

Digital Strategy Task & Finish Group
21 March 2018
Committee Room A, South Walks House, Dorchester

Purpose of session

To support and guide elements of Dorset Councils Partnership's Digital Strategy.

Issues examined at session

- To review elements of the draft Digital Strategy and provide feedback
- Help to explore key themes within the strategy
- Gauge opinion on the direction of travel and priorities relating to Digital Transformation

Information provided for members

- Presentation by the Project Manager – Ann-Marie Barlow
- Draft Digital Strategy document
- The Digital Strategy EqIA – Full Equality Impact Assessment

RECORD OF MEETING

Members of scrutiny working group attending	Councillors P Kimber, J Sewell and A Weaving *Councillors J Somper and D Turner were unable to attend the meeting, but have provided input separately which has been incorporated into these notes
Members apologies	
Others attending	Ann-Marie Barlow – Project Manager Kate Critchel – Senior Democratic Services Officer

Presentation	<p>The Project Manager set out the presentation and explained the direction of travel for the next 12 to 18 months for the Digital Strategy. This included that as a digital council partnership, helping our people to explore new ways of working and helping to close the digital divide by committing to make digital work for everyone; be this through helping to support our customers to get online, transact online or free up capacity to spend more time with those that need it.</p> <p>Members discussed what digital meant to them and what digital meant to the DCP and made the following observations:-</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Digital strategy had to be inclusive and work for everyone, However, it is accepted that there will be exceptions. • The DCP should address ways to facilitate inclusion in rural communities i.e. community hubs and the use of libraries to allow individuals to access online services. In some rural communities there is minimal telephone signal, could Wi-Fi in village halls help to connect rural communities? • To make the best possible use of digital services for those wanted to access them which would free officer time to support those individuals who needs it most. • Members would welcome greater knowledge of the Digital Champions network and details of how people could access the network's services. This would enable them to advise their local community. It was recognised that information has been published about this on social media. • The DCP should consider financial contributions to local community hubs/centres to support their own neighbourhoods. • Could the DCP invite customers who had used its digital services to become digital champions? • Expanding the digital network with other government services should be welcomed. (i.e. NHS) • Councillors were encouraged that DCC had a similar strategy and that all parties were working closely with each other. <p>Other factors raised</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of the Credit Union should be available on the D4U webpages. • Concern that Parish Clerks were unable to access the Housing Register. • Further information would be made available in the Members Connect regarding Universal Credit, "learning my way" aimed to boost digital skills. <p>Members then discussed the individual elements of the Strategy</p>
<p>1. Delivering better services to our customers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to support community hubs and help develop skills for greater digital interaction with the council using skype, webchat possibly via community hubs. This could be reflected in the Living & Learning hubs that have been in discussion for some time. • Improve the method of complaint or reporting an issue during out of hours. It was difficult to report an issue online or be able to leave a message. Although some councillors have not experienced the same problems.
<p>2. Digital skills and inclusion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot digital services and systems with customers who have special needs or access issues to ensure "fit for purpose" an example of this is via Adult Social care DCC & Children's Services DCC who are looking at these issues.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Access Groups would be invited to be involved in pilot projects. • The Project Manager had met with Dorchester Access Group – who had observed that in some areas the DCP was not digital enough for them to confidently self-sufficiently access services. • Ensure that employees and councillors have digital skills.
3. Developing our people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide training for councillors and staff to achieve greater understanding of disabilities and how people with disabilities may want/ need to access digital services. • The Digital Access Ability Centre had agreed to provide a session for the DCP regarding Digital Accessibility awareness. • Carry out a staff audit of all skills including digital • Arrange peer to peer training and support.
4. Digital engagement & democracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider live-streaming future council meetings. Although it was felt by some councillors that this project would be better suited to the new unitary authority. • Provision of other services to allow people with disabilities to access meetings. (i.e. provision of an electronic signing service) • Offer consultation and debate through social media and other digital platforms. It was recognised that the Partnership has a good online presence in terms of social media. • Provision of grants for rural communities to access digital services
5. Transforming our services together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce mystery shoppers to gauge the customer experience and ensure that lessons are learnt. • It was essential that those people who want to engage with the DCP face-to-face will still be able to so. • Councillors' knowledge that digital transformation was on-going and new technologies would continue to be introduced. • Technology and programmes that were currently too expensive for the DCP to consider now may, in the future, be more accessible.
Draft timescale for adoption	<p>Digital Strategy to be considered by the Joint Advisory Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 1 May 2018 NDDC Cabinet – 29 May 2018 WDDC Strategy Committee - 30 May 2018 WPBC Management Committee – 5 June 2018</p>
Meeting closed	12.50pm