

To: Leadership Board

On: 14 September 2016

Report by: Chief Executive

Heading: Digital Renfrewshire Strategy

1. Summary

- 1.1 This Digital Strategy “Digital Renfrewshire” sets out a vision and approach to tackling digital exclusion in Renfrewshire and ensuring that all of our citizens and businesses can benefit from the rapidly changing digital environment. It follows on from the Digital Participation Plan which is an important component of the Council’s Tackling Poverty programme. The Digital Participation Plan identified the need for an overarching Digital Strategy that would co-ordinate existing and future digital initiatives so they have the maximum impact on digital participation across Renfrewshire.
 - 1.2 The Digital Strategy seeks to raise awareness of the growing digital divide and seeks to address this through a cross cutting action plan which will be refreshed on an annual basis in response to changing needs and emerging digital developments. The Strategy includes detail on governance, consultation and the mechanisms for measuring success.
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2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that members:
 - note the evidence of digital exclusion in Renfrewshire and the need for a Digital Strategy which puts Digital Participation at the centre, and
 - approve the content of the Digital Strategy set out in Appendix A

3. Background

- 3.1 This Digital Strategy: Digital Renfrewshire sets out a vision and approach to tackling digital exclusion in Renfrewshire. It is supported by an action plan that will be refreshed on an annual basis to reflect the fast- growing digital society we find ourselves in. The Digital Strategy has been developed in response to The Tackling Poverty Strategy and The Renfrewshire Digital Participation Plan (2016). The Digital Participation Plan recommended the need for an overarching Digital Strategy to coordinate existing and future activities, share resources and work in partnership towards a shared vision.
- 3.2 Digital participation describes people's ability to gain access to digital technology, and understand how to get the best out of it. Increased digital participation can improve people's quality of life, save them money, boost economic growth and allow many public services to be delivered more cheaply and responsively.
- 3.3 The vision set out in the Strategy is that *'In a Digital Renfrewshire we will make sure everybody has the opportunity to reach their digital potential and maximise the wider economic, educational, health, social and cultural benefits for all'*.
- 3.4 The strategy seeks to raise awareness of the growing digital divide in our society. There is evidence that Renfrewshire has a high likelihood of digital exclusion¹. Digital exclusion, also referred to as 'Digital Poverty', often goes unseen by those unaffected by it and the true impacts are rarely reported on. Those most likely to be digitally excluded are already facing social inequality with those in lower socio-economic groups, retired, unemployed, in poor health and less educationally qualified at greatest risk.
- 3.5 Increasingly, access to the internet is being referred to as the fourth utility on a par with gas, electricity and water, but we recognise that in Renfrewshire many people do not have such universal access to the internet. Our Digital Strategy therefore seeks to target our efforts to support those most at risk of digital exclusion. We believe if we get it right for those who face the most barriers to digital we will get it right for everyone else. We want to ensure those who would like to use digital are enabled where possible, and individual choice not to use digital continues to be supported.
- 3.6 Tackling digital exclusion is a complex challenge and cannot and should not be met by any one organisation or service. In a time of severe public sector financial constraints, sharing resources, expertise and coordinating efforts is essential. Developing strong relationships with partners has been key to the development of the strategy and this will be further strengthened through its implementation.

¹ GoOnUK Digital Exclusion Heatmap

<https://doteveryone.org.uk/resources/heatmap/>

- 3.7 Building on the consultation outcomes and research findings from the Renfrewshire Digital Participation Plan, the strategy has been developed in partnership with a wide range of public, private and third-sector organisations and council services. The Digital Participation Group has facilitated on-going consultation which has resulted in a shared vision and agreed priorities which have been broad together into 4 key workstreams;
1. **Digital Participation** - Tackle digital exclusion by removing the barriers to digital participation and increasing promoting and increasing access to existing digital support services and coordinating efforts across Renfrewshire.
 2. **Connectivity** - Enable digital participation through provision of a robust digital infrastructure which makes it as easy as possible to access the internet wherever you are. This includes the Council's £1m investment to expand the existing free public Wi-Fi provision to a wider range of public buildings and across the town centres in Paisley, Johnstone and Renfrew.
 3. **Digital Public Services** - Become an efficient, effective and sustainable Council by developing easy to use Digital Public Services available 24/7. This includes the Council's existing Customer Access Project which is rolling out a range of new digital services for Council Tax, Housing and other high volume transactional services.
 4. **Economy** – supporting economic growth within Renfrewshire's economy through increased use of digital technology by local business and tackling the growing digital skills gap through educational and training initiatives.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – The initiatives set out in the strategy will be taken forward from within existing budgets. Efforts will be made with partners to identify external funding opportunities and leverage additional resources to support the shared objectives.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – None however the need to increase the digital skills of our workforce will be reflected in the development and delivery of a Human Resources and Organisational Development Workforce Strategy.
3. **Community Planning** – The plan was developed in partnership with Community Planning Partners. The Digital Strategy will contribute to meeting some key of the performance measures within the Community Plan.
4. **Legal** – none

5. **Property/Assets** – The implementation of the Public Wifi outdoor coverage areas is likely to involve the use of Council assets such as CCTV, Street Light and Traffic light columns.
6. **Information Technology** – The council is investing £1million in a free public Wi-Fi project to increase access to the internet. However future investment in infrastructure is envisaged. The Digital Strategy has proposed the need to review and respond to the connectivity needs of public access points and learning centres. In terms of council infrastructure the development of a refreshed ICT strategy will include plans to develop and improve council workforce connectivity.
7. **Equality & Human Rights** - The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. The Digital Strategy aims to challenge and reduce social inequality. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.
8. **Health & Safety** – The Digital Strategy recommends the needs for increased basic digital skills of its workforce and citizens. Internet safety underpins the definition of basic digital skills.
9. **Procurement** – Any procurement activity associated with the implementation of the strategy will be taken forward in accordance with the Council's standing orders and procurement policies.
10. **Risk** – The Council and its partners are committed to reducing social inequality by increasing digital participation through a coordinated approach as detailed in the Digital Strategy. If the Council and partners do not effectively tackle the causes and impacts of digital exclusion, there is a risk that the digital divide will increase within Renfrewshire.
11. **Privacy Impact** – Privacy impact assessments will be undertaken for all appropriate initiatives in the Digital Strategy and a robust approach to information security and data protection is a key underlying principle.

List of Background Papers

Renfrewshire Council Digital Strategy: Digital Renfrewshire (Appendix A)

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Renfrewshire Council Digital Strategy 2016-2019

“Digital Renfrewshire”

*‘In a Digital Renfrewshire we will make sure everybody has the **opportunity** to reach their **digital potential** and maximise the wider economic, educational, health, social and cultural benefits for all’.*



*Betty, a housebound pensioner due to a fall, trying out a virtual reality film of New York “**Wow, it’s exciting, so real, it’s almost like being there. It would be great to take people round galleries or parks.**” Roar: Connections for Life*

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Executive Summary

This Digital Strategy: Digital Renfrewshire sets out a vision and approach to tackling digital exclusion in Renfrewshire. It is supported by an action plan that will be refreshed on an annual basis to reflect the fast-changing digital world we find ourselves in. The Digital Strategy has been developed in response to The Tackling Poverty Strategy and The Renfrewshire Digital Participation Plan (2016). The Digital Participation Plan recommended the need for an overarching Digital Strategy to coordinate existing activities, share resources and work in partnership towards a shared vision.

The challenge

This strategy seeks to raise awareness of the growing digital divide in society. There is evidence Renfrewshire has a high likelihood of digital exclusion¹. Digital exclusion - also referred to as 'Digital Poverty' - often goes unseen by those unaffected by it and the true impacts are rarely reported on. Those most likely to be digitally excluded are already facing social inequality, with those in lower socio-economic groups, retired, unemployed, in poor health and less educationally - qualified at greatest risk

Our approach

Some in society think of the internet as the fourth utility on a par with gas, electricity and water. We must consider what this means in terms of provision. While we want to maximise the benefits of digital services we need to consider how these are delivered. We are not in a position to gift universal digital access, but we need to prioritise access for those who are digitally excluded where this is the chosen method of access.

Our priorities

The challenge is as complex as digital is cross cutting but through consultation with partners it has been agreed that digital participation is at the core and the key supporting areas of work have been prioritised into 4 workstreams;

1. Tackle digital exclusion by removing the barriers to **Digital Participation**
2. Enable digital participation through provision of a strong digital infrastructure of **Connectivity**
3. Becoming an efficient, effective and sustainable council by developing our **Digital Public Services**
4. Grow Renfrewshire's **Economy** by maximising the use of digital technology and tackling the growing digital skill gap

A call to action

This Digital Strategy is a call to action to work in partnership to build coordinate efforts, share our resources, knowledge and energy to achieve a shared vision. We want this to be a Digital Strategy by and for Renfrewshire. We are all responsible for closing the digital divide. In the words of Tim Berners-Lee, the inventor of the internet²;

"This is for everyone".

¹ GoOnUK Digital Exclusion Heatmap

² Tim Berners-Lee London, Olympics Opening Ceremony, 2012

<https://doteveryone.org.uk/resources/heatmap/>

https://mobile.twitter.com/timberners_lee/status/228960085672599552

Digital Renfrewshire: The Challenge

The Fourth Utility

We live in a world where technology growth has exploded. Having access to the internet is an essential component of 21st-century life and is often referred to as the 'fourth utility'. One example that crystalizes this societal shift is the recent reporting of the most common question asked by Syrian refugees on arrival in Europe "Do you have Wi-Fi?" In 2015 the UN Human Rights Council argued internet access was a human right. For many of us it is hard to imagine what it is like to be digitally excluded apart from that temporary moment of panic when we lose our signal or our power runs out. This strategy seeks to raise awareness of this shift and the growing digital divide.

The Digital Divide

Life is immeasurably enhanced for those who have the access, motivation and skills to get things done online. The internet is vital for accessing products and services, gaining self-sufficiency, keeping in touch with friends, reducing isolation, attainment and learning, saving money, finding work and staying healthy. For some people it's been a genuine life-saver. However a fifth of UK households do not have even **basic internet services** in their home. This rises to more than a third of households in the lowest socioeconomic groups and two thirds of households with occupants aged over 75 years³. This is incongruent to the rise in digital health. But still far too many people risk being left behind.

"A lack of internet access will increasingly come to represent both a symptom and a cause of Poverty"⁴(Carnegie UK Trust, 2014)

A Digital Skills Crisis

The challenge is complex and simply having access to the internet isn't enough. Searching, completing online forms, transacting, communicating, responsible use and staying safe are now vital basic digital life skills. The UK is facing a digital skills crisis. Up to 800,000 adults in Scotland, or one in five, still lack the basic digital skills to get things done online⁵. In the UK an estimated 5.8 million people have never used the internet at all, of which 27% are disabled adults.

"It is estimated 26,000 adults in Renfrewshire don't have basic digital skills".

This digital skills gap is costing the UK economy an estimated £63 billion a year in lost additional GDP. Significantly, half of all charities and a quarter of SMEs in Scotland lack basic digital skills. Today, 90% of jobs require basic digital skills and the majority are advertised and recruited online.

"The value of digital inclusion for a new user with basic digital skills has been calculated to be £1,064 per annum rising to £1,756 for advanced users and £3,568 for a professional or remote worker"⁶(GoOnUK, now DotEveryone 2014)

The Renfrewshire Tackling Poverty Commission said: "Poverty is changing, and our response needs to change". This strategy has reached the same conclusion. The potential for digital participation to reduce social inequality cannot be underestimated. Our response to digital exclusion needs to change.

³ Ofcom, Communications Market Report, 2012

⁴ Across the Divide: Carnegie Trust UK, April 2013

⁵ BBC Learning Audience Research

⁶ BT – Valuing Digital Inclusion, 2014

<http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/market-data-research/market-data/communications-market-reports/cmr12/>

<http://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/CMSPages/GetFile.aspx?guid=7324c775-a74a-47d6-b9ad4a4c173087a3>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/corporate2/insidethebbc/whatwedo/learning/audienceresearch>

<https://www.btplc.com/PurposefulBusiness/Connectivity/Beingonlineisgoodforsociety/Valuing-Digital-Inclusion.pdf>

Our Approach

Digital Participation as the Driver

The Digital Strategy is underpinned by The Tackling Poverty Strategy and The Renfrewshire Digital Participation Plan (2016). The plan was developed in partnership with over 40 different representatives from the public, private and third sector, and local academic institutions. Engage Renfrewshire, our third sector interface, has been a key partner and supporter of the digital agenda.

Why Digital Participation?

“Digital participation describes people’s ability to gain access to digital technology, and understand how to use it creatively. Increased digital participation can improve people’s quality of life, boost economic growth and allow more effective delivery of **sustainable** public services”⁷. It also allows people to engage actively in shaping the “future direction of society in a way that was not possible in an analogue world”⁸.

The Digital Participation Plan recommended the need for an **over-arching Digital Strategy** to ensure everyone in Renfrewshire has the opportunity to reach their digital potential.

This is for Everyone

Research reveals that those who can benefit the most from technology are those most likely to be digitally excluded and already facing social inequality. The key groups who face the highest levels of digital exclusion are;

- disabled or people with long term health conditions
- older adults (65years+)
- people in poverty and the children of those families

We want to tackle the challenge of digital exclusion head on. We believe if we get it right for those who face the most barriers to digital we will get it right for everyone else. Taking a person-centred approach, this strategy has to be for everyone. We want to ensure those who are in a position to use digital are enabled where possible, and individual choice not to use digital continues to be supported.

“Getting access to the internet when you do not have a computer is soul-destroying when everyone else these days has access” (Community Learning and Development, Course Participant)

Partnership is Key

Digital exclusion is a complex challenge and cannot and should not be met by any one organisation or service. In a time of severe financial constraints within the public sector, sharing resources, expertise and coordinating efforts is essential. Developing strong relationships with partners has been key to the development of the strategy. We will continue to grow and develop these further as opportunities to strengthen our approach are identified.

⁷ Scotland’s Digital Future: A strategy for Scotland, March 2011

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Economy/digital>

⁸ Scottish Government Digital Participation: A national framework for local action, 2014

<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2014/04/6821>

Strategic Alignment

The Digital Strategy will continue to actively look for opportunities to promote Digital across all our other **major** strategic initiatives such as;

- Tackling Poverty
- Paisley bid for UK City of Culture 2021
- Our Council Plan⁹ – “A Better Future, A Better Council”
- Our Community Plan¹⁰

The Digital Strategy aligns with the relevant Scottish and UK Government digital strategies, particularly the Scottish Government’s Digital Strategy “Scotland’s Digital Future: A Strategy for Scotland” which sets out the actions required to ensure that Scotland is able to take advantage of the opportunities of the digital age¹¹. We will engage proactively with a range of digital government programmes such as the Scottish Futures Trust Public Wireless Programme and the national Superfast Broad Band Rollout Programme.

An Evolving Strategy

The strategy has to be cross-cutting in the same way technology is tightly woven into today’s modern society. However, we need to recognise that longer term strategies need to keep pace with emerging technology if they are to remain relevant and deliver the anticipated benefits

“radio took 38 years to reach 50 million users, television took 13 years, web took 4 years and Facebook took just 10 months. In 2015 nearly 75% of internet users have a social media profile, compared to 22% in 2007”¹² (Ofcom 2015)

Today it’s Pokémon Go, but what will 2021 look like? This document should be viewed as a starting point, a snapshot in time. This strategy is alive and will evolve in response to changing technology and the shifting needs of our citizens, staff and local businesses.

⁹ Renfrewshire Council Plan 2014-2017

¹⁰ Renfrewshire Community Plan 2013-2023

<http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/wps/wcm/connect/3cb3ae2c-6cc9-4b7e-a879-1828f6da2484/ce-RenCouncilPlan2014-2017.pdf?MOD=AJPERES>

<http://www.renfrewshire2023.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/CommunityPlan1.pdf>

¹¹ Scotland’s Digital Future: A strategy for Scotland, March 2011

¹² Statistics from Ofcom: Adults’ Media Use and Attitudes Report, 2015.

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Economy/digital>

<http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/market-data-research/other/research-publications/adults/media-lit-10years/>

Our Vision and Priorities

*'In a Digital Renfrewshire we will make sure everybody has the **opportunity** to reach their **digital potential** and maximise the wider economic, educational, health, social and cultural benefits for all'.*

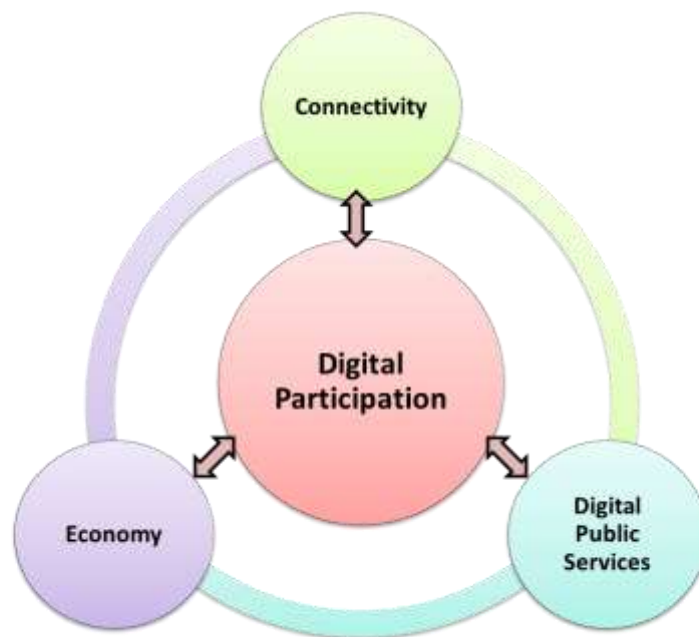
Building on consultation outcomes and research findings from the Renfrewshire Digital Participation Plan, the strategy has been developed in partnership with a wide range of public, private and third-sector organisations and council services. The Digital Participation Group has facilitated on-going consultation which has resulted in a shared vision and agreed priorities.

Priorities

In order to achieve the vision our four key priorities are;

1. Tackle digital exclusion by removing the barriers to **Digital Participation**
2. Enable digital participation through provision of a strong digital infrastructure of **Connectivity**
3. Become an efficient, effective and sustainable council by developing our **Digital Public Services**
4. Support growth in Renfrewshire's **Economy** by maximising the use of digital technology and tackling the growing digital skill gap

These priorities are represented below as four workstreams with digital participation at the core.



“Digital must move away from being an ‘add on’ to being fundamental to the future of efficient and sustainable 21st century services”

(Renfrewshire Digital Participation Group, 2016)

Delivery of Workstream 1: Digital Participation

Our aspiration

We want everybody to have the opportunity to reach their digital potential. We are determined that everyone will have the means of access, awareness, skills and confidence and motivation to participate online responsibly.

Overview

Digital Participation is the driver for this strategy and we will put the needs of the individual and the organisation at the centre. In a time where public services face increased financial pressures, the digital divide is widening particularly as more products and services go online i.e. Universal Credit, it is essential that we not widen the digital divide. We recognise that those individuals who require access to these essential services or who could benefit most from being online, are also those most likely to be digitally excluded and already facing social inequality.

Challenge

There is a long history of Renfrewshire Council services working to close the digital divide with the provision of free access to connectivity and support for digital skills in libraries and learning centres. These services are well established in the community, alongside partner agencies, and have provided a source of stigma-free digital access and support. They continue to achieve positive outcomes but initial findings indicate the growing demand outweighs capacity.

The key barriers to Digital Participation are as follows and will inform our priorities;

- **Access** to technology such as a computer or the internet for completing an online job application can be an issue due to affordability and lack of availability in your local library or in the area you live.
- **Digital Skills and Confidence** - basic digital skills such as searching for information, completing forms, emailing and shopping online are now becoming necessary for daily living in a digital society, therefore building confidence is fundamental to digital participation
- **Motivation** is vital for increasing digital participation. Understanding the benefits and opportunities digital can bring and reducing fears around internet safety through education are key.

Our Priorities

1. **We want to reduce the barriers** to digital participation across Renfrewshire;
2. **We want to target efforts** towards those who have the most barriers to digital exclusion first;
3. **We want to build capacity** for digital participation across council services and partner agencies;
4. **We want to co-ordinate efforts** across council services and partner agencies.

What we will do

1. Increase awareness of where to access free internet, technology and digital skills training across Renfrewshire.
2. Increase the digital skills of our workforce through our Organisational Development and Workforce Planning Strategies.
3. Increase the digital skills of our citizens in partnership with national skills programmes and our existing Community Learning and Development Strategy.
4. Review and develop existing digital participation services by identifying gaps and prioritising areas of need.
5. Continue to develop and promote Renfrewshire Digital Volunteer Services.
6. Tackle areas of high digital exclusion by setting up focused working groups on digital participation. A digital housing group will be set up first.
7. Target efforts and develop effective solutions to complex digital exclusion issues by testing and evolving our approaches based on what works best.
8. Drive a call to action working with new and existing partners to coordinate efforts
9. Sign up to the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO), Digital Participation Charter

Delivery of Workstream 2: **Connectivity**

Our aspiration

Access to the internet -the fourth utility- is improved and increased. It is accessible anywhere, at any time with a device that meets the needs of the user.

Overview

One of the key outcomes of the digital participation consultation and research was the need for increased access to free public Wi-Fi. The overwhelming consensus of the digital strategy consultation was that one of the fundamental building blocks to achieving the vision is access to the internet and technology. Both have been identified as major barriers to digital participation as a result of cost, availability and speed. Individuals who cannot afford home broadband may rely on a Pay as You Go mobile phone and depend on free public Wi-Fi to keep costs down. Ofcom reports that 71% of UK adults now have access to a smartphone¹³, but this may be through circumstance rather than choice. A smartphone offers many benefits in terms of access, but it can be limited for other uses, such as completing an online job or benefits application.

Challenge

Libraries and community education centres are the main providers of public access to computers and internet but demand is high and the standard of technology and internet is variable. National Improvements and investment are being made to general broadband infrastructure but there are still local gaps in coverage and speeds can vary significantly.

Our Priorities

Our four priorities are all focused on improving digital infrastructure to enable connectivity;

1. **Wi-Fi** enables internet access on the move and provides an essential means of access for individuals who rely on free Wi-Fi due to the cost of home broadband or mobile phone contracts.
2. **Broadband** availability and quality of speed is vital for business growth and home access
3. **Technology** we use in our personal lives should be reflected in the workplace to reduce the need for workarounds and enable easier digital skills transfer between home and work.
4. **Smart Cities** 'A Smart City or town should enable every citizen to engage with all the services on offer, public as well as private, in a way best suited to his or her needs. It brings together hard infrastructure, social capital including local skills and community institutions, and (digital) technologies to fuel sustainable economic development and provide an attractive environment for all.'¹⁴

Renfrewshire Council is currently updating its **ICT Strategy**, and a revised version (2017-2020) is planned. This new ICT Strategy will align with the Digital Strategy. It will define how technology and digital services can support delivery of the council's ambitions and enable improvements in service delivery while contributing to overall efficiency savings for the council.

¹³ Statistics from Ofcom: Adults' Media Use and Attitudes Report, 2015.

¹⁴ Smart Cities Background Paper, Department for Business Innovation & Skills, October 2013

<http://media.ofcom.org.uk/facts/>

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/246019/bis-13-1209-smart-cities-background-paper-digital.pdf

What we will do

1. Increase access to the internet by investing in a free public Wi-Fi for key town centre and public buildings across Renfrewshire.
2. Advocate for the improvement and availability of broadband infrastructure across Renfrewshire.
3. Develop a mechanism for citizens to voice broadband issues in partnership with Digital Scotland and Community Broadband Scotland.
4. Promote and drive forward improvements to council connectivity and develop a culture of digital participation through the refreshed ICT Strategy aligned to the Digital Strategy.
5. Increase digital participation by reviewing and responding to the connectivity needs of public access points and learning centres.
6. Develop a vision of what future Renfrewshire towns can offer residents in regards to digital by producing a Smart Cities plan which links to the Glasgow and Clyde Valley City Deal Programme.

Delivery of Workstream 3: Digital Public Services

Our aspiration

Digital technology will transform public services to deliver responsive, user-focused and efficient digital public services.

Overview

A key focus for this workstream is Renfrewshire Council's Customer Access Project which, is developing and enabling a range of new council digital services. The drivers for the project are twofold; to deliver measurable cost savings and efficiencies and to respond to changing customer needs by offering council services online. Traditional channels such as telephone and face-to-face will continue to be improved for those who choose or require this method.

Challenge

A high number of users of council public services are the same users who we have identified as those most likely to be digitally excluded. As more public services and products move online, there is a risk that the digital divide will grow deeper. This reinforces the need for an overarching digital strategy that coordinates efforts to reduce digital exclusion and achieves the vision for everyone.

Our Priorities

These four priorities have been developed in relation to the existing council customer project but could be aligned to other digital service development if deemed complementary or developed further;

1. **Sustainability, Efficiency and Effectiveness** - Digital transformation is vital in a time of financial pressure across public services. However both go hand in hand, and without upfront investment in reducing digital exclusion the vision of the digital public services will not be realised.
2. **Accessibility and Usability** – We need to make sure that the services we choose to deliver digitally can be used effectively by all our customers who choose to use them. For example, individuals with a visual impairment who struggle with small print or may require the functionality of text to speech. In the same way we include ramps and disabled parking spaces in the physical world we must do the same in the online world.
3. **Motivation** - The majority of users of council public services are those we have identified as the most likely to be digitally excluded. In addition to lack of access and digital skills, a lack of motivation has been identified as a key barrier to people going online. This could be caused by a lack of awareness of the benefits available from the internet, and/or they may be fearful of the risks. The Customer Access Project is investing in this area to change customer behaviour and increase the successful adoption of digital public services. This approach seeks to complement aims of the digital participation workstream.
4. **Digital Service Development and Partnership**
There are significant opportunities for partnership and shared learning within other areas of digital service development, such as the tele-care and tele-health developments within the Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership. The same challenges exist and a clear focus on digital participation will be fundamental to the successful widespread adoption of any new digital services.

What we will do

1. Increase efficiency and effectiveness by delivering digital services that become the preferred choice for customers.
2. Involve customers in the design and development of digital services to ensure they are fit for purpose and will be widely used.
3. Actively market the availability of digital public services and promote the benefits to be gained by using them.
4. Review and improve the support available for customers who need help to make best use of available digital services.
5. Build on and explore opportunities for partnership working across areas of digital service development

Delivery of Workstream 4: **Economy**

Our aspiration

We want to support growth in Renfrewshire's economy by maximising the use of digital technology and tackling the growing digital skills gap.

Overview

This digital skills gap is costing the UK economy an estimated £63 billion a year in lost additional GDP. This is a major risk to business growth, innovation and broader societal development. There is a clear link between market competitiveness and the uptake and application of digital technology in the workplace. Significantly half of all charities and a quarter of SMEs in Scotland lack basic digital skills. Today, 90% of jobs require basic digital skills, which have been categorised by the UK Government into three key areas; basic digital literacy skills, digital skills for the general workforce; digital skills for ICT professions (digitally innovative and creative individuals, organisations and businesses)¹⁵.

The Challenge

Digital skills need to improve continuously across the whole UK population so that all sectors and organisations can take advantage of the benefits offered by digital technologies. There is a need for action to be taken to re-skill the workforce continuously and create a pipeline of new talent coming out of education. There is a common misconception that young people are 'digital natives' but this is not always the case and some may leave education without basic digital skills e.g. creating a CV. A recent report from Child Poverty Action Group shows that children and young people living in a low income household do not have the same access to ICT facilities at home as children from families with a higher income. This means that there is a sizeable number of young people who are not only digitally excluded, but excluded from education and their peers too¹⁶. There are 600,000 vacancies in the ICT sector, forecast to rise to 1m by 2020. The people building the internet and the services we all use, are overwhelmingly men. Women occupy just 17 per cent of tech jobs in the UK. If we do not understand why, and try to rectify it, we are missing out on half the talent pool¹⁷. Education services have a role to play in tackling this challenge.

Our Priorities

- 1. To support the business sector.** Helping businesses make the most of what digital can offer to increase productivity, competitiveness, efficiency and support innovation.
- 2. To grow jobs and support access to sustained work.** Tackling the growing digital skills gap and ensuring Renfrewshire's people are digitally skilled for the current and future demands of the workplace.
- 3. To work in partnership with the education sector to prepare children and young people for the future job market** Aligning ICT education with the future demands of the workplace and job market and raise awareness of the lack of basic digital skills of young people leaving education.

¹⁵ Digital Skills for the UK Economy" by Eorays UK, UK Government, 2016

¹⁶ Cost of the School Day, Child Poverty Action Group, 2015

¹⁷ Gender equality in the tech sector will benefit the global economy

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/digital-skills-for-the-uk-economy>

<http://www.cpag.org.uk/sites/default/files/CPAG-Scot-Cost-Of-School-Day-Report%28Oct15%29.pdf>

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/e2f8ad0a-bdd6-11e5-9fdb-87b8d15baec2.html#ixzz4HbiGXNHs>

4. **To reduce gender inequality in the technology industry.** Working in partnership with education, STEM (Science, Technology Engineering and Maths) initiatives and industry to reverse the growing trend and increase the digital skills talent pool.

What we will do

1. Develop and promote a digital support plan for business – highlighting current areas of support and developing potential new services to meet local demand and address gaps.
2. Develop a digital skills plan based on the three categories of skills requirements highlighted by the UK Government in Digital Skills for the UK Economy.
3. Identify opportunities to work in partnership with other agencies in the planning and delivery of our new digital approach.
4. Work in partnership with the children and young people services to improve and develop digital skills in education aligned to the GoOnUK Basic digital skills framework.
5. Work in partnership with education, STEM initiatives and industry to reverse gender inequality.

Principles

The following guiding principles will guide and underpin the development and delivery of initiatives contained within the Digital Strategy;

- **Accessibility and Usability**
We will put the person at the centre of digital service design and involve them in the design and delivery of our digital initiatives
- **Information Security**
We will maintain the highest standards of information security and governance
- **Open Data**
We will promote an open data approach based on the Council open data strategy
- **Digital Trends**
We will endeavour to keep pace with digital trends through research and testing of innovative approaches
- **Partnership**
We will actively seek opportunities for partnership and collaboration to maximise impact through joint investments
- **Sustainability**
We will design services that have a robust business case and can be sustained in the future

Outcomes and Measures

The outcomes and measures have been developed in line with the vision of the Digital Strategy

‘In a Digital Renfrewshire we will make sure that everybody has the opportunity to reach their digital potential and maximise the wider economic, educational, health, social and cultural benefits for all’

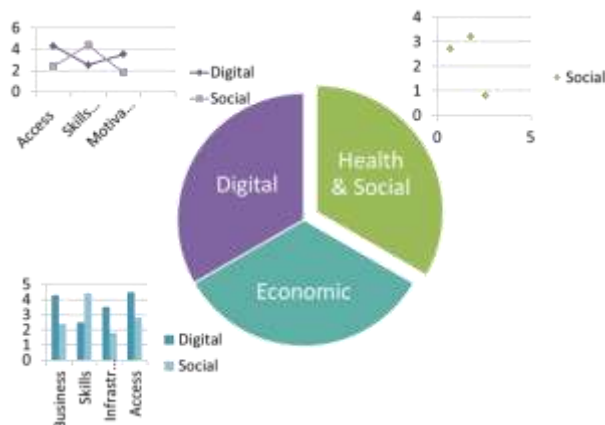
Outcomes

The key outcomes of the digital strategy have been identified as;



Measures

The outcomes will be measured by developing a Renfrewshire 'Digital Strategy Dashboard'.



(Example for illustration purposes)

The dashboard will be developed based on existing national approaches to digital measures including:

1. UK Government Digital Engagement Outcomes
2. GoOnUK (now DotEveryone) Heatmap
3. GoOnUK Basic Digital Skills Evaluation Framework

The measures above provide a national measure and additional work will be required to create a Renfrewshire view. We will identify additional measures already in use by each workstream and gaps that may require additional local measures or further development.

We will seek to identify commonality across other council measurement requests and in particular the Paisley 2021 and Tackling Poverty Programme to share findings, coordinate efforts and reduce duplication.

It is envisaged the measures will focus on the following outcome groupings;

Digital Outcomes - People are being enabled to take advantage of digital technology;

Economic Outcomes - Digital technology is improving people's economic and life chances

Health & Social Outcomes - Digital technology is supporting health and social progress

Potential indicators that can be used to measure Digital Participation are;

Digital Indicators

- Infrastructure (Broadband / Mobile 4G)
- Who is offline?
- Basic Digital Skills
- Basic Digital Skills Used

Social Indicators

- Age
- Education
- Income
- Health

Governance and Shaping

Governance

A *Digital Steering Group* has been created to bring each workstream and priority areas of work together to coordinate efforts and resources, reduce duplication and keep pace with digital developments. The group will also make strategic decisions. It is envisaged that this group membership will expand over time but at present senior officers will represent ICT, Customer Services, Renfrewshire Leisure (Libraries), Community Education, Children's Services, Economic Development, Community Resources, Health & Social Care Partnership, Policy and Commissioning and Housing. Reference groups will be represented by the CEO of Engage.

Shaping

Digital Participation Group (organisations)

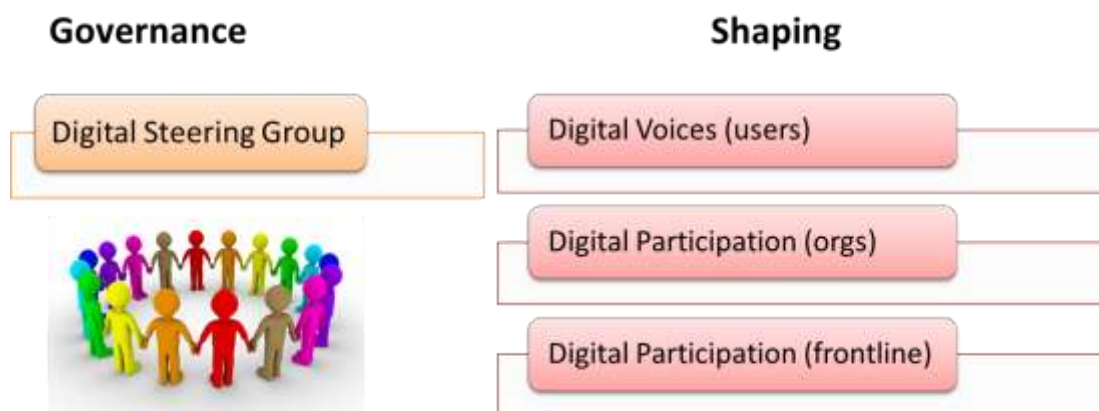
The Digital Participation Group was formed as a result of the initial consultation and engagement period on the Digital Participation Plan. Membership is at 40-50 members and growing, representing a range of public, private and third sector organisations and local academic institutions across Renfrewshire. The DPG meets approximately every 2 months across various partner venues and is planned and delivered in partnership with the CEO of Engage as the Chair and the Digital Team within Policy and Commissioning. The meetings encourage networking, sharing of resources and information, training, digital conversations and call to action.

Digital Delivery (frontline)

Led by the Digital Participation Officer this group will bring together frontline staff and local champions who are delivering digital participation across the public, private and the third sector. This provides the opportunity for sharing resources and improved coordination of activity. The group also encourages digital skills sharing to increase staff digital skills.

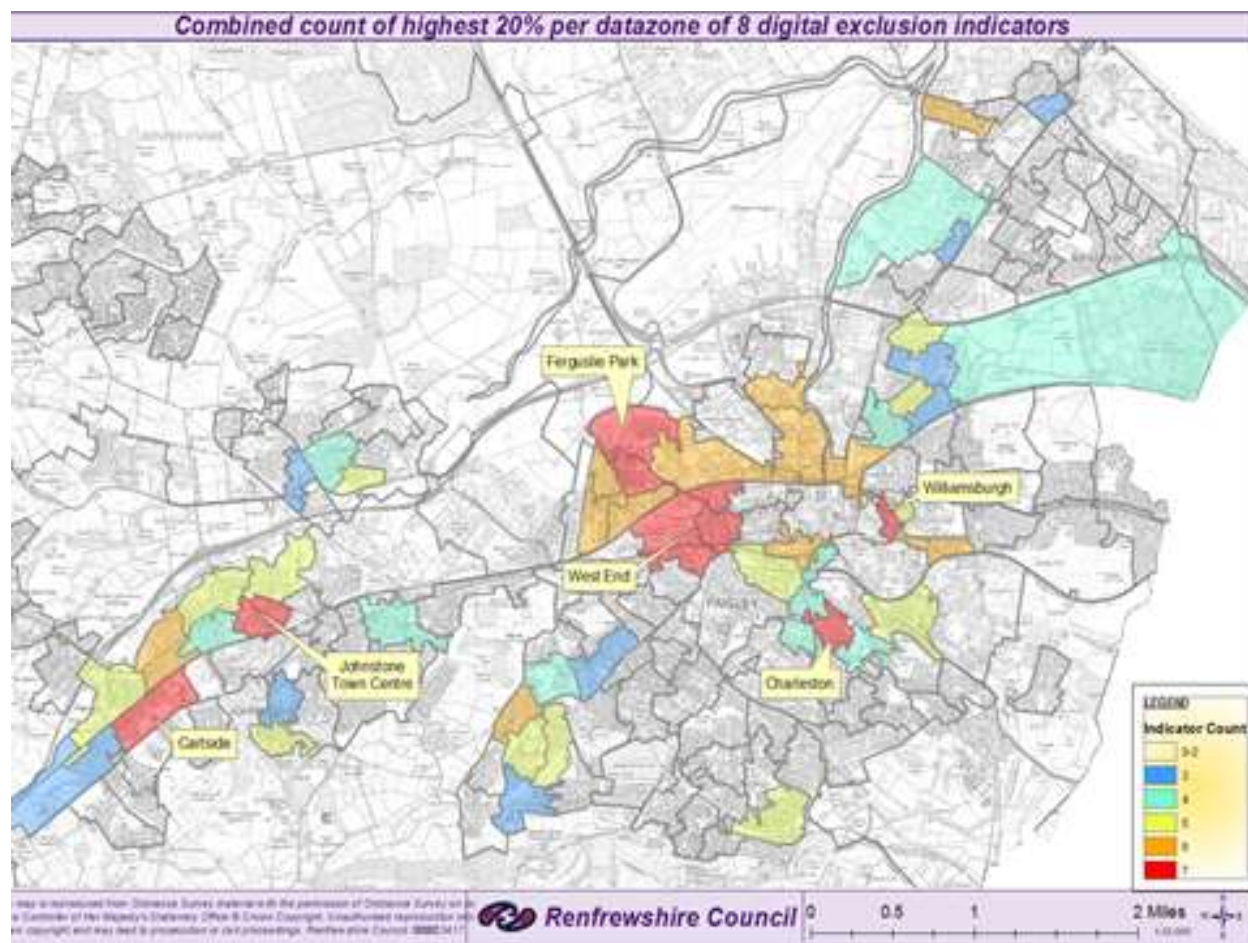
Digital Voices (users)

A mechanism will be developed to formalise consultation, user testing and the use of critical friends on digital developments across the council. This will cover timing, methods, representation and digital advocacy to ensure users are supported throughout the process by someone with digital awareness.



Appendices

Appendix 1: Map of Digital Exclusion (with a Poverty Weighting)



Appendix 2: Combined Action Plan 2016-17

Action	Digital Participation	Digital Public Services	Connectivity	Economy
Digital Participation				
Increase awareness of where to access free internet, technology and digital skills training across Renfrewshire	x	x	x	x
Increase the digital skills of our workforce through development and delivery of a HR, OD and Workforce Strategy	x	x	x	x
Increase the digital skills of our citizens in partnership with national skills programmes and our existing Community Learning and Development Strategy	x	x		x
Continue to develop and promote Renfrewshire Digital Volunteer Services	x	x		x
Review and develop existing digital participation services by identifying gaps and prioritising areas of need	x	x	x	x
Tackle areas of high digital exclusion by setting up focused working groups on digital participation. A digital housing group will be set up first.	x	x		x
Target efforts and develop new solutions to complex digital exclusion issues using test and learn	x	x		x
Drive a call to action working with new and existing partners to coordinate efforts	x	x	x	x
Sign up to the SCVO Digital Participation Charter	x	x	x	x
Connectivity				
Increase access to the internet by investing in a 1 million free public Wi-Fi project	x	x	x	x
Advocate for the improvement and availability of broadband infrastructure across Renfrewshire	x	x	x	x
Develop a mechanism for citizens to voice broadband issues in partnership with Digital Scotland and Community Broadband Scotland	x	x	x	x
Promote and drive forward improvements to council connectivity and develop a culture of digital participation through the refreshed ICT Strategy aligned to the Digital Strategy	x	x	x	
Increase digital participation by reviewing and responding to the connectivity needs of public access points and learning centres	x	x	x	x
Develop a vision of what future Renfrewshire towns can offer its residents in regards to digital by producing a Smart Cities plan which links to the G&CV City Deal Programme	x	x	x	x
Digital Public Services				
Increase efficiency and effectiveness by delivering digital services that become the preferred choice		x		

Increase access to digital public services by reviewing current provision of customer digital support	x	x	x	
Increase access to digital public services by develop an accessible customer digital self-service space	x	x		
Promote and facilitate the design, development and delivery of usable and accessible digital services	x	x		
Promote the opportunity to use digital public services and the overall benefits of digital participation	x	x	x	x
Build on and explore opportunities for partnership working across areas of digital service development	x	x		x
Economy – still needs work / review				
Develop and promote a Digital Support Plan for Business – highlighting current areas of support and developing potential new services to meet local demand	x			x
Develop a Digital Skills plan	x			x
Work in partnership with, and involve others, in the planning and delivery of our new digital approach	x	x	x	x
Work in partnership with the Children and Young People Services to improve and develop digital skills in Education aligned to the GoOnUK Basic digital skills framework	x		x	x
Work in partnership with education, STEM initiatives and industry to reverse gender inequality	x			x