

# Annual Digital Report 2022/23

<b>Created by</b>	Mark Bleazard
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<b>Reviewed by</b>	Digital Services
<b>Date</b>	

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# Executive Summary

## Digital Strategy

- **The development of the Digital Strategy 2022-27 represents an important step for the council**, supporting the Corporate Plan
- The strategy is based on important principles and has **four themes**:
  - **Digital Transformation** - we will transform services by the innovative use of digital technology that is effective, easy to use and designed around user needs
  - **Digital Skills and Inclusion** - we will develop the digital skills of our citizens, employees and members plus support improved access to digital technology
  - **Data and Collaboration** - we will improve service delivery by better use of data and increased collaboration built on secure systems and processes
  - **Digital Infrastructure and Connectivity** - we will drive excellent digital infrastructure and connectivity for the city and for the council
- Various activities have already commenced that contribute to the delivery of outcomes identified in the Digital Strategy 2022-27. This is the first report to include progress on activities and outcomes associated with the strategy and the format of the report has been revised accordingly

## Organisation and Governance

- **The report highlights the importance of the Shared Resource Service (SRS), the council's Digital team and Service Areas in improving IT provision and the impact on service delivery**
- The governance for the Shared Resource Service is included as Appendix 1
- Groups are in place to support schools in strategic developments and deliver the "EdTech" project funded by Welsh Government

## IT Service (Shared Resource Service - SRS) Performance

- **The SRS exceeded its targets for three of the four performance targets for Newport**
- Performance has been above its target consistently good in terms of calls resolved against SLA during the last four financial years. The performance for customer satisfaction and calls resolved at first point of target also exceeded their targets. The time to answer calls did not meet its target but it has improved considerably from previous years

## Funding

- Spend on IT/digital is incurred in various areas - majority of this is with the Shared Resource Service (SRS) although the council has a number of retained budgets
- Additional funding was provided for three years which made a positive impact. Working with SRS, the council has identified significant savings in 23/24 in light of budget challenges
- Schools fund their own IT provision from their own budgets, supplemented by Welsh Government "EdTech" funding

## Digital Strategy Progress

### Digital Transformation

- **The web site redevelopment project has gained momentum with an implementation partner procured to implement Local Government Drupal**
- The finance system replacement project is due to go live in the third quarter of 23/24
- The council migrated to the Microsoft Always On VPN (Virtual Private Network) solution
- The council agreed to roll out the Microsoft Teams Phone solution in 23/24
- Technology has provided a key part in continued effective service delivery including Microsoft Teams meetings and hybrid council meetings facilitated by new audio-visual equipment in the Council Chamber and meeting rooms. A room/desk booking system was developed and implemented in partnership with the SRS
- A council "Smart Home" pilot has been launched, led by adult services to promote the use and availability of assistive technologies for independent living

- Robotic Process Automation (RPA) technology is designed to automate repetitive tasks to reduce data entry and streamline routine tasks such as migration of e-mails and for “Cost of Living” payment processes.

### **Digital Skills and Inclusion**

- Several cohorts of the council ‘Get Connected’ free digital skills course were run and the council needs to consider a sustainable delivery model
- The council’s Adult Community Learning team delivered a range of fully accredited ICT and Digital Skills courses and from Sept 2023 digital skills courses and Computers Don’t Bite will be free
- Community Connectors, Libraries and community hub teams signpost the availability of digital skills sessions and can assist with basic digital queries
- All Newport City Council libraries provide free public access to internet enabled PCs
- The council provides a free public Wi-Fi service in over 50 public buildings in the city. This service is being reviewed to remove duplication whilst continuing to provide an important service
- The City Centre Wi-Fi is provided as a concession and this serves the area around the city centre
- Free Wi-Fi on Newport buses is provided in partnership with Newport Transport. This service has always been well used and the council uses it as a way to engage with the public with short online surveys

### **Data and Collaboration**

- Audit Wales acknowledged that overall considerable progress had been achieved by the council with the need to ensure that the council continues to take a ‘whole organisation approach’ to effectively using evidence and data to inform decision-making through use of the Newport Intelligence Hub services
- Newport’s Intelligence Hub have continued to provide support to regional collaboration including the Public Service Board and other partnerships
- Full details of the information risk management arrangements are reported in the [Annual Information Risk Report](#), Information and Cyber Security are also reported in the Corporate Risk register currently
- **PSN accreditation was challenging but was achieved in June 2023**
- **Newport City Council satisfied the requirements of the Payment Card Industry (PCI) Data Security Standards in July 2022 with the assistance of SRS**
- During 22/23 Audit Wales carried out reviews of cyber security arrangements of the council, evidence based decision making and on the digital strategy development
- The council continues to provide training to staff using Microsoft Teams to provide the most interaction possible and improved learning
- There was good attendance during the year for both corporate and Social Services. E-learning is also required for new starters
- **The information management team provided two training sessions for councillors in June 2023.** 32 out of 51 members attended the courses which will be repeated this year
- The implementation of a Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) system and Security Operations Centre (SOC) with SRS was implemented to monitor potential cyber attacks and provide improved preventative measures
- Freedom of Information performance for 2022/23 was 91.0% of requests responded to within 20 working days, above the target of 88%
- The council narrowly missed its performance target for dealing with Subject Access Requests. 70.9% of requests were responded to within the deadline, against a target of 75%

### **Digital Infrastructure and Connectivity**

- **Newport City Council was successful with a bid to Welsh Government’s Local Broadband Fund (LBF)** to improve full fibre connectivity and provide in-building assistive technology and telecare services to three council managed adult residential care homes
- The project is progressing well with delivery during 23/24

- The council recognises the importance of the digital infrastructure of the city and welcomes developments to improve the city's digital infrastructure. As well as larger communications providers, two smaller suppliers have plans to roll out "full fibre" connectivity in parts or of across Newport. Full fibre or fibre to the premises broadband offers the highest theoretical speeds possible
- 5G networks are starting to be rolled out by mobile operators across the UK. 5G is available outdoors from 3 different network operators in Newport. However, the coverage is less than for 4G services
- **A major project led by the SRS to move all SRS partners to a new data centre was completed in April 2023.** This is a major milestone for the SRS partnership with all partners now sharing infrastructure in the Vantage Data Centre
  - This will provide better resilience, availability and reductions in costs.
  - This has already resulted in energy consumption and associated costs
- **In addition to the data centre move during 22/23 three major IT systems were migrated to the cloud** with two more in progress
- The Community Safety Network used for CCTV needs to be reviewed and a solution identified
- The council continues to pilot an Internet of Things (IoT) network that includes trialling sensors connected to the network for various purposes.

# 1. Background and Purpose

Technology plays a critically important role in effective and efficient service delivery for organisations. Newport City Council relies hugely on its IT systems for effective day to day operation. Effective service delivery during and after the pandemic, with greatly increased home working, has demonstrated the robustness of IT systems. However, the organisation needs to improve its use of technology further. The provision of digital infrastructure for the city is another important aspect of the use of technology in the day to day lives of citizens and businesses. The development of the council's [Digital Strategy 2022-27](#) is an important development that is detailed further within this report.

The actions outlined in this report form part of the People, Policy and Transformation service plan and further detail is incorporated in the Digital team annual business plan.

## 1.1. Purpose of the Report and Benefits

The purpose of this report is to provide an assessment of the IT and digital arrangements for the council and identify where action is required to identify weaknesses and deliver improvements. This is the fourth Annual Digital Report designed to complement the Annual Information Risk Report which is now in its eleventh year. It is now the primary means of reporting on the [Digital Strategy 2022-27](#) and is the first report to do this and introduce its themes.

The benefits of the report are as follows:

- To provide an overview of the council's IT and digital services
- To highlight the importance of digital services to the organisation especially given the impact of the pandemic, the opportunities they provide and the risks of under-investment
- To compare performance with previous years with the aim of continuous improvement
- To report progress on the Digital Strategy by theme and do so annually in this report
- To identify opportunities, address weaknesses and develop an action plan

## 2. Current Position

This part of the report identifies the council's current position in relation to digital services.

### 2.1. Digital Strategy

As detailed in last year's report, work has been undertaken to replace the previous Digital Strategy. Following extensive public and staff consultation a [Digital Strategy 2022 - 27](#) was developed and this was approved by Cabinet in April 2023. The new digital strategy defines the digital aspirations for the city over the next five years. An extract of the Digital Strategy is included in Appendix 3

The strategy is guided by important principles:-

- Innovation
- Data driven
- User centred
- Inclusive
- Collaborative
- Secure
- Green

The strategy is based on four key themes:-

1. Digital Transformation
2. Digital Skills and Inclusion
3. Data and Collaboration
4. Digital Infrastructure and Connectivity



It will support and improve the wellbeing of residents and employees, as well as enabling businesses to thrive in the city. The strategy sets out how the council will use technology to transform the delivery of its services. This represents an ambitious digital vision that embraces innovation delivered in partnership with the Shared Resource Service and other key partners.

Various activities have already commenced that contribute to the delivery of outcomes identified in the [Digital Strategy 2022 - 27](#). This is the first annual Digital Report that will report on activities and outcomes associated with the strategy and the format of the report has been revised to reflect this.



## 2.2. Organisation and Governance

There have been no major changes to the organisation and governance arrangements for the council and the Shared Resource Service (SRS) partnership. Some information is provided below with more detail included in Appendix 1 for reference.

### IT Service – Shared Resource Service (SRS)

The IT Service became a partner in the Shared Resource Service (SRS) on 1/4/2017 so Newport City council has been a partner for six years. The SRS is also made up of Torfaen County Borough Council, Monmouthshire County Council, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council and Gwent Police. There is SRS representation on the various council groups including the Digital Board, Information Governance Group and project boards. The Digital team provides the link between the council and the SRS. This important relationship continues to develop and further improvements have been made during the last year. As a result of a large amount of collective effort, the partnership is developing positively. As detailed later, this includes a data centre move and a number of collaborative initiatives.

### Digital Services

The Digital team sits in the People, Policy and Transformation service area and is complemented by the existing Information Management team and Complaints team to form Digital Services.

The Digital team plays a key role for the council. It provides the link between the council and the SRS for IT work and always aims to add value in the process. It maintains an important relationship with the SRS and undertakes a client management role on behalf of the council including performance management with the SRS. It has a strategic role for the council as demonstrated in its lead on the new [Digital Strategy 2022-27](#). It has an important part to play in the Digital Board and contributed to various project boards. The team also manage a number of “retained” IT budgets including contracts for most large IT applications (financials, HR etc.), a PC replacement budget for the council and a capital programme for major infrastructure updates. The team manages a newly created cloud budget and has led on the migration of systems to the cloud as detailed elsewhere in this report. This provides improved service delivery and a better funding model.

The Digital team also has a more operational/tactical role. This role is around:-

- reactive incidents
- core planned work to maintain the existing IT infrastructure
- projects
- compliance including Public Services Network (PSN)

In all these areas the Digital team manages the escalation and prioritisation with the SRS as necessary, working with services on behalf of the council. It also provides general advice and guidance to the council and plays a key communications role. This role is an important one for the council and the relationship with the SRS which continues to improve.

### Service Areas

Service Areas use a number of IT systems to operate their services. Services are responsible for the information stored in their respective systems and to maximise the benefits of technology in conjunction with Digital and the SRS. The Digital team has worked with Service Areas in a more proactive migration of IT systems to the cloud. The development of the [Digital Strategy 2022-27](#) has included a large amount of engagement with internal stakeholders to incorporate their priorities in the strategy and future plans.

## Groups

### Digital Board

This officer board provides and supports the strategic direction for the Council on digital matters. The role of the board has been reviewed, its terms of reference updated and membership revised. The role of the board is primarily now to oversee the implementation of the [Digital Strategy 2022-27](#). When necessary the role of the board is to prioritise large scale projects. The Board is chaired by Head of People, Policy and Transformation and comprises representatives from areas across the organisation and SRS.

### “New Normal”

The “New Normal” Board was set up to develop plans for the longer term strategy of the council as a result of the pandemic. This was with a view to recognising benefits identified during the pandemic and incorporating this into future plans for service delivery going forward. The planned outcomes of this work have now been completed and reported to Cabinet. This Board has now ended.

### Digital Champions

The council has approximately 30 “Digital Champions” who are advocates for the use of digital technology. They provide a key contact point for services using digital technology. They were a key part of the testing for internet filtering migration, web browser compatibility, Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) for mobile devices, desk booking application testing etc. The intention is to enhance the role of council digital champions to improve support for employees.

### Schools

Schools fund their own IT provision and the majority use the in house schools service provided by the Shared Resource Service (SRS) although a number have provision from other service providers. A strategic group called the Schools IT Strategic Group with representation from schools, the Education service, Shared Resource Service and Digital meets regularly. The group has the following roles:-

- ensure that the ICT Strategic Group is kept informed of digital developments in education, identifying new opportunities and trends
- identify and support opportunities to innovate and share best practice, particularly in the use of Hwb and assist with the provision of professional learning opportunities and development of case studies
- support the ICT Strategic Group in researching what digital technology could help and enhance provision in schools
- provide professional advice from a teaching and learning perspective on the suitability and use of digital devices in schools

This strategic group focuses on the development of the IT provision in schools and recognises the importance of this to effective teaching and learning. Welsh Government provided additional funding designed to improve the infrastructure of schools under the “EdTech” programme. This and other initiatives have been progressed with the Education service, Shared Resource Service and Digital.

## 2.3. IT Service (SRS) Performance

### Performance Information

The Shared Resource Service has a number of common performance measures across all their respective partners. As such all partners have common targets and are measured on the same basis.

SRS performance is reported annually to Performance Scrutiny Committee – Partnerships. The [last report was presented on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2022](#).

## Performance Measures

The SRS has a number of common Performance Indicators (PI's) agreed and monitored across all partners as part of the Service Level Agreement.

### Percentage of Calls Resolved Against Service Level Agreement (SLA)

Performance for the last 4 years is detailed below.

Year	Percentage of Calls Resolved Against Service Level Agreement (SLA)	Target
2022/2023	96.1%	85%
2021/2022	94.9%	85%
2020/2021	91.8%	85%
2019/2020	93.0%	85%

The performance for the year 22/23 is 96.1%. This represents excellent performance for reactive calls for 22/23, over 10% above the target of 85%. This represents the best performance against SLA of any year. Performance has been consistently above target in each of the 4 years. This demonstrates that reactive calls are being responded to well and generally resolved within target. Performance is consistently very good throughout the year, exceeding the target in every month with monthly variations ranging from 95% to 98%.

### Customer Satisfaction

Performance for the last 4 years is detailed below.

Year	Customer Satisfaction	Target
2022/2023	91.2%	70%
2021/2022	78.0%	70%
2020/2021	64.7%	70%
2019/2020	76.0%	70%

The customer satisfaction performance for the year 22/23 is 91.2%. This represents performance well over the target of 70%. This is based on 793 completed surveys which is above the 680 surveys completed in 21/22. Performance by month ranges from 70% to 98% during the year that represents quite a variation.

### Calls Resolved at First Point of Contact

Performance for the last 4 years is detailed below.

Year	Calls Resolved at First Point of Contact	Target
2022/2023	89.2%	70%
2021/2022	78.8%	70%
2020/2021	58.8%	70%
2019/2020	60.5%	70%

The calls resolved at first point of contact performance for the year 22/23 is 89.2%. This performance is considerably above the target of 70%. This equates to 11,003 calls out of 12,335 that were resolved at first point of contact. Resolving calls at first point of contact solves calls quickly without the need to refer to other IT staff and is beneficial to customers and the IT Service alike. Performance by month ranges from 86% to 92% which is very good and consistent.

## Average Call Response time

Performance for the last 4 years is detailed below.

Year	Average Call Response time	Target
2022/2023	2 minutes 14 seconds	90 seconds
2021/2022	Unavailable but missed target	90 seconds
2020/2021	5 minutes 27 seconds	90 seconds
2019/2020	5 minutes 31 seconds	90 seconds

The average call response time performance for the year 22/23 is 2 minutes 14 seconds. This remains worse than the target but is considerably better than in previous years and represents a positive improvement.

Of the four performance measures, SRS has exceeded the target for three performance measures and missed the target for one performance measure (average call response time). In terms of these four measures this is the same as last year but performance in all those measures is better than 21/22. In addition, this represents improvement from 20/21 and 19/20 when three measures were below target and one exceeded the target.

## Projects

Most of the more significant work detailed in the Digital Strategy Progress section below are categorised as projects which include SRS as a key delivery partner. SRS works with the Digital team to schedule and prioritise project and other types of work. Whilst the key performance indicators for SRS are detailed in the Performance Information above, the successful delivery of projects is a very important part of the service provided as a whole.

## Core Planned

As well as larger time-limited projects, there are required pieces of work to provide additional system features, required updates for security purposes or work as a result of organisational changes. This work is categorised as core planned work. Some of this work can be quite small but it can also be more significant despite not being as large as a project. Some of the more important core planned work for 22/23 is detailed below:-

- Electronic Document Management System (EDMS) upgrades
- Hybrid mail system upgrade
- Office relocations
- Tree database system implementation
- Windmill Farm Childrens Residential Home internet access
- Schools Corporate email to HWB mail migration
- Telephony work for schools
- Upgrade of Windows 10 versions
- NCC Website accessibility updates
- Welsh Government childcare offer
- Non-SLA schools corporate access

Most of this work requires some element of downtime that is identified by SRS, the system provider and Digital Services. Downtime is agreed and scheduled to minimise impact but in a timely manner.

## Reactive

IT systems don't always work as they should and therefore the IT service needs to respond to incidents reactively. These incidents are logged on a service desk system by the SRS service desk or self-service by users. Incidents are primarily managed by the SRS but the Digital team get involved to escalate and assist with higher priority incidents by exception. Details of the performance in relation to reactive incidents are included in the wider performance information section above.

During 22/23 SRS migrated to a new Service Desk system and this is expected to bring various benefits to the SRS and users. Now this is live, self-service logging of incidents will be promoted as this is often most effective for SRS and users.

Occasionally major incidents occur that may result in some system down time. These incidents are managed by SRS with support from Digital Services. On these occasions SRS and Digital Services will identify lessons learned and implement any improvements as a result.

## **2.4. Funding**

As detailed in the organisation section above, spend on IT/digital is incurred in various areas. Most of the funding is provided to the Shared Resource Service (SRS) that employs IT staff and pays for a number of contracts on behalf of the council. The council has a number of budgets that remain with the council including for major systems “retained contracts”, capital programme and equipment spend. The council continues to look to rationalise systems wherever possible. As mentioned above, schools fund their own IT provision from their own budgets. This has been supplemented by Welsh Government “EdTech” funding highlighted elsewhere in this report.

Additional funding over the years 2019-2022 has made a positive difference. Various improvements have been made including the PC replacement budget, cloud funding, cyber security improvements, innovation and development fund, Robotic Process Automation (RPA) system and digital team resources.

Working with SRS, the council has identified collective savings of approximately £560,000 p.a. in 23/24. This was possible due to large contract savings as a result of the SRS data centre move, Digital contracts review and service re-design.

## 3. Digital Strategy Progress

### 3.1. Digital Transformation

#### Financial System Replacement

Following procurement, the implementation of an improved, cloud based financial system for the council progressed well during 22/23. This is expected to improve facilities and streamline financial process. This is a large implementation project that is currently planned to go live in quarter 3 of 23/24.

#### Web Site

The council's primary web site, [www.newport.gov.uk](http://www.newport.gov.uk), was identified as needing significant work in terms of the look and feel plus a review of the amount of content. This was identified as an area for improvement in the development of the digital strategy. This project was subject to delays through technology, business need and skill changes and restarted in quarter one of 23/24. It was identified that the current technical solution could be improved upon and that a new solution could provide a more sustainable delivery model. Following analysis of options, it was agreed to implement the [Local Government Drupal solution](#) used by 37 councils at time of writing this report. According to its web site, *'LocalGov Drupal is a publicly owned asset that delivers a better digital experience for citizens.'* It was agreed that the council and SRS would procure an implementation partner to deliver the new web site during 23/24. Procurement took place and an agreed partner was approved in July 2023 with delivery by the first quarter of 24/25.

#### Microsoft 365

Following a successful pilot, the Always On VPN (Virtual Private Network) solution was implemented and completed in April 2022. This provides a secure, remote access solution for people working remotely. This was a successful roll out and has been positively received. The solution also facilitate various security improvements includes updates to Windows to keep them up to date. The use of personal mobile phones, known as bring Your Own Device (BYOD, for secure access to e-mail and Microsoft Teams has been successfully tested and implemented.

#### Microsoft Teams Phone

The need for a new telephony solution was identified to support more home and flexible working as the current solution relies on a telephone handset or redirection to a work or personal mobile phone or landline. The solution enables users to make and receive calls on a work issued device (laptop primarily but also mobile devices) without any physical telephone handset or diversion to a work or personal mobile/landline. This feature is not available in the current system and integrates with the Microsoft Teams application. Following a successful pilot and the development of a business case, the council agreed to roll out the Microsoft Teams Phone solution. This solution will be rolled out during 23/24 and is anticipated to make savings for the council.

#### New Normal

The council's New Normal Programme Board worked on the council's response to the pandemic and future operations. Technology has provided a key part in continued effective service delivery including Microsoft Teams meetings and hybrid council meetings facilitated by new audio-visual equipment in the Council Chamber and meeting rooms. SRS completed development of a room/desk booking system and this was implemented. As detailed above, the board led on the development of a new telephony system. Equipment needs for the Civic Centre have been identified in line with the future use of the building.

#### Committee Room and Meeting Room Audio-Visual Equipment

Interactive screens previously installed in Committee Rooms and meeting rooms have worked well since installation that enables Microsoft Teams meetings for those in the building as well as enabling people to join remotely. Screens have camera, speaker and microphones to facilitate hybrid meetings.

The Council Chamber has enhanced facilities that were implemented as part of a successful Digital Democracy fund bid. There are plans to review the video and audio facilities in Committee Room 1 with further rooms to be considered as appropriate.

### **“Smart Home” Pilot**

A council “Smart Home” pilot has been launched, led by the Occupational Therapy team in social services supported by the council’s Digital team. This Smart Home is open to the public to promote the use and availability of assistive technologies for independent living. It is located upstairs in Newport Market and can be visited on an appointment basis. The Occupational Therapy team take people through demonstrations of a variety of assistive technology products and services that have the potential to make a positive impact for more independent living.

### **Climate Change**

The council’s Climate Change Plan 2022-2027 includes a digital element and Digital is represented on one of the internal groups progressing council plans. This is an extremely important plan for the council and digital will play its part in some of the initiatives. The [Digital Strategy 2022-27](#) recognises its importance and the need for digital to make a positive contribution including:--

- Actively considering climate change and associated actions
- Support the “new normal” way of working and associated actions
- Provide technology solutions that reduce the need for customer and staff travel
- Maximise the use of digital solutions to reduce paper usage including digitising paper records
- Minimise data storage to reduce infrastructure requirements and reduce energy consumption
- Migrate to more energy efficient technology solutions including data centre and cloud provision taking advantage of economies of scale in terms of cooling efficiency
- Maximise the use of digital solutions such as Internet of Things (IoT) network to measure climate change action and carbon emissions
- Providing information and data to facilitate organisational and individual informed decisions around climate change and carbon emissions
- Work with IT Partner, Shared Resource Service (SRS) to consider climate change measures across service delivery and take appropriate actions to reduce energy usage and reduce carbon and waste
- Consider climate impact and carbon reduction when purchasing IT equipment
- Embed reduce, reuse, recycle principles in IT policies and practices

### **Robotic Process Automation (RPA)**

Robotic Process Automation (RPA) technology is designed to automate repetitive tasks to reduce data entry and streamline routine tasks. It can also be used for data migration as well as on-going tasks. RPA was used successfully for the migration of e-mails stored in the “Archive Manager” solution into the core Microsoft 365 e-mail system. It was also used for part of the “Cost of Living” payment processes administered by the council on behalf of the UK Government. This is a technology that can improve the council’s effectiveness and efficiency so further opportunities for its use are being investigated.

### **“EdTech”**

The digital work with schools involved the spend of £567,000 of “EdTech” funding allocated to the local authority for 22/23. This is to support individual schools and pupils to develop their digital and learning practice. In 22/23 the following were ordered:

- 924 digital devices including laptops, PCs, Chromebooks, iPads, Macbooks and iMacs
- 156 projectors, with 98 of these being laser projectors
- 165 digital screens
- 144 sets of speakers
- 89 webcams
- 344 class sets of headphones

Over the last 3 years, not only has the EdTech funding provided schools with an updated digital infrastructure that meets national standards, but schools have also received:

- 1248 laptops
- 6587 Chromebooks
- 401 PCs
- 935 iPads
- 51 Macbooks and iMacs
- 153 charging trolleys
- 262 projectors
- 263 digital screens
- Plus hundreds of other peripheral devices including monitors, docks, headsets, speakers, webcams, casting devices, splitters and connectors.

## **3.2. Digital Skills and Inclusion**

### **Digital Skills**

During 22/23 several cohorts of the council 'Get Connected' free digital skills course were run. These 6 week courses were delivered by Digital Communities Wales tutors at venues across the city. The course content is based on the essential skills framework which is recognised nationally. The framework sets out the digital skills most Internet users would need to make the most of day-to-day online activities, from shopping online to starting a video call with a friend or colleague.

The council needs to consider a sustainable delivery model of the 'Get Connected' course as the delivery model adopted by Digital Communities Wales is a "train the trainer" type.

The council's Adult Community Learning team have been delivering a range of fully accredited ICT and Digital Skills courses at St Julian's Community Learning & Library Centre and the East Neighbourhood Hub in Maesglas. These include: Computers Don't Bite, Stay In Touch – IT in Everyday Life, Stay Safe Online, Internet & E-Mail, Calendars & Forms, Stay In Touch using Tablets & Smartphones, Introduction to Word Processing, Introduction to Spreadsheets, ICDL Level 1 and ICDL Level 2. Most of these courses only cost £5 and from Sept 2023 digital skills courses and Computers Don't Bite will have no course fee.

Adult Community Learning also offer a range of bespoke courses for community organisations which can be informal, non-accredited sessions if required. This includes offering courses in community venues including residential homes and housing schemes using laptops and tablets. If a venue can be provided, then these courses are usually free of charge. In November and December 2022 free drop-in sessions were held at the University of South Wales (USW) City campus where citizens could have a free digital health check and receive assistance from students studying at the USW. This was a project part-funded through by the UK Government through the UK Community Renewal Fund and was delivered as a partnership with NCC, USW and WIDI.

Community Connectors, Libraries and community hub teams signpost the availability of digital skills sessions. First point of contact employees such as librarians and hub staff can assist with basic digital queries and signpost citizens. Libraries have undertaken a digital skills audit with Digital Communities Wales so as to identify training needs in respect of the NCC libraries workforce.



## **Digital Inclusion**

The council continues its accreditation for the Digital Inclusion Charter with Digital Communities Wales to work towards delivering pledges in the Charter. Newport City Council is a member of the Digital Inclusion Alliance Wales and meets regularly with alliance members to share good practice and knowledge on the subject matter of digital inclusion. The Digital team work with teams in the Prevention and Inclusion service area to signpost and promote digital inclusion opportunities. Several teams across the council have registered as 'Online Centres' with the Good Things Foundation and are able to provide free data sims to those in need. Community connectors team raise awareness of digital inclusion support available to citizens. Digital inclusion information was shared at the "Cost of Living" events held in the city by the Prevention and Inclusion service area.

In October 2022 Newport held its first ever Get Online week as part of the national Get Online Week campaign by the Good Things Foundation. A week long timetable of digital inclusion activities were co-ordinated, bringing together partners across the city including Newport City Homes, Gwent Police, University of South Wales, Coleg Gwent and GAVO. The event held within Newport Market was free for citizens to attend to learn more about what can be accessed across the city. Activities were also held at the Coleg Gwent Campus, USW City Campus and council hubs.

## **Library Internet Access**

All Newport City Council libraries [provide free public access to internet enabled PCs](#). PCs are available on a drop in basis or sessions can be booked in advance.

## **Public Building Wi-Fi**

The council provides a free public Wi-Fi service in over 50 public buildings in the city. The pandemic highlighted the value of this service in digital inclusion and this is recognised in the digital strategy. This service is being reviewed to remove duplication with corporate connectivity and realise savings whilst continuing to provide an important service. As a result of this review, a number of sites were migrated to the new public Wi-Fi service from Welsh Government's PSBA following work by SRS to facilitate this.

## **City Centre Wi-Fi**

The City Centre Wi-Fi is provided as a concession with a company and this serves the area around the city centre only.

## **Bus Wi-Fi**

Free Wi-Fi on Newport buses is provided, funded by the council and Newport Transport. This service has always been well used and the council uses it as a way to engage with the public with short online surveys.

### **3.3. Data and Collaboration**

This is the first year of the new digital strategy. The majority of the work within this theme is currently included in more detail within the Annual Information Risk Report. Consideration will be given to how this work is reported in future given different stakeholder roles and interests. A summary of the most important aspects are detailed below.

## **Better Use of Data to Facilitate Decision Making**

During 22/23 Audit Wales undertook a review of the council's arrangements to meet its Corporate Plan 2017-22 commitment to base its decisions upon data and evidence. Additionally, the review also looked as to whether the council's chosen actions are having the desired impact and its pledge to create and establish a one-stop-shop for data and intelligence to support evidence-based working. Audit Wales acknowledged that overall considerable progress had been achieved by the council with the need to ensure that the council continues to take a 'whole organisation approach' to effectively using evidence and data to inform decision-making through use of the Newport Intelligence Hub services.

Service Intelligence Packs (SIPs) have been developed to support the decision-making process in relation to several strategic transformation priorities, including Asset Rationalisation and Optimisation and forecasting of future demand in terms of school provisioning.

Significant work has been progressed in terms of improving readily available access to performance and management information reporting through extensive data integration to support operational, tactical and strategic decision-making through development and enhancement to the Council's interactive MI (Management Information) Hub.

## **Collaborative Working Support**

Newport's Intelligence Hub have continued to provide support to regional collaboration regarding the Public Service Board and Serious Violence Duty through the development of the respective Well-being Assessments and Serious Violence needs assessments.

Newport Intelligence Hub's formal collaborative service delivery arrangements with Monmouthshire County Council are fully established and continue to provide mutual benefit through data and system expertise and knowledge sharing.

The council's Intelligence Hub and Infrastructure service have worked collaboratively and made significant progress in terms of providing highway and infrastructure asset data in support of the UK's National Underground Asset Register (NUAR) in conjunction with Wales and UK Government to improve the coordination, management and discharge of statutory highway and utility duties.

## **Compliance and Audit**

The council is subject to accreditation to the Public Services Network (PSN) by the Cabinet Office. PSN accreditation was challenging during the year but was achieved in June 2023. The council needs to comply with the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standards (PCI-DSS) when handling customer card payments and it satisfied the requirements in July 2022. The council is audited by Audit Wales that during 22/23 carried out reviews of the council's cyber security arrangements, evidence based decision making and its digital strategy.

## **Organisation**

The council has a number of roles and groups designed to ensure appropriate information risk management processes are in place with cyber security becoming increasingly important. The council has a Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) role, a senior officer responsible for information risks within the organisation who is the Head of Law and Standards. The council also has a Data Protection Officer (DPO) role as required by the Data Protection Act 2018. The council has an Information Governance Group where strategic information governance issues are discussed.

## **Communications and Awareness Raising**

Employees are often the weakest link in terms of causing incidents and the information security incidents section reflects this. Regular reminders of good practice were provided in the staff bulletin and on the intranet. The council continues to provide classroom style training to staff via Microsoft Teams to provide the most interaction possible and improved learning experience. There was good attendance during the year for both corporate and Social Services. E-learning is also required for new starters.

Detailed information security training for members was provided via two training sessions in June 2023. 32 out of 51 members attended the courses which represents good attendance.

The council procured the MetaCompliance solution to deliver cyber security related content to users that complements existing training. It includes a suite of security awareness training capabilities including security awareness training, policy management and phishing simulation.

Other important aspects are the development and updating of policies. The council also maintains and Information Asset Register and Information Risk Register.

## **Information Security Incidents**

All information security incidents are reported, logged and investigated. Information security incidents range from lost phones/other devices, password issues to data breaches where data is lost or passed to the incorrect recipient. Lessons need to be learned from these incidents to improve practice in future to minimise the risk of recurrence. Serious incidents that meet certain criteria must be communicated to the ICO within 72 hours and data subjects informed without delay.

## **Information Sharing**

Partnership and collaborative working drives sharing of increased amounts of information between the council and other organisations. The Wales Accord on the Sharing of Personal Information (WASPI) requires public sector organisations to follow agreed guidance in the development of Information Sharing Protocols (ISP's). The Information Management team leads on this work and has developed a number of ISP's with services and other organisations.

## **Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) solution and a Security Operations Centre (SOC)**

The implementation of a Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) system and Security Operations Centre (SOC) with SRS is designed to monitor potential cyber attacks and provide improved preventative measures as a result. This has now been implemented and complements existing solutions.

## **Business Continuity**

There is an ever-increasing reliance on digital technology to support business activities and it is therefore important to maximise the availability of systems. Increased resilience was a factor in the decision to join the Shared Resource Service (SRS) and this should be improved by the data centre move that was completed in May 2023. Improvements to backups have also been made to provide greater resilience as this is vitally important in the event of cyber incidents including ransomware.

## **Records and Data Management**

Much of the information held by the council would conventionally be stored as paper copies, on network file shares or within teams and service areas. The use of an Electronic Document Management System (EDMS) provides the council with a modern, efficient, electronic system for managing documents. EDMS has a number of benefits including security, access to information and records management by storing all service related documents securely in one place with appropriate retention periods.

## **Document Services**

Whilst the intention of the organisation is to use digital methods, there remains a need for handling paper documents. The Document Services team carries out this important function and manages mail, print, scanning and paper document storage. It has a central print room with digital equipment for printing internal documents, leaflets etc. and carries out central scanning for a large number of services using the EDMS system. The council has a fleet of multi-function devices (MFD's) across sites that provide printing, copying and scanning facilities. The council also has a hybrid mail solution to simplify and streamline the processes for out-going mail. The proportion of documents going through this system is increasing that reduces costs of sending mail.

## **Freedom of Information and Subject Access Requests**

### **Freedom of Information**

As a public authority, the council also handles requests for information. The number of requests received in 2022/23 was 992 which is an increase from last year (953). Performance for 2022/23 was 91.0% of requests responded to within 20 working days. This was above the target of 88% of requests. The council has met its target for ten of the last twelve years including each of the last six years.

## Subject Access Requests

Subject Access Requests (SAR's) are requests for personal information requested by the data subject. The council narrowly missed its performance target for dealing with Subject Access Requests. 70.9% of requests were responded to within the deadline, against a target of 75%.

## 3.4. Digital Infrastructure and Connectivity

### Local Broadband Fund (LBF) Bid

Newport City Council submitted a bid to Welsh Government's Local Broadband Fund (LBF) bid in December 2021. The council was advised in April 2022 that it was successful in its bid.

The bid is to improve gigabit capable full fibre connectivity and the provision of in-building assistive technology and telecare services to three council managed adult residential care homes in Newport. The following will be provided in all three buildings: -

- The provision of a gigabit capable dark fibre connection. The scheme will expand the footprint of dark fibre within Newport that will also act as a catalyst for other applications
- The upgrade of in-building infrastructure including routers, Wi-Fi access points and the potential installation of sensors
- A care management IT solution to improve the service provided to residents

Once the bid was approved, the council went out to tender for a supplier for the complete solution. Whilst there were some delays due to the availability of network equipment, the project is progressing well with delivery during 23/24.

### Broadband

Other than projects like the Local Broadband Fund designed to make a small contribution to the broadband availability in the city, the council has limited influence on broadband roll out including enhanced speed or availability. However, the council recognises the importance of the digital infrastructure of the city and welcomes developments to improve the city's digital infrastructure. OFCOM provides a [guide to broadband basics](#). As well as larger communications providers, two smaller suppliers have plans to roll out "full fibre" connectivity in parts or of across Newport. Full fibre or fibre to the premises broadband offers the highest theoretical speeds possible.

### Mobile Networks and 5G

[5G networks](#) are starting to be rolled out by mobile operators across the UK. 5G is significantly faster than existing 4G networks and therefore provides benefits to consumers for streaming high quality video and other tasks that need increased bandwidth. Whilst there may be some planning considerations when mobile operators want to change their infrastructure, the council has limited influence on the roll out of such networks or general mobile networks. According to [OFCOM's mobile and broadband checker](#), 5G is available outdoors from 3 different network operators in Newport. However, the coverage is less than for 4G services.

### Infrastructure and Cloud

#### Devices and Operating Systems

Numerous technical solutions are in place and these are included as Appendix 2. During the year the default browser was changed to Microsoft Edge.

#### Data Centre Move

A major project led by the SRS commenced in 20/21 to move all SRS partners to a new data centre. All the respective partners formally signed off the business case, Newport specifically the [business case was agreed by Cabinet in October 2020](#). Newport was the last scheduled SRS partner to migrate due to different drivers in different partners. This project was completed for Newport in April 2023 with the vast majority of work taking place out of hours with minimal impact. This was much earlier than planned in the original business case and a very positive step. The council's capital programme was used to pay for the required infrastructure in the new data centre.

This is a major milestone for the SRS partnership with all partners now sharing infrastructure in the Vantage Data Centre. This will provide better resilience, availability and reductions in costs. Some local network equipment in council buildings remains. This has already resulted in energy consumption and associated costs in the Civic Centre. Energy costs are already included in the data centre model and are proportionately less due to shared infrastructure and more efficient cooling given the scale of the data centre operation.

### **Cloud Migrations**

In addition to the data centre move, more systems have been moved to the cloud. A number of advantages are expected from the migration of systems to the cloud:-

- Access from any device, location
- Improved availability, resilience
- Improved performance
- Improved support
- Positive contribution to carbon reduction

The main disadvantage is that of additional cost this needs to be considered as part of the total cost of ownership. Based on the council's experience with systems migrated to date, the advantages vastly outweigh the disadvantages.

The migration to the cloud is based on a number of principles:-

- Cloud first
- Highest priority IT systems are targeted
- Review on a case by case basis
- Ultimate responsibility for these cloud systems remains with the council

Cloud migrations go through a comprehensive process to ensure their suitability including appropriate procurement and information governance based on the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) cloud security principles, development of a cloud register and Data Protection Impact Assessments.

Council systems that are currently provided in the cloud are detailed as below:-

- E-mail as part of Microsoft 365 project
- Telephony
- Mayrise (highways, cleansing etc.)
- Social Services system, WCCIS an all Wales cloud hosted system
- iTrent HR/Payroll system is in a cloud environment.
- Web site and "A-Z" (primary council web site plus customer services knowledge base)
- Home Care scheduling system
- Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system
- Payment solution
- Income management system.
- iShare web mapping solution
- SharePoint online (intranet)
- Modern.gov (democratic process management and documents)

New Cloud Migrations for 22/23 onwards

- As detailed above, the project to replace the existing financial system to the Technology One solution is well progressed with migration to the cloud currently expected as the third quarter of 23/24.
- The Paygate BACS system was migrated and went live in June 2022
- The Capita One education management system was migrated and went live in March 2023.
- The IDOX Uniform public protection system is well progressed with a likely go live date of the third quarter of 23/24
- The Legal case management system was also migrated and is now live

**Capital Programme**

The council holds a budget for its capital programme of major IT infrastructure. The capital programme is developed by the SRS working with the council's Digital team.

**Community Safety Network**

The council has a network that provides its CCTV service. This contract needs to be reviewed and a suitable solution identified.

**Internet of things (IoT) Network pilot**

In conjunction with a supplier, the council continues to pilot an Internet of Things (IoT) network that includes trialling sensors connected to the network for various purposes. This is using LoRaWAN technology (Long Range Wide Area Network) with a number of gateways across the city. Specific sensors have been set up for one area and a dashboard created to provide up to date readings and monitor trends. Opportunities for further use of this technology will be considered whenever possible and they do have the potential to contribute to measuring information relating to climate change.

## 4. Conclusions

### 1.1. Digital Strategy

The development of the Digital Strategy 2022-27 represents an important step for the council, supporting the Corporate Plan. The strategy is based on important principles and has four themes. The development of the strategy means that the structure of this report has been changed, including specific progress against the four themes. This report provides the primary means of reporting progress on the strategy from now on.

### 1.2. Organisation and Governance

The report highlights the importance of the Shared Resource Service, the council's Digital team and Service Areas in improving IT provision and the impact on service delivery. The SRS Boards are more joined up and effective with details included in Appendix 1.

The importance of IT in schools is also recognised and continues to be developed by a strategic group. This is complemented by Welsh Government funding of its "Edtech" programme across Wales that has made a huge impact.

### 1.1. IT Service (SRS) Performance

The SRS exceeded its targets for three of the four performance targets for Newport. Performance has been consistently good in terms of calls resolved against SLA during the last four financial years where performance has been significantly above the target. The performance for customer satisfaction and calls resolved at first point of target both exceeded their targets. The time to answer calls did not meet its target but it has reduced considerably from previous years and represents positive improvement. The Digital team plays a key role to monitor performance and work with the SRS for the programming and prioritisation of projects, core planned and reactive work.

### 1.1. Funding

Spend on IT/digital is incurred in various areas. The majority of the funding is provided to the Shared Resource Service (SRS) although the council has a number of budgets including for major systems known as "retained contracts", capital programme and equipment spend. Schools fund their own IT provision from their own budgets, supplemented by Welsh Government "EdTech" funding.

Additional funding was provided for three years and this made a positive impact. Working with SRS, the council has identified significant savings in 23/24 in light of budget challenges. This was possible due to large contract savings as a result of the SRS data centre move, Digital contracts and service re-design. The council continues to look to rationalise systems wherever possible.

### 1.2. Digital Strategy Progress

#### Digital Transformation

There has been very good progress made in this theme of the digital strategy. This includes the finance system replacement project that is due to go live in the third quarter of 23/24. Following initial delays, the web site redevelopment project has gained momentum with an implementation partner procured to implement [Local Government Drupal](#).

The council migrated to the Microsoft Always On VPN (Virtual Private Network) solution. This was a successful roll out and has been positively received. Following a successful pilot and the development of a business case, the council agreed to roll out the Microsoft Teams Phone solution. This solution will be rolled out during 23/24. Technology has provided a key part in continued effective service delivery including Microsoft Teams meetings and hybrid council meetings facilitated by new audio-visual equipment in the Council Chamber and meeting rooms. SRS completed development of a room/desk booking system and this was implemented.

The council's Climate Change Plan 2022-2027 includes a digital element and digital will play its part in some of the initiatives.

The "Smart Home" pilot aims to promote the possibilities of assistive technologies to support more independent living and the potential it has to make a positive difference.

Robotic Process Automation (RPA) technology is designed to automate repetitive tasks to reduce data entry and streamline routine tasks. RPA was used successfully for the migration of e-mails stored in the "Archive Manager" solution into the core Microsoft 365 e-mail system. It was also used for part of the "Cost of Living" payment processes. Further opportunities for its use are being investigated. The greatest benefits are realised for processes with time-consuming manual data entry and large numbers of transactions.

Welsh Government "EdTech" funding has provided a very positive improvement to the infrastructure and digital facilities for schools and has been implemented successfully by SRS, Education and Digital Services working with schools.

## **Digital Skills and Inclusion**

Several cohorts of the council 'Get Connected' free digital skills course were run and this is positive development. However, the council needs to consider a sustainable delivery model of the 'Get Connected' course. The council's Adult Community Learning team delivered a range of fully accredited ICT and Digital Skills courses. Most of these courses only cost £5 and from Sept 2023 digital skills courses and Computers Don't Bite will have no course fee. Adult Community Learning also offer a range of bespoke courses for community organisations.

Community Connectors, Libraries and community hub teams signpost the availability of digital skills sessions. First point of contact employees such as librarians and hub staff can assist with basic digital queries and signpost citizens. Libraries have undertaken a digital skills audit with Digital Communities Wales so as to identify training needs in respect of the NCC libraries workforce.

All Newport City Council libraries [provide free public access to internet enabled PCs](#). PCs are available on a drop in basis or sessions can be booked in advance.

The council provides a free public Wi-Fi service in over 50 public buildings in the city. This service is being reviewed to remove duplication with corporate connectivity and realise savings whilst continuing to provide an important service. The City Centre Wi-Fi is provided as a concession with a company and this serves the area around the city centre only. Free Wi-Fi on Newport buses is provided, funded by the council and Newport Transport. This service has always been well used and the council uses it as a way to engage with the public with short online surveys.

## **Data and Collaboration**

Audit Wales undertook a review of the council's arrangements to base its decisions upon data and evidence. It acknowledged that overall considerable progress had been achieved by the council with the need to ensure that the council continues to take a 'whole organisation approach' to effectively using evidence and data to inform decision-making through use of the Newport Intelligence Hub services. Service Intelligence Packs (SIPs) have been developed to support the decision-making process. Significant work has been progressed in terms of improving readily available access to performance and management information reporting.

Newport's Intelligence Hub have continued to provide support to regional collaboration regarding the Public Service Board and Serious Violence Duty through the development of the respective Well-being Assessments and Serious Violence needs assessments.



Further details of the items below are provided in the Annual Information Risk Report. PSN compliance was challenging but was achieved in June 2023. Newport City Council met the requirements of the Payment Card Industry (PCI) Data Security Standards in July 2022.

The council has a number of roles and groups designed to ensure appropriate information risk management processes are in place with cyber security becoming increasingly important. All information security incidents are reported, logged and investigated.

Employees are often the weakest link in terms of causing incidents. Regular reminders of good practice were provided in the staff bulletin and on the intranet. The council continues to provide classroom style training to staff with was good attendance for both corporate and Social Services.

The information management team provided two training sessions for members in June 2023. 32 out of 51 members attended the courses which represents good attendance.

The council procured the MetaCompliance Solution to deliver cyber security related content to users. The Information Management team leads on information sharing and has developed a number of ISP's with services and other organisations.

The implementation of a Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) system and Security Operations Centre (SOC) has now been implemented and complements existing solutions.

There is an ever-increasing reliance on digital technology to support business activities. The council is committed to ensuring robust and effective business continuity management.

The use of an Electronic Document Management System (EDMS) provides the council with a modern, efficient, electronic system for managing documents, improving the way information and documents are used and the flow of information around the council.

Freedom of Information performance for 2022/23 was 91.0% of requests responded to within 20 working days, above the target of 88%. The council narrowly missed its performance target for dealing with Subject Access Requests. 70.9% of requests were responded to within the deadline, against a target of 75%.

## **Digital Infrastructure and Connectivity**

Newport City Council was successful with a bid to Welsh Government's Local Broadband Fund (LBF). The bid is to improve gigabit capable full fibre connectivity and the provision of in-building assistive technology and telecare services to three council managed adult residential care homes in Newport. Work commenced on the project following the tender. The project is progressing well with delivery during 23/24.

The council has limited influence on broadband roll out including enhanced speed or availability. However, the council recognises the importance of the digital infrastructure of the city and welcomes developments to improve the city's digital infrastructure. As well as larger communications providers, two smaller suppliers have plans to roll out "full fibre" connectivity in parts or of across Newport. Full fibre or fibre to the premises broadband offers the highest theoretical speeds possible.

[5G networks](#) are starting to be rolled out by mobile operators across the UK. According to [OFCOM's mobile and broadband checker](#), 5G is available outdoors from 3 different network operators in Newport. However, the coverage is less than for 4G services.

A major project led by the SRS commenced in 20/21 to move all SRS partners to a new data centre. This project was completed for Newport in April 2023. This was much earlier than planned in the original business case and a very positive step. This is a major milestone for the SRS partnership with all partners now sharing infrastructure in the Vantage Data Centre.

This will provide better resilience, availability and reductions in costs. Some local network equipment in council buildings remains. This has already resulted in energy consumption and associated costs in the Civic Centre.

In addition to the data centre move, more systems have been moved to the cloud. A number of advantages are expected from the migration of systems to the cloud including access from any device/location, improved resilience and improved support from suppliers. These benefits have been realised in migrations to date. During 22/23 three major IT systems were migrated to the cloud with two more in progress due to complete in 23/24, most notably the council's primary finance system. The council will proactively look to migrate systems to the cloud as the preferred option when practical and affordable.

Work has commenced to review the Community Safety Network provision that provides the council's CCTV service.

In conjunction with a supplier, the council continues to pilot an Internet of Things (IoT) network that includes trialling sensors connected to the network for various purposes. Opportunities for further use of this technology will be considered whenever possible and they do have the potential to contribute to measuring information relating to climate change.

## **5. Actions Summary**

### **1.3. Digital Strategy**

The Digital Strategy needs to be communicated to all stakeholders to ensure it is understood. Relevant ownership for delivering the intended outcomes and associated actions needs to be identified. The Digital Board will oversee the implementation of the Digital Strategy with the Digital team leading operationally with SRS and services. Progress against the Digital Strategy will be reported annually in this Annual Digital Report.

### **1.4. Organisation and Governance**

The relationship between the council and the Shared Resource Service (SRS) is one that aims for continuous improvement in partnership working. The SRS will be a vital partner in the delivery of the new Digital Strategy. The Digital team also has an on-going role to engage with other services and contribute to their respective plans and strategies. The “EdTech” programme will continue to make improvements in schools.

### **1.5. IT Service (SRS) Performance**

Whilst the SRS has performed consistently well against its Service Level Agreements (SLA's) its performance needs to be monitored regularly and any issues reviewed for appropriate action by SRS/Digital as appropriate. As the new Service Desk system is now live, self-service logging of incidents will be promoted. The Digital team will continue to develop relationship between council and SRS especially in relation to the delivery of anticipated outcomes and actions in the new Digital Strategy. The Digital team will continue to work with the SRS for the programming and prioritisation of projects, core planned and reactive work.

### **1.6. Funding**

Spend on IT/digital is incurred in various areas and this is generally expected to bring about positive benefits in service delivery. However, budget challenges mean that opportunities to rationalise systems, infrastructure and licences need to be reviewed on an on-going basis to ensure the continued best use of available funding.

### **1.7. Digital Strategy Progress**

#### **Digital Transformation**

The council's finance system is due to be migrated to a new cloud based system in the third quarter of 23/24. The council has commenced the implementation of Local Government Drupal for the redevelopment of the council web site by the first quarter of 24/25. The Microsoft Teams Phone solution will be rolled out during 23/24. The council will continue development of Microsoft 365 solution working with SRS. Lessons from the “Smart Home” pilot need to be established to understand wider potential for these technologies and the council's role. Further opportunities for the use of Robotic Process Automation (RPA) need to be considered.

#### **Digital Skills and Inclusion**

The council needs to consider an approach to the “Get Connected” courses in future. Council libraries will continue to provide free public access to internet enabled PCs. The council will continue to review its free public building Wi-Fi service to remove duplication with corporate connectivity and realise savings whilst continuing to provide an important service. Free Wi-Fi on Newport buses is provided, funded by the council and Newport Transport. Plans for a suitable Tablet Loan Scheme are to be developed for roll out in libraries.

#### **Data and Collaboration**

The council needs to continue to take a ‘whole organisation approach’ to effectively using evidence and data to inform decision-making through use of the Newport Intelligence Hub services. Further details of information governance items are provided in the Annual information Risk Report. Actions are included in that report.

**Digital Infrastructure and Connectivity**

The Local Broadband Fund (LBF) project has commenced with implementation to be completed during 23/24. Two more system cloud migrations are in progress due to complete in 23/24, most notably the council's primary finance system. The council will proactively look to migrate systems to the cloud as the preferred option when practical and affordable. The council needs to review its Community Safety Network that provides its CCTV service. The council continues to pilot an Internet of Things (IoT) network. Opportunities for further use of this technology will be considered whenever possible.

## 6. Risk Management

Risk		Impact of Risk if it occurs* (H/M/L)	Probability of risk occurring (H/M/L)	What is the Council doing or what has it done to avoid the risk or reduce its effect	Who is responsible for dealing with the risk?
Digital Strategy is not up to date/relevant		M	L	<a href="#">Digital Strategy 2022-27</a> developed and will be kept under constant review in terms of outcomes and actions. Progress will be reported to Digital Board that provides the governance to support the Review and update Digital Strategy with stakeholders	Digital Services Manager (DSM) and Digital Projects Managers with internal and external stakeholders in partnership with SRS
Funding of service is not sufficient to meet the organisation's demands and aspirations, especially given more flexible working		M	L	Additional funding now allocated to areas of need. Innovation and development fund enables new technologies to be tested	Digital Services Manager (DSM) and Digital Projects Managers in conjunction with Head of PPT / SRS management
Delivery of IT Service by Shared Resource Service (SRS) provides less control		M	M	Develop relationship with the SRS further and contribute to its strategic direction and governance. Develop client side role to provide strategic input and performance monitoring. Continue to contribute to the delivery of projects, core planned and reactive work	Digital Services Manager (DSM) and Digital Projects Managers in conjunction with Head of PPT/ SRS management
Critical IT systems are not available to services		H	L	Data centre migration completed. Move of systems to the cloud will provide improved availability and resilience. Review business continuity business impact assessments	Digital Services Manager and Digital Projects Managers in conjunction with SRS and services
Appropriate devices and operating systems are not available		M	L	Laptops remain the standard and Digital will consider future needs. Windows 10 updates to take place for devices	Digital Services Manager (DSM) and Digital Projects Managers in conjunction with in conjunction with SRS

## 7. Action Plan

Action	Deadline
<b>Digital Strategy</b>	
<b>Communication</b> - Digital Strategy to be communicated to all stakeholders	Sep 23
<b>Strategic Management</b> - Digital Board to provide strategic management of the strategy and its progress	On-going
<b>Ownership of Outcomes</b> - allocation of ownership for intended outcomes and associated actions	Sep 23
<b>Progress Monitoring</b> - progress against the strategy outcomes and actions managed by the Digital team and to be reported in future Annual Digital Reports	Sep 24
<b>Organisation and Governance</b>	
<b>SRS Boards</b> - represent council at Shared Resource Service (SRS) Board meetings	On-going
<b>Relationship Management</b> - continue to develop relationship between council and SRS especially in relation to the delivery of anticipated outcomes and actions in the new Digital Strategy.	On-going
<b>Programming/Prioritisation of Work</b> - continue to work with the SRS for the programming and prioritisation of projects, core planned and reactive work	On-going
<b>“EdTech” Project</b> - work with Education service and SRS in delivery of Welsh Government “Edtech” funding for 23/24	Mar 24
<b>Education/Schools Support</b> – support Education service, schools and SRS in application of technology for schools in Newport	On-going
<b>Digital Team Engagement</b> - Digital team engagement with services and contribution to other plans and strategies throughout the organisation	On-going
<b>IT Service (SRS) Performance</b>	
<b>Performance Management</b> - monitor and manage performance between SRS and Digital team	On-going
<b>SRS Report</b> - SRS Report to Partnership Scrutiny Committee	Oct 23
<b>Self Service Promotion</b> - promote logging of calls via self-service	Oct 23
<b>Funding</b>	
<b>Best Use of Available Funding</b> - opportunities to rationalise systems, infrastructure and licences need to be reviewed to ensure the continued best use of available funding	On-going
<b>Digital Strategy Progress</b>	
<b>Digital Transformation</b>	
<b>Finance System Migration</b> - the council’s finance system is due to be migrated to a new cloud based system	Dec 23
<b>Web Site Redevelopment</b> - implementation of the Local Government Drupal solution for the redevelopment of the council’s web site	June 24
<b>Microsoft Teams Phone</b> - the Microsoft Teams Phone solution will be rolled out during 23/24	Mar 23
<b>Microsoft 365</b> - continued development of Microsoft 365 solution	On-going
<b>Climate Change Digital Elements</b> – develop and progress digital elements of the council’s climate change plan	On-going
<b>”Smart Home”</b> - lessons from the pilot need to be established to understand wider potential for these technologies and the council’s role	Mar 24
<b>Robotic Process Automation (RPA)</b> - further opportunities for the use of Robotic Process Automation (RPA) need to be considered	On-going
<b>Digital Skills and Inclusion</b>	
<b>Digital Skills courses</b> – consider a sustainable delivery model for Get Connected courses	Dec 23
<b>Library PC Access</b> - council libraries will continue to provide free public access to internet enabled PCs	On-going

<b>Free Public Building Wi-Fi Review</b> - free public building Wi-Fi service to remove duplication with corporate connectivity and realise savings whilst continuing to provide an important service	On-going
<b>Bus Wi-Fi</b> - provide free Wi-Fi on Newport buses funded by the council and Newport Transport	On-going
<b>Tablet Loan Scheme</b> – develop a suitable scheme for roll out across libraries	Mar 24
<b>Digital Champions</b> - enhance the role of council digital champions to improve support for employees	Dec 23
<b>Data and Collaboration</b>	
<b>Better Use of Data to Facilitate Decision Making</b> - continue to take a 'whole organisation approach' to effectively using evidence and data to inform decision-making through use of the Newport Intelligence Hub services	On-going
<b>Collaborative Working Support</b> - Newport's Intelligence Hub's support to regional collaboration regarding the Public Service Board	On-going
<b>Digital Strategy Updates</b> - Progress against the strategy outcomes and actions managed by the Digital team and to be reported in future Annual Information Risk Reports with important aspects summarised in Annual Digital Report	Sep 24
<b>Annual Information Risk Report actions</b> – these are included in that report	Various
<b>Digital Infrastructure and Connectivity</b>	
<b>Local Broadband Fund (LBF)</b> - project implementation across three adult residential care homes	Mar 24
<b>Cloud Migrations</b> - two more in progress due to complete in 23/24, most notably the council's primary finance system	Dec 23
<b>Cloud Services</b> – the council will proactively look to migrate systems to the cloud as the preferred option when practical and affordable	On-going
<b>Capital Programme</b> – development of capital programme for major infrastructure	On-going
<b>Community Safety Network</b> – this contract needs to be reviewed and a suitable solution identified	Dec 23
<b>Internet of Things (IoT) Network</b> - opportunities for further use of this technology will be considered whenever possible	On-going

# Appendix 1 – Shared Resource Service (SRS) Organisation and Governance

## SRS Governance Arrangements

The SRS continues with three boards. All documents are now available to members of all boards to improve communication and transparency. The three boards are as follows:-

### Strategic Board

This purpose of this board is to set the Strategic Direction of the SRS. It provides collective challenge to the Business and Collaboration Board around alignment to the SRS Strategy and identifying collaborative opportunities across all partners. It provides collective challenge to the Finance and Governance Board around alignment to the SRS Strategy and assurance to all partners. It provides collective challenge to the SRS Chief Operating Officer to drive forward SRS strategic principles. NCC is represented on this board by the Chief Executive and the Cabinet Member for Organisational Transformation. The Strategic Board provides updates on audits, performance as well as progress on the annual tactical plan.

### Business and Collaboration Board

The purpose of this board is to provide collective challenge to the SRS Chief Operating Officer to drive forward the SRS strategic principles including to deliver effective ICT services from a single combined unit and operate as one SRS, to improve services to provide a solid foundation upon which partner organisations can operate, to ensure the investment in technology is focused on delivery of the corporate priorities of the partner organisations, to develop a capable, professional workforce that can meet the challenges within technology over the coming years and to provide a collaborative platform for public sector organisations to share common ground. NCC is represented on this board by the Head of People, Policy and Transformation and the Digital Services Manager. The Business and Collaboration Board provides an overview of performance, the annual tactical plan together with opportunities for collaborative working across partners on an informal and formal level.

### Finance and Governance Board

The purpose of this board is to assure the Strategic Board that the SRS is delivering value for money, support the development of a medium term financial plan for the SRS, support the audit programme at the SRS and receive updates from audit in relation to the combined audit programme, provide collective challenge to each other around alignment to the SRS Strategy. It also provides collective challenge to the SRS Chief Operating Officer to drive forward the SRS strategic principles. NCC is represented on this board by the Head of Finance. The Finance and Governance Board provides updates on audits, SRS budget monitoring and agrees annual partner budgets.

These boards continue to mature with a strong sense of collaboration. All decisions made by boards need agreement by all partners. Developing a strategic, cohesive vision for all partners is challenging despite each partner's commitment to the partnership and its aims. An Audit Wales report into the partnership identified an increased level of consistency of vision and direction.

In addition to the three boards there is also a Delivery Group.

### Delivery Group

The SRS holds four weekly Delivery Group meetings with each partner separately. At these meetings, performance data is reviewed with individual partners and work is prioritised for the next four week period. NCC is represented by its client function led by the Head of People, Policy and Transformation. The focus of these meetings is being shifted to more strategic initiatives.

### Information Security Leadership Board

Newport now attends a cross SRS partner information governance forum that complements our internal officer Information Governance Group.



## **Appendix 2 – Technology Solutions**

### **Devices**

The council now almost exclusively uses laptops for flexibility and mobility and this has been useful for increased flexible working over the last few years. Laptops will always be issued unless there is a specific reason that a desktop device is required in very limited scenarios. Windows 10 is deployed to all devices with regular updates required.

### **Microsoft 365**

The council previously migrated its e-mail solution to Microsoft 365 with e-mail in the cloud. This provides improved collaborative, agile working facilities and information security. The solution uses Microsoft Multi Factor Authentication (MFA). In addition, the Microsoft Advanced Threat Protection (ATP) solution protects against attachments and links sent in e-mails. The e-mail configuration includes the use of Transport Layer Security (TLS) to encrypt e-mail to external e-mail systems set up to the same standard which should include all local authorities and the public sector generally. Other security standards for e-mail system hygiene have also been implemented.

Microsoft Teams continues to provide instant messaging/chat facilities as well as video/audio conferencing facilities. These facilities are used extensively and enable the organisation to hold a large number of virtual meetings and informal discussions. The solution is regularly updated by Microsoft with additional features and other improvements. The latest version of the Microsoft 365 client is rolled out to all Windows devices.

### **Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) system and Security Operations Centre (SOC)**

The implementation of a Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) system and Security Operations Centre (SOC) with SRS is designed to monitor potential cyber attacks and provide improved preventative measures as a result. This has now been implemented and complements existing solutions.

### **Devices for Members**

Members have tablets and, in combination with laptop devices, provide a comprehensive solution for their role. The refresh of member laptop devices is included within the wider laptop refresh cycle so where new devices are required they are provided. Following local government elections in May 2022 tablets and mobile phones were re-issued or new devices provided where necessary.

### **Digital Champions**

The council has approximately 30 “Digital Champions” who are advocates for the use of digital technology. They provide a key contact point for services using digital technology. They were a key part of the testing of new infrastructure as part of the data centre move and other developments.

### **Remote Access Virtual Private Network (VPN) Solution**

The council now uses the Microsoft Always On VPN solution. This enables all staff who need to work from home to do so. It provides the ability to carry out password resets and Windows updates due to its “always on” connection type enhancing security. Staff are able to work from anywhere where a wireless network is available (subject to geographical restrictions), as if they were sat at their desk, which also reduces the requirement to carry paper documents.

### **Multi-Function Devices**

‘Follow Me’ print is available to all users, who are able to access council printers from any location with a device. An upgrade took place to the software that supports Multi-Function Devices (printer/copier/scanner).

### **Secure/Large File transfer solution**

Secure and large file transfers are now provided using Microsoft Office Message Encryption and Microsoft One Drive for Business.

### **Xerox Mail “hybrid mail”**

More services have been set up to use the “hybrid mail” system to streamline the production of paper and electronic outputs. This enables documents to be sent to production printers in the print room and then processed through the mail room folder/insert machine. This improves security by ensuring that print outputs are split into envelopes automatically in the folder/insert machine. The system’s use continues to increase, led by the Digital team.

### **Wireless Staff Access**

Wireless Access points are provided in many council buildings. This includes appropriate security controls in place. Following the completion of the data centre move new infrastructure will be implemented to improve Wi-Fi at key sites.

### **Wireless Public Access**

Public Wi-Fi is available in the city centre (Newport City Connect), over 50 public buildings (Newport Community Cloud) and on buses.

### **Physical Security**

Major buildings are limited to staff with physical access cards and alarmed outside of opening hours. As detailed in the physical access policy:

- IT facilities must be located in secure areas protected from unauthorised access
- Any visitors to IT secure areas must be signed in and accompanied at all times
- Computer rooms are subject to additional security measures to protect them from unauthorised access, damage and interference

The Building Access policy also require staff to display identity badges at all times.

### **Mobile Phones**

The council has a large number of mobile phones issued to staff. The vast majority are now smart phones with e-mail, internet access, Teams etc. For those that just need calls and texts, basic phones are provided as they are much cheaper. All phones are managed using a Mobile Device Management (MDM) solution to limit access and the ability to wipe phones remotely if required.

### **Tablets**

A relatively small number of tablets are in use across the organisation for specific purposes including tablets for members. These devices are managed using the same Mobile Device Management (MDM) solution as for mobile phones.

## Appendix 3 – Digital Strategy

Full strategy at [www.newport.gov.uk/digitalstrategy](http://www.newport.gov.uk/digitalstrategy)



## BACKGROUND

This is the council's second digital strategy, developed at a time when digital technology is increasingly important to service delivery. It has been developed following extensive engagement with citizens, businesses, employees and members. This engagement has identified various common needs and aspirations. It

recognises differences in how customers want to interact with the council given their level of digital skills and inclusion. The strategy builds on and develops activities commenced in the original digital strategy. The strategy sets the strategic direction for the council over the next five years.

## PRINCIPLES

The strategy is guided by important principles:-

- **Innovative** – embrace new ways of working and technology
- **Data driven** - decisions are made based on sound evidence
- **User centred** – users are at the centre of what we do
- **Inclusive** – services are available to meet individual needs
- **Collaborative** – collaboration internally and externally
- **Secure** – systems and data are protected
- **Green** – digital technology supports the council's net zero aspirations

These principles are closely aligned to the council's Corporate Plan principles of *Fair and Inclusive, Empowering, A listening council* and *Citizen Focussed*.

## THEMES

The strategy is based on four themes:

### 1 DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

We will transform services by the innovative use of digital technology that is effective, easy to use and designed around user needs

### 2 DIGITAL SKILLS & INCLUSION

We will develop the digital skills of our citizens, employees and members plus support improved access to digital technology

### 3 DATA & COLLABORATION

We will improve service delivery by better use of data and increased collaboration built on secure systems and processes

### 4 DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE & CONNECTIVITY

We will drive excellent digital infrastructure and connectivity for the city and for the council