CYNGOR GWYNEDD DIGITAL PLAN

2023-28

GWYNEDDIGIDOL

Cefnogi pobol Gwynedd mewn byd digidol

Forward

As new technologies continue to develop and change the way we interact with each other and with the world around us, the publication of this Digital Plan is a defining moment for Cyngor Gwynedd as we carve out a bold path on our journey to becoming a digital Council.

As a Council we will capitalise on opportunities to innovate and embed digital technology to improve the lives of our residents, to better work together with partners, and to strengthen and improve the responsiveness of our services to the needs and expectations of our customers.

The Digital Plan sets out a vision of continuous improvement to the means by which the Council may be contacted to make enquires or request a service, to our ability to use data meaningfully to make more informed decisions, and to equip our officers with the required skills and digital solutions to develop and run services of the highest quality, in a safe and resilient manner.

The Plan will last five years, but the vision to create a digital County is a long-term one and the improvement priorities outlined here are a strong foundation to start the journey.

Councillor Ioan Thomas
(Cabinet Member for Finance and Information Technology)

The Council's vision for the period 2023-28 identifies the need to establish and implement a Digital Plan as one of the main improvement objectives of the priority area "Efficient Gwynedd". This priority area forms one of our seven well-being objectives for the period in question, and the Digital Plan has a key role to play in laying the foundations to realise each of the other six objectives as well.

At a time that is financially challenging, our use of digital technology and our ability to realise the projects of this Plan will play a key role in how public services are delivered to the people of Gwynedd in future.

A comprehensive annual review together with regular progress reports will allow us to monitor the contribution of the individual projects to the broader vision, accepting that, given the constant advancements in digital technology, the priorities will require some adjusting, even within the lifetime of the Plan.

I look forward to seeing this Plan realising its objectives and achieving its identified purpose.

Geraint Owen
(Corporate Director)

Introduction

Since 2020, the use and variety of digital technology has increased significantly. Digital technology became even more important during the Covid-19 pandemic, and more recently, the emergence of ever more sophisticated technologies – such as artificial intelligence – has highlighted the "digital revolution" and its effect. It means that digital technology is now an essential part of our everyday lives and has transformed the way citizens and public services deal with each other. We must respond to these changes, not only to take advantage of the opportunities that are presented by digital technology, but also to alleviate some of the possible challenges. Through technology we can transform the Council and its services and secure financial savings at the same time.

95% of adults in the UK have a smart phone.

Here is the *Cyngor Gwynedd Digital Plan, 2023-2028*. This is an ambitious and far-reaching strategy that is alive to the day's digital developments and outlines the path the Council will follow to adapt to the "digital future". It represents a programme of digital transformation that will better develop the services ran y the Council.

60% feel more confident after Covid-19 in accessing public services via digital channels.

The Digital Plan runs in parallel with the Cyngor Gwynedd Plan (2023/2028), expanding on the digital project that is referred to under the "Efficient Gwynedd" heading. But it is not limited to this heading alone. It contributes across the board to *all* projects in the Cyngor Gwynedd Plan. Our vision is to make the Council a **DIGITAL COUNCIL**, where technology is used wisely to deliver services more economically and effectively, and where the customer is increasingly central in everything we do.

This vision looks beyond the Plan's five-year period. The Plan's vision is to develop, improve and embed digital thinking and solutions naturally and effectively in all activities, to strengthen and improve our services, administer more efficiently, and to better use information to make smarter and more informed decisions – all in a digital environment that is safe and resilient. The principles of equality and well-being are present throughout the Plan, including the Welsh language and the element of sustainability within the Five Ways of Working:

Y Gymraeg

There is a clear place for the Welsh language in all digital developments, where every internal development is made bilingual without exception, with the default setting being in Welsh. The Welsh language has its proper place in each and all developments, and this is reflected in the Digital Adaptation Assessment which will be a compulsory step before Council departments purchase a digital system or service.

Long term

The Plan sets out a long-term vision that goes beyond the five-year period of the work programme, with the digital groups' terms of reference having responsibility for reviewing and updating the vision and Plan as necessary.

Prevention

Many improvement priorities have been designed to avoid failure, and although "resilience" is a specific heading, many of the other priorities also contribute to this and improve the Council's services.

Integration

Working in partnership with other organisations is crucial to maintaining effective public services, and this is recognised in the Plan. We will facilitate the process of working with external partners, as well as integrating the Council's internal systems.

Collaboration

The Plan's content has been shared with the North Wales Data, Digital and Technology (DDaT) Group, which is a Local Authority and Health digital collaborative group, and more widely as well for attention and collaboration opportunities through the digital arm of the Welsh Local Government Association.

Involvement

The content, spirit and priorities of the Plan were developed collaboratively by the four sub-groups of the Council's Digital Transformation Board, and several meetings were held to prioritise the core areas, giving all representatives the opportunity to voice their opinions.

It is important that we are inclusive of all people and groups, regardless of their digital literacy or access to digital technology. The Council is committed to digital inclusion so that everyone has appropriate access to services.

To fulfil this vision, this Plan outlines projects that have been split between five priority areas, which are:
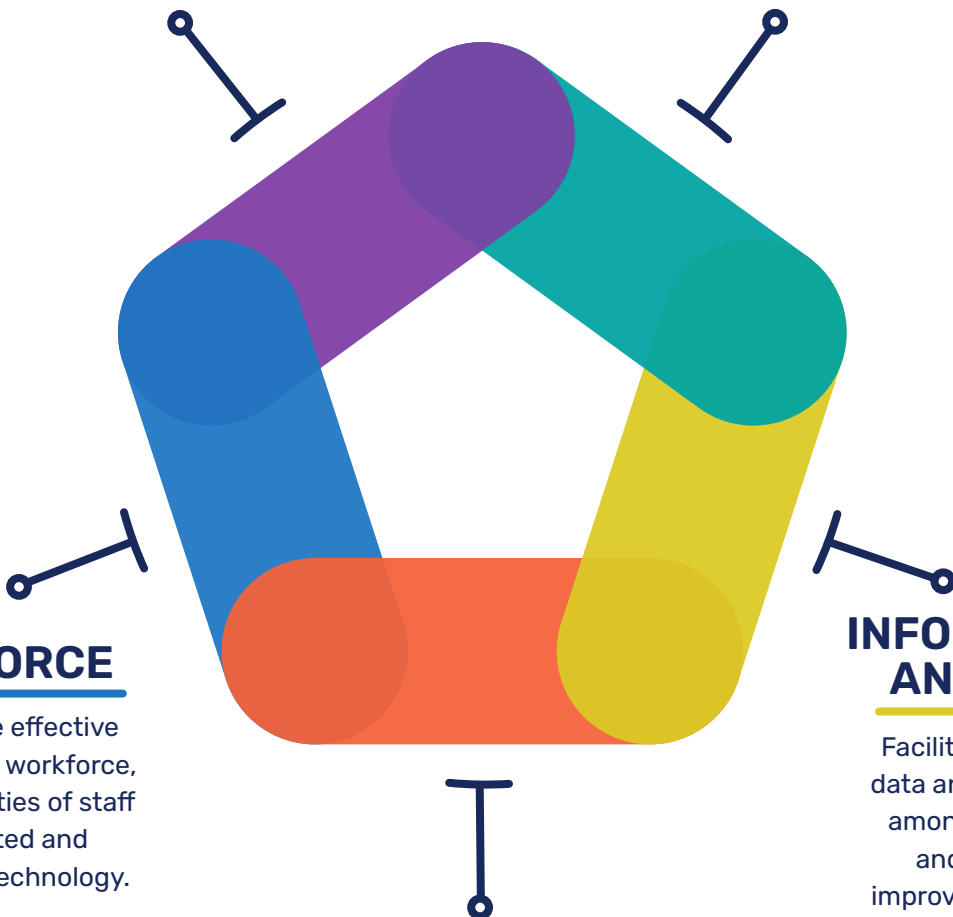
RESILIENCE

Developing a robust digital infrastructure in order to protect the Council's services.

CUSTOMER CONTACT

Ensure a service that is inclusive and bilingual, that puts the customer first and runs in a place and time that is convenient to the customer.

WORKFORCE

Create a more effective and productive workforce, where the abilities of staff are supported and enhanced by technology.

INFORMATION AND DATA

Facilitate access to data and information among customers and staff, and improve data quality.

ADMINISTRATION AND BUSINESS SYSTEMS

Facilitate and automate routine and transactional work, and use technology to add value to services.

Three things are identified in the Plan's five priority areas:

The current situation

The relevant development projects

The desired effect

Digital technology plays an increasingly important role in the way the Council delivers services. Consequently, this Plan does not stand alone. Its content and impact will influence all aspects of the Council's work; therefore it is important to ensure that the projects are compatible with, and contribute towards, the Five Ways of Working as well as the Welsh Government's Digital Strategy (2022). A matrix summarising this can be seen at the end.

Of course, technologies change continuously and future digital capabilities will be much broader than those of today. Thus, this is not a static strategy. Any change will be added to the strategy as required, and reviews will be made annually.

Customer Contact

'Ensure a service that is inclusive and bilingual, that puts the customer first and runs in a place and time that is convenient to the customer.'

As the residents of Gwynedd and the Council turn more and more to digital technology, the relationship between services and the customer has become closer. It means that the Council's responsiveness to customer enquiries and needs has increased, but there is always room to develop this further. We will give attention to the following items as part of this priority:

1. Enhance methods of communication, enquiries and submitting service requests

Customers have several means of contacting the Council – over the phone, via e-mail, through the website or digital forms on My Account, but these mainly operate separately. It means that it is not possible to continue with the same discussion across more than one medium of communication, or if the media changes.

We will merge the systems for the above media, and also introduce additional ones such as *WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger* and *X*. This will facilitate the customer contact process and allow customers to submit a request and receive a response from the Council through one or more of the above media. The services will be accountable for storing information about the request, as well as reporting back to the customer.

Since 2012-3. the percentage of homes in Wales with access to the web has increased from just over 70% to around

90%

today.

2. Improvements to the Council's telephone provision

Contacting the Council over the phone remains a popular choice amongst customers; therefore, it is important that we further develop this form of customer contact. There are two main considerations:

- Respond to the increasing use of MS Teams amongst staff.
- Have a system that enables staff to respond to calls in the office or when working remotely.
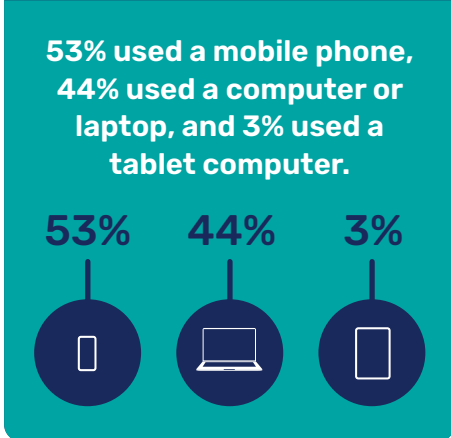
We will introduce a new telephone system for staff which will be integrated with MS Teams and operate through a mobile app and computer, rather than a desk-based phone. It will allow staff to easily forward customer calls to other officers, speeding up the information flow with customers.

Comprehensive reports from the phone system will be created, allowing the Council's departments to identify any weaknesses or strengths so that they can be proactive in improving their services to the public.

3. Redesign the Council's corporate website

As the expectations of customers when using websites increases, it is important that the Council's website is accessible, modern and contemporary. In a public consultation that was conducted about the Council's website and apGwynedd in 2021, respondents highlighted that the pages were often confusing and that it was difficult to search for and find the relevant information. We will re-examine the website's design to respond to these problems and incorporate additional changes to take advantage of new technology that was unavailable when the website was established in 2013, including Artificial Intelligence and Web Chat and Chat Bot technology.

With 60% of the website's visitors using a phone or tablet, we will ensure that it is designed for effective browsing on mobile devices.

Between July and September 2023, there were

756,500

visits on the Council's website.

53% used a mobile phone, 44% used a computer or laptop, and 3% used a tablet computer.

53%   **44%**   **3%**

4. Develop and promote apGwynedd

ApGwynedd was released in 2018 and it includes the My Account provision, "Where I live" information, and access to Gwynedd bus timetables amongst other resources. With more and more using mobile devices, we will develop apGwynedd further.

We will commit to further developing apGwynedd on both Google and Apple platforms, and one of the developments will include a live map showing every bus that runs as a public service on Gwynedd's bus network. It will be possible to identify the current location of the bus, the locations of the bus stops, any change to the service, and will facilitate customer enquiries.

ApGwynedd has been downloaded

10,508

times
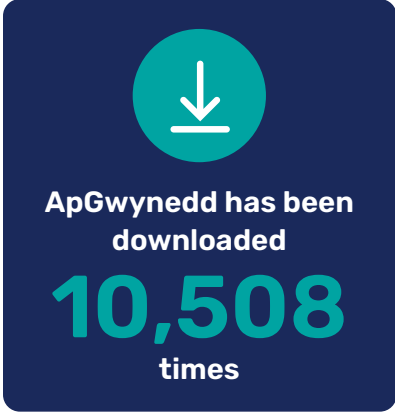
5. Siop Gwynedd video kiosk

There are three Siop Gwynedd sites across Gwynedd: Pencadlys, Caernarfon; Embankment Road, Pwllheli; Penarlâg, Dolgellau. The purpose of these sites is to provide customers with direct access to the Council's services. We will develop this customer contact service by installing up to three video kiosks at each site, so that the public can speak virtually with the relevant officer, wherever they are based.

6. Paying through a machine for services

The Council has very few services that raise an income through their use, e.g., car parks, launching boats or buying red diesel in the marina. Although there are payment machines at these sites, they are not standardised and there are several different ways of paying: sometimes the customer must have loose change; others, they must use an app or send a text message to pay. To improve customer experience, we will make payment methods across all sites more consistent.

Information and Data

'Facilitate access to data and information among customers and staff, and improve data quality.'

The digital age is also an age of information. As people and organisations across the globe are connected by new technologies, the spread of information has accelerated vastly. Digital information now touches everyone, and it is important that Cyngor Gwynedd enhances access to information and embeds transparency, both for customers and staff. We must equip staff with evidence and resources so they can make the best decisions possible for the people of Gwynedd. The programme to improve standards and report confidently on our data is a long-term and standing commitment, and we will give attention to the following items:

1. Identifying our data

The Council provides over 300 systems, with each one collecting and presenting data. Most of these systems are stand-alone and are not integrated with the other systems, and consequently tend to suffer inconsistencies in the form and accuracy of the data.

It is essential that we identify the exact content and purpose of the data collected before commencing any improvement exercise. We will create data maps and a register for each system, and identify how these compare with each other. This register will support other exercises in the Plan, namely "*Data Charter*" and "*Rationalising the systems used*".

90%

of the world's data was generated between 2019 and today.

2. Data charter

As part of the *Council's Information Strategy*, work is under-way to establish an Information Assets Register, which is a register of personal information. Together with data maps, this work will steer our work of establishing a "*Data Charter*" to ensure that our arrangements for storing data are appropriate. The Charter will also set a direction and processes for:

- **Open data.**
  This will improve efficiency (by reducing the number of freedom of information requests, and being able to respond more quickly to requests that are made), transparency and the public's understanding of the Council in accordance with the Council's participation strategy.
- **A programme for improving data standards**.
  We will create standards for various data categories to ensure better consistency and accuracy in the data that is collected and reported.

• **Train data system owners of the importance of data accuracy.**
Although the Data Charter is relevant to all Council officers, there are some officers in a "System Owner" role who have responsibility for the data of the system which they are managing. We will develop training for these officers so that they have an awareness of the requisite guidelines for compliance with the Charter.

The Charter will help us to maintain good practice in terms of gathering, retaining, sharing and reporting on data, improve the accuracy of data, and enable us to share it more widely for everyone's benefit.

3. Create a data warehouse (*wGwynedd*)

Our systems have been established on services or units within specific departments, and those systems that are used across the whole Council are few and far between. It means that we cannot easily report on data across multiple systems, which leads to inconsistencies and a lack of accuracy in our data.

We will design and create a data warehouse (wGwynedd) which will bring together data from several different systems. This integration will facilitate joint thinking between the services, and support us to predict and measure the use of multi-step services in the future. The warehouse will be based on the "Data Register" and the "Data Charter", and it will include processes for reconciling and cleaning our data, both to improve accuracy and enable us to report confidently and accurately.

Any report that requires data that is outside the particular system of the service in question will come from the warehouse, and data that is published externally will also be taken from here.

Cyber-security and information security are clearly integral to the architecture of *wGwynedd*, and a range of access rules and a system of recording activity will be prominent features of the warehouse.

Data architecture is a highly specialised field and we will require external support to realise this vision. It is likely to span several years, but the outcome will be far-reaching. The Council will report on and use data more confidently and evidence-based decisions will be facilitated.
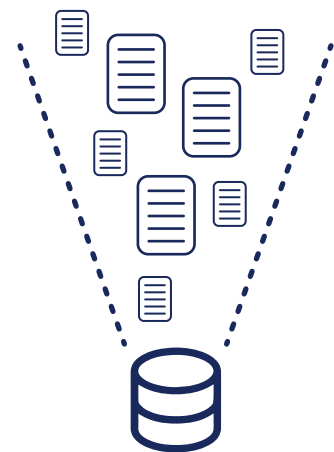
4. Data reporting platform

Many systems are used for reporting data, whether through *Excel, PowerBI, Grafana* or *Crystal Reports*. These offer different ways of analysing and presenting data, but they are complex and require support, guidance and training to be used correctly and efficiently.

We will conduct an exercise to identify the best platform for the Council's needs. Consideration must be given to their capabilities to report accurately, efficiently and to the right place, and to use the appropriate data source. We will consider the cost, the functionality of the packages, and the support offered.

With a high-quality reporting package, we will be able to analyse data consistently and accurately, and present this clearly.

5. Data literacy training

Most of the Council's officers handle data in some way, whether by gathering, recording and/or interpreting data. Doing so is second nature for many and is done automatically as part of a wider process. But as the use and importance of data increases, we must ensure that the Council's staff are alert to the potential of data, and are empowered to use it effectively, and understand the risks.

We will introduce data literacy training to everyone in the Council. A workforce that makes smart use of data can contribute significantly to improving the quality of our data and strengthening the quality of our services.

In 2018, Wales was the part of the UK with the highest proportion of people (19%) with no digital skills.

6. Presenting performance data.

The methods of gathering and presenting performance data (e.g., for the process of challenging and supporting performance) varies per department, which causes inconsistency in the information presented. Some of these deficiencies can be traced back to deficiencies either in the way the data is reported or in the accuracy of the data within the systems that are used in the departments.

Our changes to our arrangements for gathering and reporting on data will address both of these deficiencies, and will also improve our departmental performance reports and access to them. For example, we can use digital performance dashboards to harmonise and make consistent how the departments present data, as well as make this process automated, and we can also share elements of these on our digital channels for use by the public.

Administration and Business Systems

'Facilitate and automate routine and transactional work, and use technology to add value to services.'

Digital technology has an important role to play in modernising the services provided to the people of Gwynedd. We can turn to pioneering technology solutions to facilitate the running of services, enhance customer experiences and increase productivity, mainly through automating activities that are transactional and repetitive, and focusing on what *truly* adds value. We can promote smart and flexible working and increase the effectiveness and efficiency of services.

We will give attention to the following items as part of this priority:

1. Introduce Artificial Intelligence for transactional and routine activities.

Although several services are using digital technology, much manual activity persists. We can introduce Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology and a Robotic Processes Server to reduce manual work in administration, especially in activities that are transactional and routine. We will form a designated team in the Development Unit to specialise in Artificial Intelligence and identify opportunities to transform services.

The technology will allow us to not only make savings, but to add value to services and improve the experiences of customers. Despite these advantages, we cannot avoid concerns regarding Artificial Intelligence, and we will follow good practice guidance issued by the Government.

2. Digitising and automating invoicing arrangements.

The invoicing system is an integral part of the Council's financial management. It continues to be paper-based, and these papers exchange hands several times before they are input into the Council's financial system. As well as being laborious, invoicing also makes it a necessity to be in the office. This system is used by departments in the Council and by external providers, and significant improvements can be introduced to accelerate the process and make it more secure, accurate and efficient.

We will map the current work process, redesign it and introduce a new and faster digital process, removing the reliance on location, creating anti-fraud standards and reducing the administrative burden.

3. Reduce and improve our use of paper

Although digital correspondence by the Council is increasing, the printing of documentation continues. It must be acknowledged that printing is important for those customers who do not correspond digitally; therefore it is unavoidable that paper correspondence will continue to some extent, but we will focus on increasing the online presence of our services to rationalise the use.

We will identify a procedure where correspondence that is sent via mail is centralised, streamlining the effort of printing documentation, folding it, putting the correspondence in an envelope and preparing it for postage. Where correspondence is returned to the Council on paper, we will integrate this into the digital system rather than inputting the information manually.

This Plan will reduce the time taken to send correspondence through the post, and the resource required to do this.
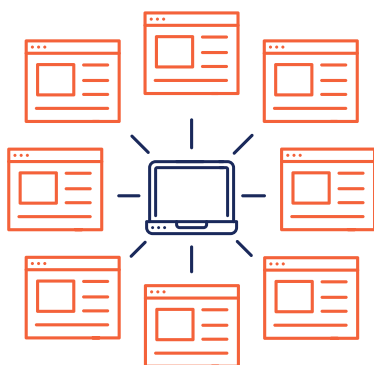
It is estimated that around

1.4 billion

trees end up in landfill each year due to paper waste.

4. Rationalising the systems used

Around 300 digital systems are used in the Council, with each one incurring an effort or financial cost to maintain – they are a mixture of systems that have been developed internally or purchased from third party companies. Often, only part of the system is used, as that is sufficient for the purposes of the service, but the unused models may be valuable to other services, and we will consider this element in the exercise.

The first phase of the plan will involve conducting a full and thorough review of all our systems, working with every department to create a complete asset register of our systems. The second part of this exercise will be to rationalise the systems, either by combining them into fewer systems or identifying new systems that can serve across several services.

The outcome of these exercises will be to protect us from waste where a provision already exists or where a new provision would not be appropriate. By reducing the number of systems we support, the Council will improve data consistency, deliver savings and reduce the demand on our infrastructure.

5. A review of the organisation's management systems

"Organisational management systems" is the term given to those systems that are used to plan and manage an organisation's resources, including financial and workforce planning. There are three elements in Cyngor Gwynedd:

- A third-party system for financial management.
- A third-party system for payroll.
- An internal system for planning the workforce.

An effort is made to keep the information that is shared between the above systems current and accurate, which is a mixture of automated steps as well as manual operations. We will review our organisational management needs, comparing our current provision against integrated systems that provide a full provision in these fields, and introduce a business case to carry on as we are or change.

The business case will present the effort and the costs involved with continuing as we are or changing, as well as the impact of this on our workforce and our services.

6. The Internet of Things.

The Internet of Things (IoT) are objects or "things" connected to the internet that have sensors, collect data from the sensors, and make decisions based on the data. The Council is already innovating in this field and has introduced solutions in terms of the environment, but we can do more with the technology, including saving energy, monitoring the climate, predict floods, facilitate independent living in social care, street enforcement, waste and much more.

We will create an Internet of Things Hub, which will include expertise in Internet of Things technologies, the infrastructure support to enable it, and access to investment in order to introduce sensors for delivering various projects. We will prioritise projects in the environmental and care sectors, with the environmental field offering opportunities to make financial savings by rationalising our energy use and having a positive impact on our carbon footprint, as well as modelling environmental events such as flooding. In social care, we can improve residents' quality of living by supporting them to live independently, such as through telecare.

The technology associated with the Internet of Things varies. Broadband is used by some types of the technology, mobile phone signal by others, and increasingly, and cost-effectively, low-power wide-area network (LP-WAN) technology. As the demography and landscape of Gwynedd varies, and connectivity is weak in some places, we will ask which one of the above is most suitable for use. In some circumstances, LP-WAN technology will be the only option, and will very often be the best option when other connections are available.

We will support Ambition North Wales to improve broadband connection (1Gb), a 4/5G mobile phone network and establish a LP-WAN network throughout North Wales. Widespread use of the internet of things will contribute to reducing our carbon emissions, save energy costs, enable our residents to live more independently for longer, monitor and model environmental events such as flooding, and contribute to several new ways of delivering more effective services.

7. Make the best use of the Microsoft365 platform

Like other organisations, the Council uses Microsoft packages. These are deeply integrated in our services and activities, but we can do much more with our subscriptions.

To make full use of the Microsoft packages, we face some challenges. The platform has grown substantially and is still growing, with many of the recent options within the product having been disabled because of limited resources, and the platform continues to grow with new functions being introduced continually. There are several different licensing methods for Microsoft products, with one main method provided for all our users, but through profiling and stringent control of who requires what, we can rationalise somewhat on the costs of the licences.

We will provide more support to the Microsoft365 platform, across four fields:

- **Technical**.
  Research the latest functions offered and enable access to them according to staff needs.
- **Digital**.
  Develop software packages by using the PowerApps development platforms and Copilot Artificial Intelligence packages.
- **Information Security.**
  Research the effect of using the product from the perspective of information security, including major changes to information sharing and retention periods.
- **Administrative**.
  Stricter control and user profiling to rationalize expenditure on licences.

We will make more effective use of the choices that are available within the product packages, improve internal administration, introduce more digital solutions earlier, use them safely and rationalise the use of the licences.

8. Facilitate collaboration with partners

The Council is working closely with several external partners, but digital arrangements can sometimes be problematic when working across organisations. Historically, the Council has been ahead in facilitating this type of collaboration, whether by configuring the national collaboration network, Govroam, or by adopting SharePoint technology earlier than most organisations. These have contributed greatly to joint working between the Council and the Health Board, but we can facilitate further cross-organisational working.

Cyngor Gwynedd cannot enable joint working by itself; we must move step-by-step with partners, by introducing internal changes jointly, or by investing in alternative platforms. Inevitably, security is prominent in any system, and our ability to support will also depend on the resources that are available.

Cyngor Gwynedd will be a ready and willing partner to support measures and initiatives to remove digital barriers to enable collaboration with strategic partners.

9. Connectivity and digital inclusion

The context of Gwynedd's digital connectivity suggests that 94.6% of the County's dwellings are in an area that can receive superfast broadband of 30mbps or higher, with 2.36% receiving a supply of less than 10mbps, and 0.66% receiving a supply that is less than 2mbps. There is very little data on the level of inclusion, which is the ability and readiness to use digital media, but a recent survey (March 2023) by Audit Wales suggests that an average of 7% of adults in Wales are digitally excluded.

The UK Government is responsible for digital connectivity infrastructure in the UK, but through funding, the digital projects of the Ambition North Wales growth programme have been identified to improve connectivity; specifically, the "Connected Campuses", "Connected Key Sites and Corridors" and the "Last Few %" projects. Cyngor Gwynedd will support Ambition North Wales to develop these projects, including technical and practical input to alleviate any barriers such as planning policies, or by enabling the Council's public buildings to be used as part of any solution.

We will continue to support the North Wales Regional Skills Partnership to improve digital skills in Gwynedd, as well as improvement programmes that are part of the Digital Gwynedd campaign to increase digital inclusion.

In developing this Plan, we have considered those characteristics that affect the public's ability to engage with digital technology effectively, for example age and poverty. We have worked with CWMPAS recommendations in terms of digital inclusion, and the Plan will contribute to the Council's ambition of being an Age Friendly authority by 2025.

10. Schools and Education

Cyngor Gwynedd adopted the Gwynedd Schools Digital Strategy at the end of 2021. This is a comprehensive strategy and leads on the mission to "support digital learning to ensure the best opportunity for the pupils of Gwynedd". The principles and plans in the digital strategy for the schools are an integral part of the Council's digital arrangements and plans, and we will keep the spirit and purpose of the strategy up to date to reflect the Council's digital schemes.

Workforce

'Create a more effective and productive workforce, where the abilities of staff are supported and enhanced by technology.'

The smooth and successful running of our services will continue to depend on the skill of our staff, but we can invest in digital technology to empower and support them. By equipping employees with digital skills, empowering them to use technology wisely and creating appropriate workspaces, the Council can stimulate innovation and increase productivity. We must create a culture that encourages the use of technology and ensure that all members of staff have access to it, as well as attracting and training the digital skills we need. There is an opportunity to embed agility and smart working in the organisation, and through this, modernise the services provided for the benefit of the people of Gwynedd.

We will give attention to the following items as part of this priority:

1. Introduce a digital account to every officer

The Council employs approximately 7,000 staff, with just under half (40%) of them having a corporate account, mainly representing school- and office-based staff. These accounts are used to stage several systems, including access to e-mails, the Council's intranet and staff Self-Service. Accounts are accessed with laptops provided by the support units of the Information Technology Service.

The same provision is not offered to the rest of the workforce, but access to internal modules such as staff Self-Service is allowed through personal devices and accounts. Staff from the social care services, manual workers and support staff in schools represent the main part of this cohort, and we want to create corporate accounts for them so that everyone has fair access. This will include email addresses, and we want to prepare specific areas in the workplace where these staff will be able to access digital platforms. A training programme will be prepared to empower staff to use the provision effectively.

By moving from a semi-digital Council to a Council that enables all the workforce to communicate and administer digitally, we will reduce our use of paper and postage costs, deliver training in a timely manner, change the mindset of staff to think digitally, and identify opportunities with these skills to improve services.

2. Support the vision of the "Working for the Future" programme

Much changed during lockdown, especially our ways of working. Staff are now working hybrid – in the Council's offices and remotely.

There are many advantages to this way of working, including work-life balance, staff morale, and staff recruitment and retention. Nevertheless, we must ensure that there is provision in place to facilitate this new way of working and support staff to be effective, wherever their workplace.

The digital element of the provision will focus on supplying equipment on desks in the offices, connections to the network, a provision for hybrid meetings in the meeting rooms, and a system for allocating space in the office to work. We will also facilitate a smooth transition from working in the office to working elsewhere. The "Working for the Future' arrangements present an opportunity to rationalise our office estate, and a comprehensive list of statistics will be provided to measure our use and model our trends for the future.

3. Training, skills and digital thinking

A significant percentage of the Council's workforce uses digital technology in their work in some way, but it is assumed that IT skills and digital awareness varies. IT skills include the ability to make effective use of digital systems and tools, and digital awareness is the ability to identify the best medium for the purpose of the work. We will conduct the following exercises:

- Profiling jobs and identifying the level of digital skills required to fulfil the duties of that role.
- Assess the digital skills of the workforce and compare these with the expectations of the job.
- Create a programme of digital skills training, as well as mindset change workshops to:
    - Ensure that staff and officers have the appropriate skills and knowledge.
    - Develop and foster a culture of working digitally.
    - Follow change management principles to support individuals to cope and adapt their way of thinking.

It is essential that we clearly communicate the reason for these changes, demonstrating how digital technical skills contribute to improving services and facilitating work tasks. This campaign will involve the whole Council and will require clear and firm leadership.

4. Promote Cyngor Gwynedd as a digital employer

The digital employment field is extremely competitive, and the ability now to work remotely for regional, national and international companies has increased the competition. It means that the Council is competing with organizations around the world for digital talent, and recruiting and retaining staff remains a challenge. One challenge is the lack of awareness that the Council is among the largest digital employers in the area, meaning that many do not consider the Council when looking for jobs.

Other areas also face recruitment challenges, such as the social care. We have therefore introduced significant improvements to recruitment processes, including the introduction of a new jobs page on the Council's website which is much clearer and user-friendly.

Since 2019, the Council has recruited

5 👤👤👤👤👤

Degree Apprentices in Software Engineering, and

1 👤

Degree Apprentice in Cyber Security.

Cyngor Gwynedd works closely with the North Wales Regional Skills Partnership, being a key part of its Digital Skills Group, and contributes to the agenda of up-skilling and attracting new digital talent. The situation will not improve unless we take action to do somethings differently, and, due to the fierce competition, it is important that we sell the Council as an attractive place to follow a career in digital technology. We will hold several exercises to try to raise awareness of Cyngor Gwynedd as a digital employer and make our digital jobs more attractive by:

- Collaborating with schools by holding digital activities and workshops to show that the Council offers exciting careers in digital technology.
- Amend job titles and job descriptions, aligning them more closely with the DDaT (Digital, Data and Technology) framework.
- Create more apprenticeships.
- Continue to support and contribute to the work of the North Wales Regional Skills Partnership.

We will raise the profile of Cyngor Gwynedd as an employer in digital technology, create opportunities to attract more apprentices, amend job descriptions to be more attractive, and create an environment where it is possible to pursue a long and successful career in the Council.
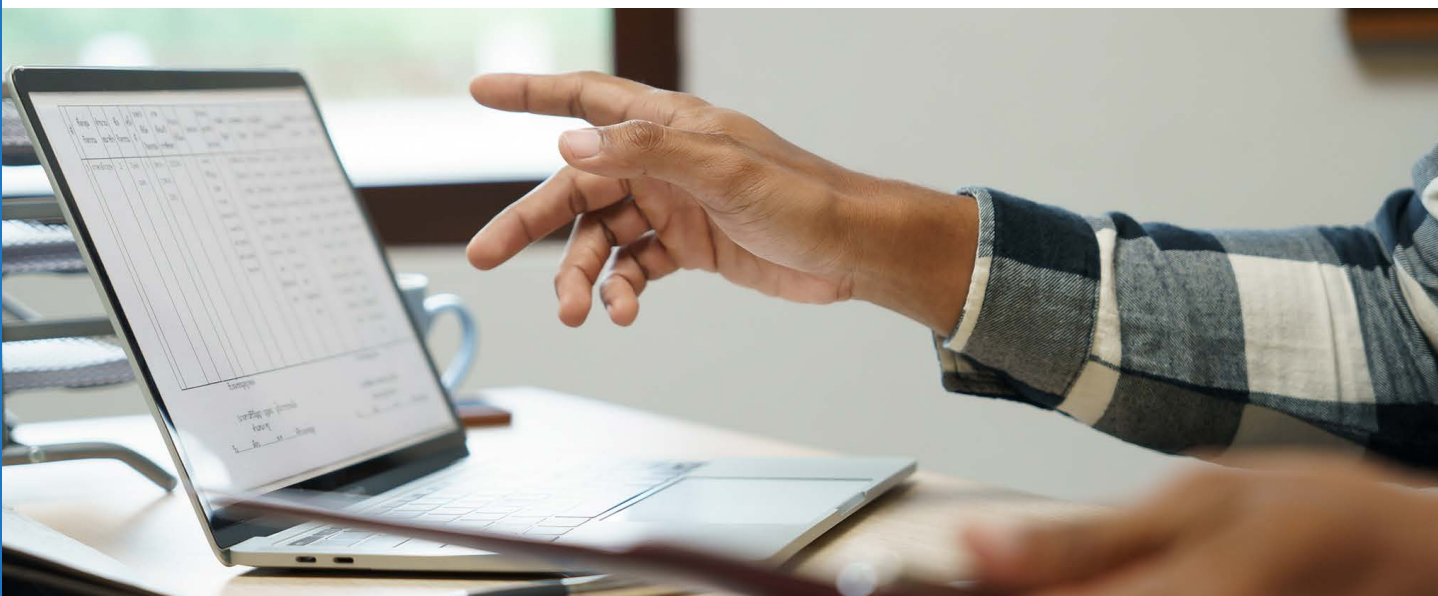
Resilience

'Developing a robust digital infrastructure in order to protect the Council's services.'

Digital technology offers innovative solutions and many opportunities, but it does poses challenges in terms of maintaining a resilient platform. As we become more and more reliant on technology, the risks arising from a failure in our infrastructure are increasing, be that through an incident such as flooding or fire, or through cyber-attacks and data security breaches. We must ensure that the Council's infrastructure remains resilient and is able to respond to, and fully recover from, any losses that result from the incident.

We will give attention to the following items as part of this priority:

1. Upgrade analogue lines to digital

From 2025, ISDN (Integrated Services Digital Network) and PSTN (Public Switched Telephone Network) telephone lines will be switched off permanently. These connections include telephone lines and data connections across several services – burglar alarms, lift alarms, crossings, weather stops, and traditional telephone lines. It is therefore essential that we recognise our current use of analogue lines, finding an alternative solution for those services that must continue.

We will divide the project into two phases, with the first phase identifying our current use of analogue lines. This phase is expected to show whether alternative provision is needed, and will likely highlight services that are out of date and no longer required. Savings can be made on those connections that will be switched off, but the alternative provision that needs to be introduced may mean costs above the current provision. The second phase introduces the alternative technology. We will appoint a resource internally to lead on these phases, but it is expected that external expertise will have to be commissioned to investigate some links that cannot be traced.

The result of the exercise will be to rationalise the number of connections and provide a solid and durable provision for those services that need to continue.

2. Service continuity

Service continuity includes many elements of our digital provision, and how it can provide and maintain a resilient platform to support our services, whatever the circumstances. Losing our digital systems would cause problems for the services provided, as well as for the people of Gwynedd.

Just under half (48%) of UK organisations identify a "catastrophic cyber attack" as the highest risk scenario.

Although our infrastructure provision is robust, improvements can be introduced in terms of our ability to respond to incidents, be they incidents originating from cyber-attacks or another issue such as flooding or fire. Risks are ever-present, and we must be aware of them – it is a rapidly developing field that requires continuous investment to stay ahead of all current and future risks.

With new digital opportunities constantly being introduced and officers eager to utilise the available technology, cyber security will become increasingly important. There is need to introduce new arrangements, structures and policies to address the risk, together with systems to protect staff and the people of Gwynedd from cyber-attacks and the ability to recover from an incident effectively.

We will invest in resources, software and procedures to strengthen our defences against cyber-attacks, give more freedom to share information and access systems, and create provision to be able to respond to incidents outside of the Council's core hours.

3. Upgrade the broadcasting provision in the Council Chambers

The Council holds meetings of the Full Council and the democratic committees in the Dafydd Orwig Chamber and Hywel Dda Chamber. Only face-to-face meetings have traditionally been held here, but because of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, the Council is required to allow councillors to be able to join meetings virtually. We have identified four types of meetings where councillors will be able to join remotely. Webcasts will continue, and the provision will work easily in Welsh and English.

The provision is now in place but includes several different technologies. It means that the system of administering and supporting Chamber meetings is complex, with different elements requiring specialist support. Nor does the present provision reflect the latest technologies now available in the market.

We will review the current arrangements with the intention of introducing new provision that has been designed for holding multi-location and bilingual meetings, and where they can be broadcasted live. It will be necessary to ensure that the provision is simple and easy to use, durable, and transforms the chambers so that they can be used for all types of meetings.
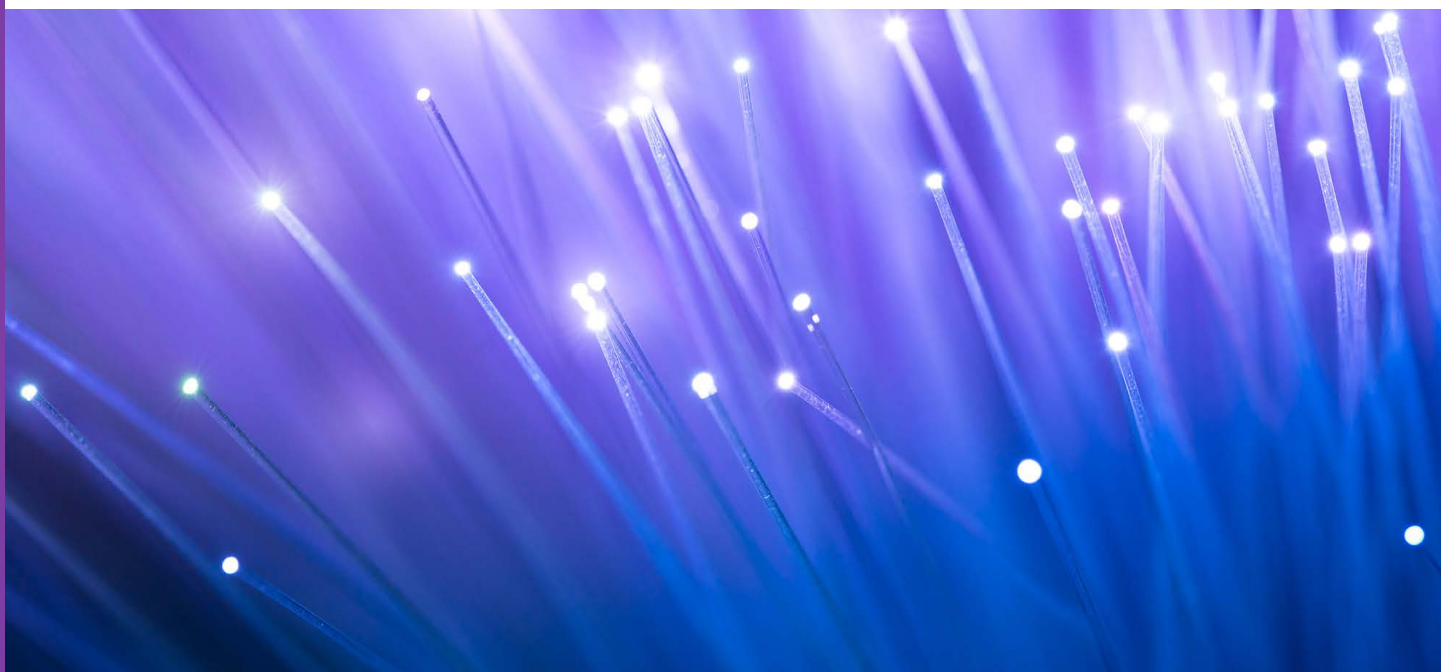
Contribution to the 5 Ways of Working and the 6 missions of the Welsh Government Digital Strategy (2022)

Digital Priority	Development project	5 Ways of Working					Welsh Government Digital Strategy (2022)					
		Long term	Prevention	Integration	Collaboration	Involvement	Digital Services	Digital Inclusion	Digital Skills	The Digital Economy	Digital Connectivity	Data and Collaboration
Customer Contact	Enhance methods of communication, enquiry and submitting service requests.	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓		
	Improvements to the Council's telephone provision	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
	Redesign the Council's corporate website	✓	✓			✓	✓			✓		
	Develop and promote apGwynedd	✓	✓			✓	✓					
	Siop Gwynedd video kiosk	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓	
	Service payment machines	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
Information and Data	Identifying our data	✓	✓	✓	✓							✓
	Data Charter	✓	✓	✓								✓
	Create a data warehouse (*wGwynedd*)	✓	✓	✓	✓							✓
	Data reporting platform	✓		✓	✓	✓						✓
	Data literacy training	✓	✓						✓			✓
	Reporting on performance	✓		✓		✓						✓
Administration and Business Systems	Introduce Artificial Intelligence for transactional and routine activities	✓	✓	✓			✓					
	Digitising and automating invoicing arrangements	✓	✓	✓			✓					
	Reduce and improve our use of paper	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓					
	Rationalise the systems used	✓	✓				✓					✓
	A review of organisational management systems	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓					✓
	The Internet of Things	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓
	Make the best use of the Microsoft365 platform	✓	✓	✓			✓					
	Facilitate collaboration with partners	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓
	Digital connectivity	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
	Schools and education	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Workforce	Introduce a digital account to every officer	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓			
	Support the vision of the "Working for the Future" programme	✓										
	Training, skills and digital thinking	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓		
	Promote Cyngor Gwynedd as a digital employer	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓		
Resilience	Upgrade analogue lines to digital	✓	✓				✓					
	Service continuity	✓	✓				✓					
	Upgrade the broadcasting provision in the Council Chambers	✓				✓	✓	✓				

Governance Arrangements

The developments in this Plan will be driven and supported by the Council's Digital Transformation Board, chaired by the Corporate Director, with support from the Cabinet Member for Finance and Information Technology, the Assistant Head of Information Technology and Finance, and Heads of Department. The Board has established a network of digital sub-groups to involve stakeholders across the Council's services.

The Board takes ownership of the vision presented in the Digital Plan and will be responsible for:

• Prioritising and coordinating the improvement priority projects.

• Allocating adequate resources to effectively carry out tasks to realise the projects.

• Ensuring that the membership of the Board and sub-groups is representative and have the skills and the authority to act.

• Keep the Plan updated by introducing changes according to the Council's requirements and those of its services, and/or changes in technology.

The Department of Finance and Information Technology will report on the progress of the Plan, and that according to the Council's performance management arrangements, while the Digital Transformation Board will present an annual report on what has been achieved.

GWYNEDDIGIDOL

Cefnogi pobol Gwynedd mewn byd digidol