

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.

Report for Cabinet 18th January 2022

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REPORT TITLE: Digital Powys Programme update

REPORT FOR: Information

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a high-level summary of the Digital Powys Transformation Programme 'phase one', providing details on the programmes achievements to date.

2. Background

- 2.1 'Digital Powys' is one of the Council's 9 transformation programmes, within the Council's Vision 2025 Transformation Programme. The Programme focuses on 5 workstreams and is underpinned by the Council's Digital Powys strategy. Digital transformation is a critical element of our transformation programme and supports in the delivery of our ambitious Vision 2025 Corporate Improvement Plan.
- 2.2 The original Business Case was submitted and approved in September 2019 and set out the first phase of the Programme which covered programme delivery up to the 31st of March 2022. The programme funding was made up from Welsh Government Digital Transformation funding which was match funded by the Councils Transformation funding and additional transformation funding.
- 2.3 The original business case covered delivery from 2019 to 2025, in which the programme was split into two phases. As we are nearing the completion of phase one, we are now in the process of submitting a revised business case to secure the funding required to progress to phase two.
- 2.4 During the Covid Pandemic the programme was able to realign work to meet several requirements that enabled the council to continue to deliver services, as well as ensuring that both staff and residents of Powys were safe. Some of this work was adopted by our partners and regionally across Wales.
- 2.5 The scope of Phase 1 of the Digital Programme is very ambitious with the programme currently delivering on 74 activities across 5 workstream areas, all focused on embracing digital technologies to improve our customers' experience and delivering our Vision 2025 objectives.

3. Achievements

Phase One of the programme as well as the wider Digital Services has delivered significant benefits to our customers and staff. Attached in appendix 1 are a list of some key achievements and benefits to date. Below is a summary under 5 categories highlighting some of these achievements.

3.1 Customer and staff processes redesign and automation

- Since the programme's inception we have successfully re-designed and made available on our web platform 53 new service elements. This has made Customer interaction with the council quicker and easier leading to improved customer satisfaction and accessibility 24/7 and has also enabled services to make saving which are made up of cashable, non-cashable and cost avoidance.

- As well as re-designing our current processes we have also developed new processes that previously would have involved using forms, databases, spreadsheets, phone and e-mail. This has avoided the purchase of new solutions and has made our processes more efficient.

- Since the beginning of the year (March 21), we have also commenced a programme of work which redesigns and automates Internal back-office processes, improving services to make more efficient use of resources, and free up staff to focus on the needs of our customers. This includes developments such as:
 - Members' correspondence tracker.
 - Finance tasks automation.
 - ALN Individual Development Plan systems integration.
 - eLearning integration.
 - Mobile Support Services furniture request process.
 - ICT service web chatbot.

- The programme has also had to adjust to support Covid response processes which have been designed and implemented in an agile way, allowing the council to continue to deliver services, in a safe way as well as sharing our development with partners and three local authorities to adopt. These processes include, Track and Trace, Welfare calls, WG Food parcels, Lateral testing, Library order and collect, desk booking, and pavement Licences. We also procured and implemented a Covid Bereavement Barcoding solution to ensure we had a secure and efficient way of tracking Mortuary operations.

- We have successfully procured a Unified Communication Solution that will underpin and drive the Councils Omni channel vision. This will provide services to our customers via a multi-channel approach giving our customers an integrated customer experience across voice, video, chat, SMS, email and

web” with accessibility at the core i.e., seamless transition between communication channels, removing the need for service users to ‘tell their story’ more than once.

3.2 Support for schools

- We have improved use of digital technology for teaching and learning in schools. During 2021, all teachers in Powys received a new laptop to assist with both conventional teaching and blended learning, (1113 in total).
- Education Digital Standards for all Powys schools achieved, this represented upgrading networks, Wi-Fi access points and servers in 11 High Schools and 83 primary and special schools.
- Support for pupils. Laptops provided to all Year 12 students to assist with their ongoing education and to encourage pupil retention within the County's High Schools.
- Support for Digitally Excluded Learners. During lockdowns we included provision of Wi-Fi connectivity via 4G MiFi boxes (600) and the emergency configuration and issue of laptops (800) so pupils could continue their education from home.

3.3 Information to Improve decision-making in the Council through the use of data

- **Digital Health and Social Care collaboration** – Integrating health and social care. The team won an award for the insight provided, giving decision-makers intelligence across place and time across a variety of data sets, enabling them to understand demand, how to intervene earlier and provide marketing campaign around hydration. We have formed a close collaboration with DHCW, recently producing a report focused on Rehabilitation services, and we are planning to release more insight into Mental Health services and Discharge to Reassess (ensuring people have the right level of care in the right place).
- We have 76 published reports on our **Well-being Information Bank** providing a wealth of data on demographics, Powys' economy, social care, environment and culture. Reports are automated and provide users with insight focused on our 13 localities.
- We have had **6,116 views on our PowerBI** reports during a three-month period. Officers within the organisation are using reports to help understand demand in the service, and to pinpoint differences amongst localities.
- **TTP reporting** – the team have developed reports that provide the contact tracing team with a detailed level of insight to help manage demand and report to Welsh Government. The reports were purchased by WG to provide the rest of Wales with the same level of insight.
- **Education Data Hub** – We have started to build a data hub for the school's service to use. We have produced automate reports focused on exclusions, pupil numbers and compliments. The team are currently focused on

providing insight into admissions, attendance and primary/high school profiles. We are building on this insight over the next six months and adding to the hub to provide a level of insight never had before. The use of geo-spatial analysis is helping schools to understand patterns amongst primary, special and secondary schools, differences within catchments and see connections between disparate datasets.

- **Freedom of Information insight** – The team focused on the most popular freedom of information requests and worked with the service to automate the data collection and reporting. This enables users to self-serve and reduce demand to the small team.
- The organisation has **invested in PowerBI premium**, this has allowed us to provide automated reporting of more confidential information, rather than just publishing out to our Well-being Information Bank. The team are continually upskilling in the ever-changing technology and are finding better ways of doing things. This software has allowed us to share reports with others in other organisations and work more collaboratively to understand the user journey.
- We have **published self-serve reports** to understand **demographics** across our 13 localities and **population projections** over the next 20 years. Both reports are connected to Stats Wales and enable users to select whole population, female or male separately. These reports enable services, particularly commissioning, to model what future services may look like, down to a locality level. We are using these in our Well-being and Population Assessments, and they will help shape our Well-being plan.
- We have provided adult social care with **automated data** that can help them to produce their **market position statements** for domiciliary care. We are currently working on older people accommodation. We have provided a great level of insight to officers, who are able to update this information whenever they need to, as well as understand demand and future demand across the 13 localities.
- We worked on a collaborative project with Rhondda Cynon Taff, Merthyr and Bridgend focused on using Azure and providing insight into social care. The team were able to upskill in new technologies and learn how to develop in Microsoft Azure. This project, along with their work with Digital Services has enabled the team to produce a prototype of what our framework could look like using Azure and all of the new technologies it brings.

3.4 Support for communities, businesses, and individuals to connect via digital services.

- 21 Community Broadband Projects have been set up with Powys Communities. These communities have formed project groups and are working with a chosen supplier to bring fibre to their communities supporting them to thrive in a digital age.

- Broadband Webpage developed and launched to help people understand their current connection and the options available to improve their broadband including funding information for improving their homes broadband.

3.5 Workforce, digital skills

- Development of a Competency framework that supports digital capabilities of all Powys County Council staff and members. The Framework is a developmental and supportive framework which empowers and enables staff to develop and enhance their digital capabilities, which in turn will support the Council to provide a better standard of service in the ever-changing digital world.
- The Council recognised that we needed to grow our own staff with the right skills to ensure that the programme was successful and that we had the right skills to maintain the digital infrastructure to develop further technologies beyond the programme. To achieve this, 6 assistant developers posts have been created and are currently upskilling in a variety of tools and technologies covering traditional approaches such as scripting as well as more recent methods such as low-code no-code application development. Recruiting from existing ICT staff has brought advantages in terms of knowledge of existing processes and systems and fosters shared learning to bring new skills across the wider team.

3.6 Financial efficiency

- Phase One of the programme as well as the wider Digital Services has not only delivered significant benefits to our customers and staff but has also delivered significant financial efficiency.
- Below is a summary of these savings. Please note that these are savings identified by Digital services, through engagement with service areas at the initial engagement stage. Not all savings were realised, however we have included all the information to provide a picture on the entire journey from identification to realisation

Year	Target	Cashable savings achieved	Non-cashable savings achieved	Cost avoidance savings achieved	Total savings	Awaiting confirmation	Total savings including non-confirmed
19/20	£235,000			£24,244	£24,244	N/A	£24,244
20/21	£384,010	£211,186	£87,297.54	£240,234.12	£538,717.66	£95,430.66	£634,148.28
21/22	£634,990	£17,172	£691.08	£11,409.25	£29,272.33	£262,125	£291,397.33
Total	£1,254,000	£228,358	£87,988.62	£275,887.37	£592,233.99	£357,555.66	£949,789.65

- 3.7 The delivery of these transformation projects has been achieved through a multi skilled team which includes Work Stream Leads, Business Analysts/ Business Intelligence Officers, Developers, Customer experience specialists, IT Team, ICT Project Managers, along with service area operational leads.
- 3.8 To support the delivery of the programme on-going work and investment has been key to retain a fit, robust and safe infrastructure which is vital for not only the programme to succeed but to ensure we maintain current business continuity across the council.
- 3.9 It must be noted that for aspects of the work above we have achieved two National Awards. One Commendation for the council in the category of Digital Transformation at the MJ Achievement Awards 2021. This recognised the work carried out in several areas, including the development of a bespoke Track and Trace system, as well as systems for food parcels, welfare calls and the monitoring of lateral flow tests for social care staff. [National recognition for Powys](#)

And the other award was winner of the national LARIA award for best use of data for our integrated health and social care project (collaboration with Digital Health and Social Care Wales, formerly known as NWIS). [Covid-19 data work nets award for Powys County Council](#)

We have also held 3 learning events on behalf of Wales Centre for Digital Public Services, showcasing our digital transformation to other government organisations in Wales. We have also presented our transformation journey at a UK national event at the Local Government Strategy Forum in October 2021.

4. Delivering Vision 2025: Our Transformation Programme

The Digital Powys Programme has enabled the council to take full advantage of new digital tools and technologies to transform how we engage with our residents, businesses, and communities, support their independence, provide services and use data to inform everything that we do.

The programme supports the delivery of our key transformation and improvement objectives, within our Corporate Improvement Plan, which are:

- The Powys economy is thriving and sustainable
- Powys residents start well, live well and age well
- Powys residents are capable, confident and fulfilled
- Powys communities are vibrant, resourceful and connected

The programme has a strong focus on the improvement objective '*Powys County Council is high performing and well run*', which will be achieved by:

- Ensuring our processes and interactions are designed around our customers and what they need through their preferred method (e.g., digital, face to face or on the telephone)
- Developing our capability and capacity - creating leaders that are digitally focussed and developing the digital capability in our workforce and our communities
- Providing a fit, robust, and safe infrastructure to support digital capability and an agile workplace

- Using digital capabilities in decision making to enable value-driven choices, working closer with our partners, and making our information open and accessible wherever possible
- Creating location-specific digital services across Powys to connect and support businesses, communities, and individuals
- Maximising joint digital opportunities and improve data sharing capacity and capability for the benefit of our businesses, communities, and citizens

5. Issues/challenges

- 5.1 The Programme to date is successfully achieving its objectives and outcomes including the Corporate Improvement Objectives. However, the programme has faced challenges regarding the achievement of 'Cashable savings', specifically regarding automation.
- 5.2 These challenges are being overcome with tighter governance around the choice of processes which are suitable for development and confirmation/sign off from service areas that savings will be made following the re-design. Although it must be noted that our transformation should be focused on customer centred benefit as designed within our Digital Strategy.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 In conclusion, the implementation of Phase one of the Digital Transformation programme and the wider work of Digital services has achieved many benefits that has impacted positively on our citizens, communities, and staff.
- 6.2 The benefits and impact that the Programme and past Digital investment has made our transformation relatively seamless during the pandemic and highlights why investment in this area is key.

Many other local authorities struggled during this time and services were paused. However, Powys was not only able to continue to operate effectively, but we were also able to implement and develop new solutions and data insights which provided better services and improved understanding of areas that would help support the Council and its partners respond to Covid-19.

We should also acknowledge the unknown savings made in providing an environment for our workforce to work from home effectively. The accelerated roll out of digital solutions including O365 applications such as Teams, OneDrive and SharePoint enabled a seamless transition to remote working and collaboration across the council from the very beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic. The success of this transition and ongoing delivery is due to digital investment.

- 6.3 This success achieved through past investment in this area, is underpinned and driven by the culture and skills that we have developed over many years. To continue this development and continue to evolve as a digital council we

need to continue delivering the programme building on our successes of phase one into the delivery of phase two of the programme.

7 Resource Implications

- 7.1 This is a report for information and does not require a comment from the Head of Finance (Section 151 Officer).

8. Legal implications

- 8.1 The Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) has commented as follows: There are no legal consequences of noting the contents of the Digital Transformation programme phase 1 achievements.

9. Comment from local member(s)

- 9.1 N/A

10. Integrated Impact Assessment

- 10.1N/A

11. Recommendation

To note the contents of the Digital Transformation programme phase 1 achievements.

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Appendix 1

Digital Activity/development	Benefits realisation, Impact to our customers (internal/external) 'what difference has this made
<p>Covid Response Processes Track & Trace Library Order & collect Welfare calls WG Food parcels Pavement Licences Lateral Testing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quickly enabled the council to respond to Covid. • Supported the community in ensuring their welfare and needs were met. • Food parcel tracking. • Council Provided Track and Trace to 3 other Local authorities. • The ability for staff to register their testing their results, providing management information and data to WG. • Businesses were able to adapt to change quickly. • Cost avoidance savings of £138K • Data visualisation and a 13 locality approach enabled the organisation to understand demand across the county and to pinpoint where to focus resource <p>Impact</p> <p>Our staff were able to provide on-going support in the communities.</p> <p>Our residents were secure in the knowledge that we were supporting them during this difficult time with any needs requirements and followed up with welfare calls if required.</p>
<p>Covid Bereavement Barcoding procurement- A Digital System for Mortuary operations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A secure and efficient way of tracking Mortuary operations. • Cost avoidance of approx. 10k <p>Impact</p> <p>Providing our residents with dignity in death.</p>
<p>Desk Booking</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring the safety of our staff. • Complying with WG's Covid guidelines. • Cost avoidance of approx. 15k <p>Impact</p>

	<p>Safe and secure environment for staff to continue to deliver services.</p> <p>Customers being able to continue to access services during the pandemic.</p>
<p>Website (end to end customer processes) Social Services complaints Get a new bin, bag, box Missed collections Request assisted collection Fly-tipping Complaints, comments, compliments Bulky Waste New CVT permit New Garden Waste, sacks View Housing Account balance CVT permit renewals & QR code Council Tax - Set up and amend direct debit Council Tax - Download bill and view account summary Business Rates - set up direct and amend direct debit Business Rates - View account summary and download bill Report a problem with Road, Pavement, Drainage, Hedges, trees, verges, Bridges, walls, cattle grids, barriers and fences, salt bins, gritting. Report a dead animal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A fit for purpose website for the council, with analytical and management reporting of customer interaction across all channels • Re-designed processes, forms, and workflows • A two-way communication tool with our customers (setting customer expectations and providing updates) • Provide a single Customer view • “My Account” facility • A Website responsive to mobile devices • Provide management reporting on a real-time basis • Links to back-office systems removing duplication and manual interventions. • Improved back-office processes • Reduction in paper • Total cashable and non-cashable savings identified to date £253K <p>Impact</p> <p>The ability to view and track your interactions with the authority within My Powys Account facility.</p> <p>The ability to log your written and spoken language preference and receive updates in your choice of language.</p> <p>Customer expectations are set with timescales around delivery, customers are provided with automatic updates received from systems.</p> <p>The ability to upload supporting documentation removing the need to send in paper documents. E.g., trade waste, CVT permits.</p> <p>Able to book and pay. E.g., Bulky and Garden waste.</p> <p>Can receive electronic bills via My Account. E.g., council tax and business rates</p>

<p>Trade Waste Citizens Panel Report a problem with litter Flying Start Applications Abandoned Vehicle Internal process - Impact Assessment Council Tax and Business Rates electronic billing.</p>	<p>Ability to see where other jobs have been logged and their status E.g., Fly-tipping. Ability to participate in consultations that you may be interested in. E.g., Citizen Panel</p>
<p>ALN IDP systems integration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabling the new ALN IDP process, a statutory requirement <p>Impact Enables the delivery of integrated development plans for students with alternative learning needs</p>
<p>Hwb Schools laptop</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved use of digital technology for teaching and learning in schools. • Education Digital Standards for all Powys schools achieved this represented upgrading 11 High Schools and 83 primary and special schools. • Support for Digitally Excluded Learners <p>Impact Computer networks that support teaching in Powys have been modernised to ensure they are fit for future purpose.</p> <p>During 2021, all teachers in Powys received a new laptop to assist with both conventional teaching and blended learning. (1113 in total)</p> <p>Laptops provided to all Year 12 students to assist with their ongoing education and to encourage pupil retention within the County's High Schools</p> <p>Support for Digitally Excluded Learners during lockdowns included provision of WiFi connectivity via 4G MiFi boxes and the emergency issue of laptops so pupils could continue their education from home.</p>

eLearning integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Automated daily updates of training records providing up-to-date management information. £1,406 non cashable saving of staff time. <p>Impact Saved several hours per week of officer's time and eliminated wasted management and staff time chasing up missing information across the council.</p>
Systems information tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved accuracy of information provided to service desk <p>Impact Improves the responsiveness and time-to-fix for ICT service desk calls</p>
ICT service web chatbot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alternative route to resolve ICT service issues <p>Impact Provides users with an "always-on" route to resolve over 140 different ICT service issues, or raise a ticket with all the needed information</p>
Mobile Support Services furniture request process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An improved paperless process. Inventory management and real time data. £15,822 non cashable saving. <p>Impact Provided an electronic management system to manage incoming and out-going furniture donations, instead of paper records. Real-time information and access to jobs via mobile devices instead of paper. Saving in staff time through reduced paperwork.</p>
Members' correspondence tracker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An improved management tool for handling information and ensuring timely responses. <p>Impact Provided an automatic acknowledgement, assigning and following up process, ability to attach information, receipt of automatic notifications for when a response is required.</p>
Finance tasks automation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved speed and reduced errors <p>Impact Payment receipts processed more rapidly with fewer mistakes that impact debtors</p>

<p>Broadband Webpage</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An information page to help people understand their current connection and the options available to improve their broadband. <p>Impact</p> <p>People living in Powys can check their current internet connection and find out if there are faster options available. Funding information for improving homes broadband is also available for people living in Wales. The page also contains contact details for the Community Broadband Officer.</p>
<p>Communities Engaging in Community Broadband Projects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 communities are currently engaging in Community Broadband Projects <p>Impact</p> <p>These communities have formed project groups and are working with a chosen supplier to bring fibre to the premises to these areas.</p> <p>33 properties in one community have been connected to date (I must add that this project had been going for a while before I started supporting)</p> <p>10 projects have funding applications in with DCMS for the UK Gigabit Voucher Scheme.</p> <p>11 projects are engaging with their communities and 1013 properties in total have registered their interest to date.</p>
<p>Well-being Information Bank and use of Power BI</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We had 76 reports available on the Well-being Bank, this is a resource that anyone can use on our website. We have added many FOI reports to the bank so that people can self-serve, hopefully leading to a reduction in FOI requests, or if not sign-posting to the information online. <p>Impact</p> <p>We have redesigned the look of the bank so that we are now able to capture hits on our pages and understand how people are using the resource.</p> <p>It holds data on a wealth of areas, we are focused on highlighting the population and population projection reports internally as these are key to understand what future demand may look like.</p>

	<p>We have had 6,116 views on Power BI reports during a three-month period. The tool is being used by those in the organisation to understand demand in their services.</p>
<p>Automated reporting (Education Data Hub and Adult Social Care)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Education Data Hub is in its infancy. Current reports include exclusions, pupil numbers and compliments. <p>Impact</p> <p>The use of geo-spatial analysis is helping schools to understand patterns amongst primary, special and secondary schools, differences within catchments and see connections between disparate datasets.</p> <p>Adult Social Care</p> <p>We have worked with the service to look at their old market position statements (MPS) and understand the data requirement for these statutory pieces. The team have developed some automated reports that provide the data that the service needs to produce their MPS’.</p> <p>Impact</p> <p>By automating the data update, it means that the service can produce a SWAY document, which allows them to understand the latest position in terms of domiciliary care (we are now working on older people accommodation). Officers now have better insight down to a locality level, they can understand current demand, and project future demand based on population projections (using the report on the Well-being Information Bank).</p>
<p>Digital Health and Social Care collaboration</p>	<p>Produced automated reports providing insight on the following during COVID19 pandemic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID testing • GP out of hours calls • Hospital admissions • Care Home reporting • Rehabilitation Services <p>Impact</p>

Decision-makers have had insight into health data, has assisted with decisions to intervene earlier in some situations. It has also highlighted differences across our 13 localities and has shown trends over time.

Digital Health and Social Care Wales and PCC are still working together on Rehabilitation Services and are presenting at various health meetings across Wales to get buy in for better integration of health and social care.

One example of the impact of our geo-spatial analysis is that a hydration campaign was born out of the data on the GP out of hours calls report. It showed many people had Urinary Tract Infections and were calling GPs out of hours.

The campaign began in May 21 and is continuing.

Total reach – 65,830 people

Total engagements - 636

Where this campaign was run – social media (Facebook & Twitter)

How many posts have been run – 64 posts altogether

Accelerated pace to enable remote working and collaboration across the council

- Accessibility of O365 Teams/OneDrive/SharePoint

Impact

The accelerated roll out of O365 applications such as Teams, OneDrive and SharePoint enabled the almost seamless transition to remote working and collaboration across the council at the very beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Increased communications and the creation of self-help tips and user guides on the Digital Hub enabled staff to gain greater knowledge of the applications and the ability to utilise them in the way best suited to their role.