

Digital Strategy 2022 - 2027



Foreword

This Digital Strategy outlines how Conwy County Borough Council will maximise technology to realise its vision to develop Conwy as a progressive County creating opportunity. To help achieve the vision we need to develop as a digital County, one which embraces innovation across our services, promotes high quality jobs and provides seamless digital connectivity to its citizens, partners and businesses.

We are ambitious for the future of Conwy and recognise that developing a truly digital County will require us to work supportively with anybody accessing our services. Our priorities within this Digital Strategy have been developed to ensure those the priorities set out in the Council's Corporate Plan (2022-2027) are effectively supported by the digital technologies and solutions we adopt.

Furthermore we recognise that whilst Local Authorities are not in the same position to exploit new technologies as private sector firms, we have an important role to play as an enabler. We are working to achieve this through our Opportunities Board as well as programmes such as our award winning Modernisation Programme, the Hwb Programme developing digital capability within our schools and partnering in the Local Full Fibre Network programme to improve fibre speed broadband access in the County. Supporting the objectives of the Council's Renewal Programme are also key considerations in the creation of our Digital Strategy. In developing our strategy we have also considered how our themes can effectively contribute to the well-being goals set out within the Future Generations (Wales) Act.

Our four key priorities as outlined in this strategy to fulfil our vision are: digital workforce, digital services, digital connectivity and digital economy. These priorities ensure physical connections to digital services are in place, we embrace technology solutions to support digital delivery, working as a partner and enabler to create the best possible digital environment for residents, businesses and visitors to make the most of the digital revolution.

Building on our placement as a desirable location in an area of outstanding natural beauty to visit, live and work in, we will be a place synonymous with nurturing digital skills and tech pioneers to deliver digital solutions that can benefit us all. Looking to the future, we will work to ensure that Conwy is ideally placed to exploit the opportunities of continued investment in next generation connectivity wherever we can.



Councillor Charlie McCoubrey,
Leader, Conwy County Borough Council



A Progressive County Creating Opportunity



PRIORITIES

- **Workforce**
 - Modernised workforce that embraces technology to deliver improved services and efficiencies.
- **Services**
 - Transformative, open and accessible services which share data wherever possible.
- **Connectivity**
 - Cyber resilient, reliable connections and systems can be accessed when and where needed.
- **Economy**
 - Develop a digital County that strives to embrace innovation and high skilled jobs.



PRINCIPLES

- **Collaborative**
 - Working together to deliver Digital Conwy the best possible digital environment.
- **Innovative**
 - Test and develop innovative solutions which benefit Conwy residents, businesses and visitors.
- **Inclusive**
 - Delivering digital services that are inclusive and accessible.



Digital Workforce

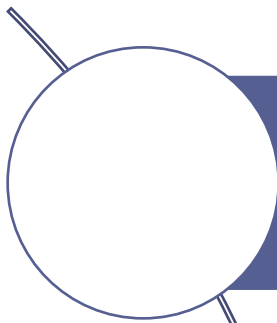
The Council's award winning modernisation programme involved the development and occupation of our state of the art Coed Pella offices when opened in November 2018.

Prior to occupation, services across the Council went through major change processes as the Council developed and implemented its "workwise" agile working model to help ensure our workforce utilise technology to operate anywhere. Use of space at the new Coed Pella data centre was maximised. Technology solutions were key to the success of this change; the next challenge is to further exploit all the digital solutions that officers and members now have at their disposal.

The significant change to ways of working brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic has also identified benefits to officers or members working away from the traditional office environment through access to latest digital solutions and technologies, supporting Services as they update and transform ways of working.

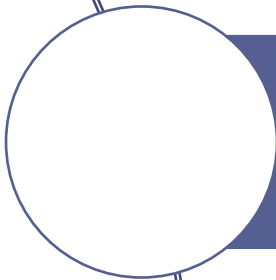
A further outcome of the corporate plan is the cross cutting theme which states "Conwy County Borough Council is resilient". The development of a digital workforce in part demonstrates our progress towards the realisation of this.

To further improve our digital workforce, we plan to undertake the following:



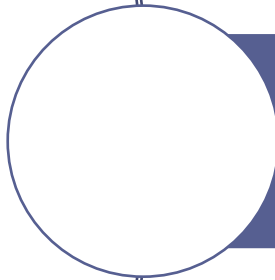
Developing our digital skill sets.

- Investment in our workforce to ensure they are digitally skilled and comfortable using and exploiting latest technology tools.
- Continually refresh IT & Digital Transformation skills base to maximise our ability to support and innovate.



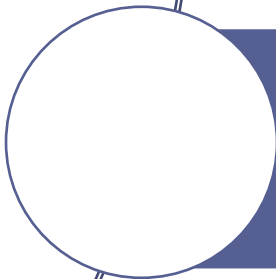
Productivity & collaboration tools.

- Develop a rollout strategy for migration towards the latest desktop productivity tools e.g. Microsoft 365 and Zoom.
- Implement digital solutions to support streaming and participation in our democratic meetings.



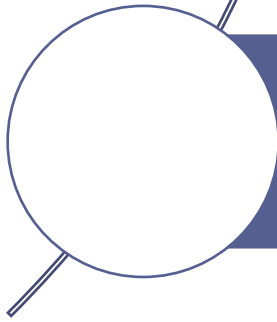
Tools to do the job.

- Ensure officers and members are equipped with up to date devices and peripherals to support digital working.
- Deliver access to key systems for officers and members from any location from a range of devices including PCs, Laptops, Tablets and Smartphones.



Paperless working.

- Support further developments for services to operate in a paperless manner, whilst reducing print, postage and storage.
- Develop digital alternatives to ways of working or legacy technologies that are still utilised by our services e.g. post and facsimiles.



Digital conferencing.

- Promote digital conference platforms for meetings to reduce travel and office occupancy.
- Increase use of video to record or stream accessible meetings, corporate messages, classes and webinars.

Digital Services

Conwy County Borough Council has adopted a digital first approach for provision of its services with the website identified as the primary channel for contact and retrieval of information. This is complimented by information assistants and dedicated service teams who can utilise digital technology to provide more information through use of digital contact centres, telephony or in person.

By offering an assisted digital approach for those who may require extra support, it helps to ensure service users or officers who do not have digital connections, or who are not confident using them are included.

We will build on recent successes to provide the best possible experience for any person wishing to engage with the Council, contributing to the Council's corporate plan outcome that "people are informed, included, listened to and can add to their community". We will consider innovative ways to use technology to enhance how we care for our vulnerable people or protect communities in support of our target to ensure "people are safe and feel safe".

As part of the Council's Renewals Programme, we will work to prioritise development of online services to focus on a "digital first" approach to provide accessible access to search for, request, apply and pay for services online.

We will strive to further develop our digital service provision by adopting the following:



Digital Connectivity

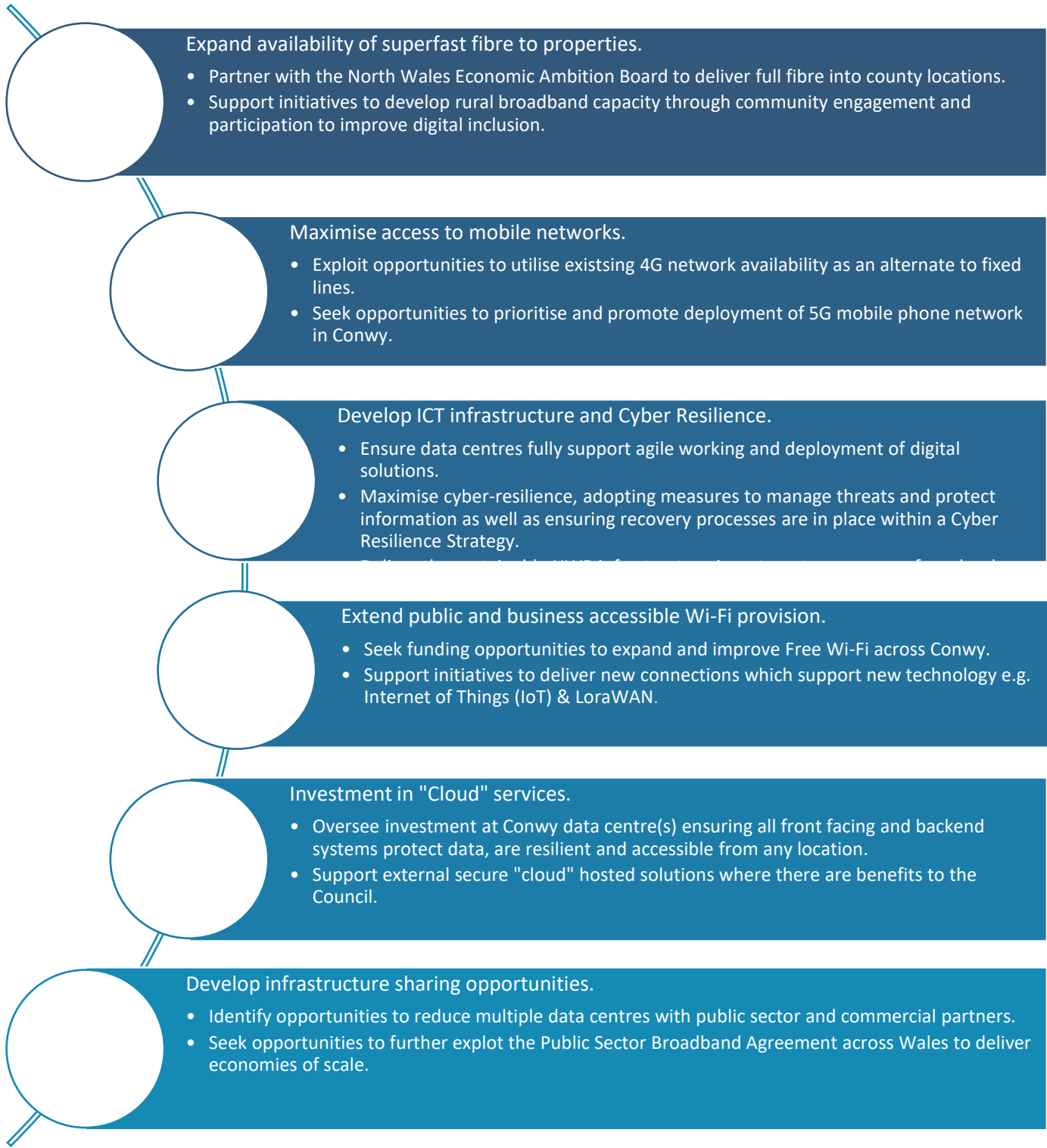
The nation's digital infrastructure is increasingly recognised as the 'fourth utility' with robust performing internet connections now essential to our everyday lives where people may prefer to engage from a distance. This has never been more evident than during the Coronavirus Pandemic in 2020. Our citizens, businesses and visitors expect to have access to high speed, resilient broadband connections from any part of Conwy that do not hinder us whether at home, learning, working or visiting the County. Whilst delivery high speed broadband sits with providers, the Council can promote and support regional programmes to accelerate rollout or promote take up of grant funding to deliver localised improvements.

This is equally true for delivery of Council infrastructure and systems, it is essential our infrastructure can meet the demands from staff, members and anybody wishing to engage with the Council to ensure our services can operate effectively. Our infrastructure must provide resilience and support the ability to access technology from any location.

Maintaining connections to systems and data securely is also a key consideration with effective Cyber Resilience critical to ensuring data and systems are protected and can be recovered in a timely manner. To that end the development of a Cyber Resilience Strategy can maintain focus on this key area of risk to the Council, helping us to ensure we react appropriately to emerging and changing threats.

The Council's Corporate Plan for the term 2022-2027 sets out a priority that "People in Conwy are safe and feel safe". As part of that priority the Council has set out its commitment to ensure measures are in place to protect personal data and promote cyber security to keep citizens safe online.

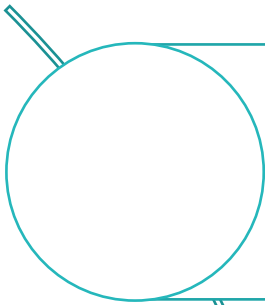
We plan to take the following steps to help develop and improve digital connectivity across the County over the term of this strategy:



Digital Economy

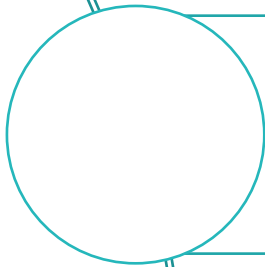
A further objective of our Corporate Plan is to ensure “people in Conwy live in a County which has a prosperous economy”. By seeking opportunities to work in partnership with schools, colleges, Welsh Government and businesses we can help to raise awareness and support adoption of new ideas and initiatives targeting growth in Conwy’s digital economy.

Furthermore, it can help to develop and enhance digital skills across our County, supporting our aim that “people are educated and skilled”.



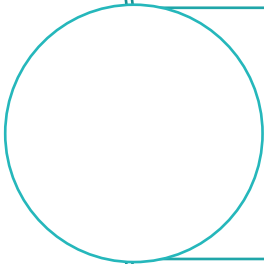
Events and Tourism.

- Appropriate IT support is available at key events e.g. through free Wi-Fi access.
- Work with services to enhance web, booking and payment services to maximise income and customer experience.
- Develop digital platforms to promote events, shows and initiatives.



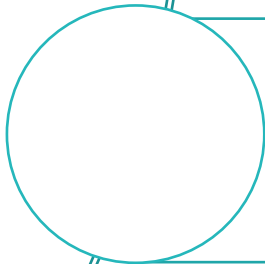
Innovation.

- Work alongside educational and business partners to share learning from new technologies e.g. adoption of LoraWAN for agriculture, flood management and care solutions.
- Support recreation by developing solutions to deliver recreation digitally e.g. fitness classes



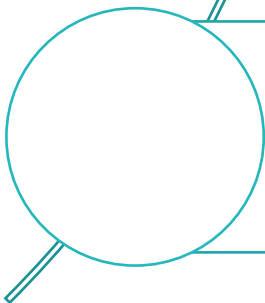
Partnerships.

- Promote learning and placement opportunities for officers and learners to develop skill levels in areas of digital technology.
- Develop and introduce services for partners to help raise digital competences and capabilities including cyber security.



Digital towns and villages.

- Seek funding opportunities for digital investment to regeneration in towns and communities.
- Support communities to improve access to superfast broadband speeds.



Digital businesses.

- Work with local digital infrastructure and solution providers to further enhance Conwy's use of digital services.
- Support sharing and expansion of publicly available networks, broadband and data.

Delivery Statement

This Digital Strategy sets out the aspirations of the Information Technology & Digital Transformation Service for the period 2022 - 2027. Whilst it is difficult to predict the technological advances that will take place over the period of this strategy, it remains our overriding intention to demonstrate a commitment to support progressive adoption of technology solutions in Conwy to benefit everybody.

We are in a digital revolution with opportunities arising from advances in technology infrastructure and solutions constantly. We cannot stand still. Understanding the demands on our services and how delivery of “digital ready” solutions can help to meet them is essential. To that end the development of this strategy, prioritising essential areas for investment and allocation of IT and Digital Transformation resource requires consultation across our services. The business partner model adopted by IT and Digital Transformation helps to ensure this consultation takes place and the needs of services are listened to. In turn this feedback contributes to influencing the strategy areas, priorities and as a consequence policies and technical standards adopted.

Furthermore, participation in consultative and partnership groups as well as learning from other good practice for example in other Councils has helped us to ensure the strategy supports priorities around key considerations such as cyber resilience, information security and accessibility for our service users.

The strategy focusses on how we view the future potential of ICT and digitisation to ‘support a progressive Conwy’, particularly as we take steps following modernisation to realise future opportunities and maximise the return on our recent investments.

As with any strategy the stated outcomes of our digital journey need to balance provision, aspirations and expectations with the very real challenge of cost to achieve. Consolidation or upgrade of digital solutions offers opportunity for efficiencies and savings. We will look to finance progression on this journey collaboratively across services by seeking capital investment and utilising digitally focussed grant support to target outcomes which are sustainable.

So what will success look like? We believe by working proactively with our services and service users, using our business partnering model and direction from the Corporate Plan to understand expectations that this IT and Digital strategy can feed into the business planning framework, initiating key viable projects over the term of the strategy which deliver long term improvements to the Council’s services.

Our vision, through implementation of this strategy is that we will realise a material improvement to the way we work, how our services are delivered and how we contribute to the lives of our residents and visitors which will include:

- A digitally competent workforce, working collaboratively across teams from any location, reducing the need for travel between sites and making home working easier.
- Extending our citizens’ ability to engage, interact and participate with the Council digitally to access services and democratic meetings.
- Addressing inequalities in the way people gain and understand access to our services.
- Helping to further improve our processes to make them simpler and effective.
- Reducing costs associated with legacy process and systems to deliver sustainable savings.

- Supporting our schools so that they are equipped with latest technology to ensure our teachers can support pupil learning digitally in the classroom and at home.
- Further developing cyber resilience across the Council to manage the increased threat of cyber-attack and recognising the increasing reliance on technology solutions.
- Expanding and improving the essential need for improved broadband capacity for homes, businesses and visitors.
- Developing our partnerships to share and exploit existing or emerging technologies that can help to realise improvements to our lives and wellbeing.

Whilst we do not anticipate every element of focus will be endorsed, we feel it is important to outline the potential to develop further as we embrace technology to support our rapidly changing ways of working.

This strategy will be used as a reference for IT and Digital Transformation Service planning during 2022 – 2027.