress made since the last Digital Strategy 2021 to 2023 and to deliver our aims through to the end of 2026/27. This will be reviewed annually, with progress being reported to members.

3.4   The strategy is set into 5 theme areas:
- Digital Customers
- Digital Care and Support
- Digital Economy and Skills
- Digital Place
- Digital Council

3.5   Outlined below are key accomplishments from the previous Digital Strategy

- Launch of new Leisure website and Leisure System with improved self-service options and enhanced information.

- Launched a new digital assistant "Ask-Tom" which is available 24/7 to respond to the most frequently asked customer questions. Over 13,000 enquires were resolved by the assistant in the last year with a >99% customer satisfaction rate. 32% of these enquires are managed outside of our normal opening hours.

- Increased the number of services that can be accessed through webchat (AskTom?) and moved this to a more prominent home-page location, which has led to a 40% increase in customers using this service.

- Implemented a series of improvements to the customer experience of using the MyTelford portal, including the inclusion of a customer survey in the closure email sent to each customer.

- Creation of a custom system for travel assistance and transport requests.

- Our Virtual House is now complete and fully accessible via Live Well Telford: Virtual House tour - Virtual House tour - Telford & Wrekin Council. Residents can take an interactive tour of the house to see examples of assistive technology and sensory aids and equipment that help with daily activities around the home.

- Created the Independent Living Centre (ILC) - Technology showcase 'try before you buy' partnership with voluntary sector, health and social care

partners and people with lived experience of care and support needs, working together to help residents to help themselves to live more independently, using technology enabled care.

- Implemented an App to aid Mental Health professionals and booking Doctors (in partnership with ICB).

- Implemented One Health and Care - a confidential digital shared Health and Social Care record which collates information from different organisations within Health and Social Care.

- In late 2023, infrared technology to detect falls and track the habits and behaviours of residents was introduced as a pilot. This technology can also identify changes in activity that could affect the health and wellbeing of residents and prevent them from getting worse.

- On line referral into Family Connect safeguarding for professional partners to streamline and speed up the referral process.

- Care Providers portal introduced, linking to our adult social care case and financial management system to reconcile and pay for care delivered.

- Through working with a range of partners, including Age UK, Stay, Hub on the Hill, CVS and PODS. A new digital directory of Live Well Telford https://livewell.telford.gov.uk/ has been created, providing a one-stop shop to help people get online e.g. how to access PCs, free Wi-Fi, training etc. In addition, 64 devices have been provided to a range of partners to support local groups/projects, including homework clubs, wellbeing cafes and tea and tech training sessions.

- Supported over 100 young people with a device via the Leader and Cabinet Young Person Grant scheme.

- Through of face-to-face Digital Inclusion sessions, we have supported 120 people, of which 77% are 65 and over. This helps them to gain confidence to get online, use the internet, online banking and the NHS App, achieving a 97% very satisfied response.(see Appendix B)

- Learn Telford has provided a weekly Job Junction from Wellington Library for advice around employability skills, careers or learning advice, enabling use of the IT equipment in a supported environment.

- A pilot project has been delivered with Teldoc Primary Care Network to support patients to download and use the NHS app.

- Collaboration between businesses is being encouraged through 'Hello Telford', a free B2B tool providing a one-stop shop digital platform which

gives businesses the chance to collaborate and to buy and sell from each other, whilst reducing their carbon footprint.

- In 2023, the Council rebranded its inward investment and business support service as Invest Telford. A new website (www.investtelford.co.uk) effectively promotes the town's strengths and opportunities with case studies from local success stories.

- The new council fund called Innovate Telford offered a unique opportunity for over 100 Telford businesses to benefit from funding to help them transform over the course of 6 months.

- High quality digital infrastructure is being delivered thanks to the partnership between Telford & Wrekin Council and Virgin Media O2 Business. Not only boosting digital inclusion and job opportunities in the borough, but this investment will also facilitate providing high-speed connectivity to both urban and rural areas of the borough; along with providing the infrastructure for further connectivity improvements such as the facilitating delivery of 5G.

- We are piloting a connectivity solution called LoraWAN which is excellent at transmitting sensor data over long ranges and our first pilot is using Gully Sensors in high-risk areas of road flooding.

- Worked with the Housing Investment Programme and Nuplace to ensure our new build housing is part of our digitally connected Borough.

- Telford's many and varied attractions are being promoted through the recently launched Visit Telford website (www.visittelford.co.uk).

- Cyber Security has been at the forefront of our service delivery and design. We have implemented a new Third-Generation Security Firewall: Our upgraded security firewall ensures robust protection against cyber threats. Implemented Zivver's Secure Digital Communications Platform: This platform prevents communication-related data leaks, boosts productivity, and ensures compliance with data privacy regulations.

- We have consistently delivered excellent digital services, ensuring reliable access to systems and information. Our average service uptime was 99.92% in 2021 and remained high at 99.88% in both 2022 and 2023.

- The Council's commitment to evidence-based decision making has seen many improvements in the use of data for many Council services, such as significant increases in the use of Power BI for interactive reports and dashboards, as well as increases in data modelled and processes automated for more efficient reporting.

4.0   Summary of main proposals

4.1   The Digital Strategy has a focus on the following aims:

4.2   We acknowledge that navigating the digital landscape can be challenging. Therefore, we are dedicated to ensuring that those without access or digital skills are not left behind and ensuring that some non-digital channels will be left open for those that need them. We are committed to the broad options of channels to communicate with the council and providing our customers with choice.

4.3   Delivering a consistent, easy to use and reliable customer experience across all sections of the organisation, no matter which contact or communication channel our customers choose to use.

4.4   We continue to make our digital services user-friendly and accessible, through encouraging those customers who can interact with the council online to do so, it helps us to allocate more resource to improve the services for those customers who need to reach us using conventional contact methods.

4.5   Creating and supporting a digitally skilled and confident community, who are able to access services and opportunities online, including jobs of the future.

4.6   Giving people the right digital access so they can do more for themselves, encouraging inclusion, and promoting accessibility.

4.7   Working with our partners, using digital technology, to empower and enable people to fulfil their potential, be actively involved in their communities, stay safe and live healthy independent lives for longer.

4.8   Supporting growth of the digital/tech sector and increasing digital skills and the use of technology to improve productivity and growth in businesses borough wide.

4.9   To enhance Gigabit and 5G connectivity for residents and businesses in Telford and Wrekin. Closely monitoring this progress and maintaining our partnership with National Government Schemes, including Building Digital UK, to improve high speed connectivity in remote rural areas of Telford and ensuring full urban connectivity

4.10   Continue to create Telford Connected – creating a better borough through digital innovation by improving the way that services are delivered through the deployment of smart technology.

4.11 Providing, enabling and encouraging the council, partners, and customers with secure, reliable, resilient IT infrastructure whilst reducing our own carbon footprint.

4.12 Fostering a culture of digital leadership, innovation and ongoing service improvement whilst enabling our workforce to have the skills and abilities to deliver our priorities and to have the opportunity to further develop.

5.0 **Alternative Options**

5.1 Not having a Digital Strategy.

6.0 **Key Risks**

6.1 The risks and opportunities relating to the Digital Strategy are outlined within this report.

7.0 **Council Priorities**

7.1 The proposed Digital Strategy supports all Council priorities, and in particular a community- focussed, innovative Council providing efficient, effective and quality services.

Key Outcome:
To create a better borough through digital innovation, providing seamless connectivity for all and encouraging more take-up of information and services online.

8.0 **Financial Implications**

8.1 There is currently an approved capital budget to support the Digital strategy of £13,979M for the period 24/25 to 27/28.

9.0 **Legal and HR Implications**

9.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. Legal Advice will be provided on an ongoing basis.

10.0 **Ward Implications**

10.1 These are detailed within the strategy.

11.0 **Health, Social and Economic Implications**

11.1 These are detailed within the strategy.

12.0 **Equality and Diversity Implications**

12.1   These are detailed within the strategy.

13.0   Climate Change and Environmental Implications

13.1   These are detailed within the strategy.

14.0   Background Papers

    1   None

15.0   Appendices

    A   Digital Strategy 2024 – 2027
    B   T&W Digital Support Leaflet June 2024

16.0   Report Sign Off

Signed off by	Date sent	Date signed off	Initials
Legal	10/09/2024	17/10/2024	EH
Finance	30/10/2024	30/10/2024	DR