

A woman in a light blue shirt is shown in profile, looking at a tablet computer she is holding. The background is a bright, out-of-focus window. A red horizontal bar is overlaid on the top left of the image, containing the title text.

City of Wolverhampton Council's Digital Strategy

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1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Council's Digital Strategy will bring together the various digital strategies that are being pursued within the Council. The Digital Strategy aligns to the digital services and engagement strategy that is defined in the ICT Strategy, the Wolverhampton Digital Inclusion Strategy which is one of the strands of the Welfare Reform Programme, Wolverhampton Homes Digital Inclusion Strategy, the EU Smart City framework which comprises of six categories of digital projects and initiatives, the broadband voucher scheme, the Black Country Local Broadband demand stimulation plan and the Universal Services Framework.
- 1.2 According to the Office for National Statistics, in 2014, 38 million adults (76%) in Great Britain accessed the Internet every day, 21 million more than in 2006, when directly comparable records began. Access to the Internet using a mobile phone more than doubled between 2010 and 2014, from 24% to 58%. 22 million households (84%) in Great Britain had Internet access in 2014, up from 57% in 2006. It is expect that from 2015 mobile devices will be the primary internet device for most individuals.
- 1.3 According to Socitm (a UK based IT professional body) "Digital' implies technologies that allow people without programming skills (e.g. citizens, service users, employees, suppliers and others) to interact directly with other people, locations and organisations via the internet, using a desktop computer, mobile device, kiosk or other 'consumer' interface. In the context of local public services, it is about transforming the way we do just about everything and ensuring that it covers the service from start to finish."
- 1.4 Digital context: We live in a digital age and this new environment offers huge potential for the Council to interact with citizens more effectively and make a step change in levels of efficiency. It also offers huge potential to the individual in terms of job searches, social engagement and service convenience. Most UK citizens use and already benefit from digital services:
- 79% of the UK population is now using the internet, up from 59% in 2005
 - 92% of the population (70% for aged 65 or over) have a mobile phone, with 45% possessing a smartphone
 - Levels of trust are high with only 47% of people having concerns about entering credit card details online with only 24% read online terms and conditions
 - Over 63% of the UK population use online banking services

There is an acceleration toward ubiquitous availability of general purpose digital technologies. This will make it possible to completely rethink how the Council organises itself, how it learns and adapts, and how it fosters innovation. There is also a shift toward openness as the default, not just in technology but across our economy and society.

- 1.5 Digital is important, transformative and positively disruptive. But of itself digital is not the panacea for resolving all problems. Digital works best when it is deeply embedded in the organisation's culture and when the customer journey and business processes are part of the design thinking. Sometimes, particularly where there are complex social problems to solve, the best customer journey is not digital at all.

- 1.6 Creating a digital strategy that looks 3–5 years ahead is an unrealistic expectation. Technology is advancing too fast and the Council’s strategy needs to be agile and flexible enough to accommodate these advances. Equally, accurate budgeting is difficult when the landscape is evolving at such a rapid rate. A digital strategy therefore has to take a different approach. Thus this strategy will focus more on creating policies, priorities and a workforce (people) who can be trusted to make the right decisions as new technologies emerge, rather than defining everything up front. As the old adage by Maimonides (1135) says, *“Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime”*.

2 Digital Leadership

- 2.1 The influence of the City of Wolverhampton’s Digital Strategy goes beyond the bounds of the council and the City of Wolverhampton as the digital ecosystem has no boundaries. The Council’s Digital Strategy clearly sets out the Council’s digital ambitions and delivery mechanisms, eliciting trust and confidence in the council as a digital leader.
- 2.2 The growing number of social media followers and the Council’s appetite to build on this success by expanding the number of social media channels further demonstrates the confidence of the council as a digital leader.
- 2.3 The Digital Strategy aligns the strategic digital activities of the council with the Corporate Plan and the council’s priorities. The Digital Inclusion and Universal Services Framework initiatives support the council’s priority of building Stronger Communities while the Smart City and Broadband Voucher initiatives support the council’s priority of building a Stronger Economy. These digital initiatives along with the Digital Services and Digital Enablers demonstrate the City of Wolverhampton Council is a Confident Capable digital leader.

3 Digital Services

- 3.1 Digitalisation offers key benefits by enabling the Council to:
- Redefining customer relationships using information and knowledge as an asset to understanding their customers’ needs better and meet them in the most cost efficient manner.
 - Access to online transactional services and self-service portals which make life simpler and more convenient for customers.
 - Channels to collaborate and share information with other customers, businesses and partners.
 - Innovation in new ways of delivering services supporting transformations.
 - Achievement of savings in service delivery
- 3.2 Current industry accepted figures from Socitm show the follow comparison between the three main customer engagement channels:
- | | |
|----------------|-----------------------|
| • Face to face | £8.23 per visit |
| • Phone | £3.21 per call |
| • Web | £0.39 per transaction |

- 3.3 The Council’s ambition is for all services that can be efficiently delivered digitally as self-service solutions will be thus delivered. The use of digital services will be promoted through marketing and publicity and existing contact channels to improve take up. Access for disabled people and excluded groups is an integral part of the approach, and will be delivered through working with libraries, community hubs and partner organisations. All council services will be digital by design and mobile responsive.
- 3.4 All access channels are to be supported by a fully integrated corporate Customer Engagement Management (CEM) solution. The CEM solution will provide a consistent model for all customer contact across the Council. A master record of customers (including businesses) is to be held and updated by the council to provide consistent, accurate customer data to enable effective and efficient resolution of customer enquiries.
- 3.5 The strategy is focused on driving real change. The approach includes:
- Establishing a citizen customer-centric operating model.
 - Achieving efficiencies and making better use of technology and realising new value from council information assets.
 - Governance arrangements to ensure that new ICT solutions comply with strategic objectives.
 - Increased standardisation and modularisation of business processes and supporting technologies to create a platform that can deliver new models of open and innovative public services.
 - Greater engagement with services and suppliers to remove cultural as well as technical barriers.

4 Digital Inclusion

- 4.1 Digital inclusion can enhance lives, support community cohesion and improve equality of opportunity. Wolverhampton’s City Strategy overall goal is ‘prosperity for all’, by creating opportunities that encourage enterprise, empower people and re-invigorate the city. Broadband infrastructure is specifically mentioned under encouraging enterprise and business, and its impact can be felt across the planned results and key themes below. The associated action plans can be found in the [Digital Inclusion Strategy](#).
- 4.2 **Digital by Design** – Embracing digital channels as the default in service design where possible will help to stimulate; Business benefits - providing access to online markets, supply chains, electronic data and trading, for small and large enterprises, and making the public sector easier to do business with. Opportunity - enabling individuals and communities to take more control of their lives, giving access to online data and services to improve productivity, work-life balance and education for all. Public service reform - digital delivery lowers costs whilst protecting vital services from direct cuts, with more choice, local delivery and increased autonomy.
- 4.3 This does not mean that those who are not online will be left behind. Where digital channels are the default and by design, there will still need to be support for those who are not online to ensure they can access every service. A key catalyst to the development of Wolverhampton’s Digital Inclusion Strategy has been the introduction of Universal Credit. This new system will require individuals to apply for benefits online, with implementation for new claimants anticipated in 2015. In reality, the

need for benefit claimants to have access to IT is already underway with online sign-on for Jobseekers Allowance and Universal Jobmatch. Jobmatch is the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) free, online job posting and matching service for companies and anyone looking for work.

- 4.4 The Council will ensure Wolverhampton residents have access to and support required for online transactions in particular around applying for Universal Credit, Jobmatch and job searching. This includes access to computers through Jobcentre Plus (JCP) offices and community hubs. Enabling and supporting the achievement of core objectives such as:
- **High employment rate:** by improving employability of residents and connectivity to jobs
 - **Reducing (Child) Poverty:** by enabling residents to claim benefits and access to employment as a means out of poverty.
- 4.5 **Consumer Benefits/ Access to Cheaper Services** - Research on drivers of digital inclusion found that “people living in 3.6 million low income households which are digitally excluded are missing out on annual savings of over £1 billion a year from shopping and paying bills online” through wider range of provision, cheaper deals and paperless billing. Wolverhampton has particular high rates of child poverty, with 1 in 3 children living in poverty and 1 in 4 people living in fuel poverty.
- 4.6 The Council will raise the awareness of Wolverhampton residents, of the ability to save money online as part of our overall aim to tackle poverty and achieving prosperity for all. Enabling and supporting the achievement of core objectives such as:
- **Reducing (Child) Poverty:** by opening access to cheaper services with positive impact on poverty and by enabling residents to manage their money better online.
- 4.7 **Skills and Employment Benefits** - Wolverhampton currently has one of the lowest employment rates in the country, therefore getting local people into jobs and helping them to progress is arguably one of our highest priorities. Though we are making progress, we still face significant challenges and digital inclusion can play a role. Wolverhampton’s educational attainment is improving, but remains slightly below the national average at both Key Stage 2 and 4. There is a positive correlation between access to a computer and the internet at home and improvement in children’s educational performance. Wolverhampton has invested heavily as part of its Building Schools for the Future programme in the IT capability of both primary and secondary schools across the City, with £26 million having been invested in the City’s 26 secondary schools. The approach varies across schools, for example Highfields in Warstones, has used its allocation to provide a laptop for every child.
- 4.8 The Council will increase the skills levels of Wolverhampton residents including digital skills and support them into employment through assistance with online job search and applications. Enabling and supporting the achievement of core objectives such as:
- **High Employment Rate:** by improving educational attainment and the skills of residents, employability and earning potential and enabling online job search.
 - **Reducing Child Poverty:** by enabling residents to improve their skills and access to employment as a means out of poverty
- 4.9 **Health and Reducing Isolation** – Social exclusion and lack of human contact is a key issue for some of the most vulnerable in the city. Wolverhampton’s history of heavy industry has left a legacy of long

term limiting illness and poor mobility (10.2% higher proportion of those with limited mobility than the rest of England). Over 3000 older people have dementia and, in a local survey, 14% reported that they were seriously affected by depression and anxiety. In addition, one in three over 65's live alone.

- 4.10 The Council will use technology to reduce isolation and improve health. The City of Wolverhampton has taken up the Challenge on Dementia laid down by Prime Minister through the Wolverhampton Dementia Action Alliance. The Council will use technology were applicable to develop a person-centred approach to care and the provision of services. Enabling and supporting the achievement of core objectives such as:
- **Longer healthier lives:** by offering alternative means of accessing health services and reducing isolation.
- 4.11 The actions contained in this Strategy will need to constantly evolve in light of the uncertainties relating to some of the external factors, such as the date of the roll out of Universal Credit within Wolverhampton and its impact on existing capacity in terms of access points and support available. The implementation plan to deliver this strategy will be refreshed on an annual basis.

5 Universal Services Framework

- 5.1 The rollout of Universal Credit, which will replace both out of work and in work benefits, started in the Black Country at the beginning of 2015 in Dudley then Walsall. Wolverhampton is in the fourth tranche where the rollout will start for single claimants in December 2015.
- 5.2 Universal Credit will require claimants to apply for and manage their account online, receive their payments monthly in arrears and pay their rent direct to their landlord. We anticipate that some residents will require additional support, for example if they do not have access to or lack the skills and capability to get online. Three themes have been developed that integrate with both the digital services and the digital inclusion strategies discussed above.
- 5.3 **Triage:** should be open to all and utilise existing community venues. Communication is key for both organisations and residents. Providers and frontline workers should be well informed.
- 5.4 **Digital Inclusion:** focused on access and support. The first action is to map publically accessible computers, including specialist equipment and then consider gaps in relation to geographical and equality. Support required will be one-to-one and small group depending on individual needs, which could start with the basics e.g. how to switch on the computer.
- 5.5 **Personal Budgeting Support:** building on what's already available including the credit union, Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB), Better off in Wolverhampton, welfare rights and support available through social landlords. Considering innovative approaches and creatively responding to issues caused by and the needs to provide payment of tenancy in advance whereby Universal Credit will be paid in arrears.

6 Smart City Framework

6.1 The Smart City Framework aims to position Wolverhampton as a city that has an economically advantageous offer and comparative competitiveness due to its investment in technology. By capitalising on technology and encouraging innovation across the city, the Council can make the city of Wolverhampton a more attractive place to live, work and invest in. The following perspectives and guiding principles are Wolverhampton's considered approach in achieving a Smart City:

- main enabling tool is ICT (infrastructures, hardware and software), enabled by smart processes and interoperability and fuelled by data
- International, national and hinterland links are also important (beyond the city), given that a Smart City could be described as quintessentially a globally networked hub
- public, private and civil partnerships and collaboration with different stakeholders working together in pursuing smart objectives at a city level
- Smart objectives include transparency and open data by using ICT and e-government in participatory decision-making and co-created e-services, for example apps
- orchestrating and integrating some or all of the other smart characteristics

6.2 The Council will adopt the EU Smart City Framework in pursuit of its Smart City ambitions. The EU Smart City Framework comprises six categories of projects and initiatives. Below are the six categories, with explanatory comments taken from the report "Mapping Smart Cities in the EU" (RAND Corporation, for the European Parliament, January 2014:

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=IPOL-ITRE_ET%282014%29507480).

The six categories are defined below and form a key part of the Councils digital initiatives. The associated action plans can be found in the [Progress in developing a Smart City Strategy](#) report:

6.3 Smart Governance

- participation of citizens through ICT-enabled platforms
- transparency of city decision-making and enabling better feedback from citizens to civil servants
- citizen and business participants set the agenda
- open data strategies and platforms, crowdsourcing and co-creation platforms, etc.
- open data projects
 - include citizen or user competitions to develop apps and other digital services (often reusing public data)
 - are regarded by participants and government officials as providing better Smart Governance and Smart Economy outcomes than conventional approaches
 - tend to have only modest capital costs, most of which are already sunk
 - primary cost associated with such projects is the opportunity cost of time, which is provided by the participants
- joined up within-city and across-city governance, including services and interactions which link and [...] integrate public, private, civil [...] organisations so the city can function efficiently and effectively as one organism

6.4 Smart Economy

- e-business and e-commerce
- increased productivity
- ICT-enabled and advanced manufacturing and delivery of services
- ICT-enabled innovation, as well as new products, new services and business models
- smart clusters and eco-systems (e.g. digital business and entrepreneurship)
- local and global inter-connectedness and embedded internationally with physical and virtual flows of goods, services and knowledge

6.5 Smart Mobility

- ICT supported and integrated transport and logistics systems
- sustainable, safe and interconnected transportation systems can encompass trams, buses, trains, metros, cars, cycles and pedestrians in situations using one or more modes of transport
- prioritises clean and often non-motorised options
- Relevant and real-time information accessed by the public, in order to save time and improve commuting efficiency, save costs and reduce CO2 emissions
- network transport managers, to improve services and provide feedback to citizens
- mobility system users might also provide their own real-time data or contribute to long-term planning

6.6 Smart Environment

- Smart energy including renewables, ICT-enabled energy grids, metering, pollution control and monitoring, renovation of buildings and amenities, green buildings, green urban planning
- Resource use efficiency, re-use and resource substitution
- Urban services such as street lighting, waste management, drainage systems, and water resource systems that are monitored to evaluate the system, reduce pollution and improve water quality

6.7 Smart People

- e-skills
- working in ICT-enabled working
- access to education and training
- human resources and capacity management
- an inclusive society that improves creativity and fosters innovation
- enable people and communities to themselves input, use, manipulate and personalise data, for example through appropriate data analytic tools and dashboards, to make decisions and create products and services

6.8 Smart Living

- ICT-enabled life styles, behaviour and consumption
- healthy and safe living in a culturally vibrant city with diverse cultural facilities
- good quality housing and accommodation
- high levels of social cohesion and social capital

7 Broadband Vouchers

- 7.1 Wolverhampton already has strong superfast broadband availability at 93%, covering 103,550 dwellings and 236,400 people, however there are several areas which do not have access to superfast broadband. These areas tend to correlate with our key business areas including Wolverhampton City Centre, Stafford Road Technology Corridor, Bilston and Wednesfield.
- 7.2 The availability of superfast broadband can greatly increase the productivity of a business and attract investment into the city. A good broadband connection means there is greater capacity to send and receive data electronically. This will allow files to be downloaded and uploaded faster and emails sent and received much quicker, which will be particularly beneficial for companies that regularly need to send or archive large data files.
- 7.3 As part of the regional working initiative, the Black Country has been awarded £12.2 million aimed at extending the availability of high-speed fibre broadband to 98 per cent of homes and businesses. Wolverhampton City Centre is excluded from the rollout and the remaining rollout within Wolverhampton will take place in the later phases of the rollout in late 2016 to 2017. However in the Autumn statement, the Government announced an extension of the broadband connection voucher scheme to 22 additional cities including Wolverhampton from 1 April 2015. Broadband Vouchers provide grants of up to £3,000 to small medium sized enterprises (SME's) to cover the installation costs of a faster and better broadband service. The extension of the voucher scheme will allow Wolverhampton to address the gap in superfast broadband in Wolverhampton City Centre and also allow a shorter term solution to slow broadband speeds on our business parks prior to the rollout of infrastructure as part of the Black Country Local Broadband Plan. The city is allowed to retain ten per cent of all vouchers issued to fund demand stimulation activity and costs associated with delivering the scheme.
- 7.4 The demand stimulation plan for Wolverhampton and the wider Black Country, outlining approaches to promoting broadband vouchers, building on what has worked elsewhere, will include:
- Promoting the benefits of superfast broadband and availability of the broadband voucher schemes to businesses using the business rate database. This method was used in Leeds and generated a 2% response. This approach is aligned to the Smart City Framework.
 - Promoting the opportunity to businesses through the Black Country Growth Hub, the one-stop-shop for business support, in particular its product, Optimising Business Technology which supports businesses to take-up and maximise usage of superfast broadband.
 - Targeting geographical areas reporting slow broadband speeds such as businesses on the Pendeford Business Park and Wolverhampton Science Park.
 - Targeting businesses in Wolverhampton's Business Improvement District (BID) Area in the city centre.

8 Digital Enablers

- 8.1 The multiplicity of digital identities across the public services has been an issue for local authorities for over a decade. However, in today's connected world of digital-by-default or digital-by-design and data sharing, managing and verifying digital identities is an increasingly difficult issue for all local

authorities. Plus data breaches can lead to heavy fines and public criticism. The Council will introduce a secure customer identity and authentication management solution.

- 8.2 Both static and dynamic data is required to give data relevancy and eligibility. Personalisation relies on dynamic data. This is the data, which is changing all the time. The phone call and reason for call, the last click on the website, the referral from the search engine, the click on the advertising banner, the conversation at the counter, a live chat conversation or a mobile app download and sign up or interaction. The City of Wolverhampton's Digital Engagement platform will enable the Council to hold both static and dynamic data so that data has relevancy and eligibility.
- 8.3 Place and time underpin almost everything that the council does and controls. They also underpin almost everything that happens in the lives of citizens, as well as everything we know and learn about the world. Geospatial Visualisation is the power to take data and present it graphically in terms of maps and relative positions over time. These graphical representations potentially enable us to better understand complex problems as well as solve more basic issues such as correctly identifying the location of a faulty lamp-post, and the time it was repaired. The Council as part of the digital services and digital engagement will implement a customer services solution that will enable the greater use and accessibility of geospatial visualisation.
- 8.4 The Council will exploit existing and new social media channels to deliver key strategic communication objectives such as increasing the number of people who feel informed about our services, raising awareness of key services that deal with what matters to local people, increasing the number of active foster families, developing a sustained and integrated stakeholder communication approach to businesses, investors and developers and improving internal communication and engagement. Growing the Council's 40,000-plus-strong social media presence will see better marketing and content provision on existing City Council Facebook, Twitter, Flickr and You Tube channels promoting the adoption of digital services. Digital growth will also see the launch of new social media channels, including LinkedIn, greater use of TripAdvisor and Email marketing.
- 8.5 The transformation of public buildings and public spaces is key to enabling the delivery of the Council's Digital Strategy. Initiatives such as the provision of publically accessible WiFi in all publically accessible public buildings throughout the city will promote digital inclusion whilst the transformation of the council's property portfolio will deliver centres of digital excellence enabling better ways of working.
- 8.6 Robust information security, information sharing and privacy protection standards are critical for engendering confidence and trust in digital services. The Council will champion the use of the Wolverhampton Information Sharing framework in multi-agency environments to ensure that the framework is embedded and a clear, consistent approach to information sharing is being adopted, supporting multi-agency initiatives such as the Wolverhampton MASH, Safeguarding Trigger Trees and phase two of the Families in Focus project.

9 Action Plan

- 9.1 While the action plan outlines a full three years of actions, it is envisaged that it will be reviewed annually, so that a rolling plan is constantly updated and maintained, with the next two years' worth of actions always being clearly articulated, mandates reviewed and delivery accountabilities assigned.
- 9.2 In order to achieve the Council's vision, realise the outcomes, ensure that the most effective governance, and build the required capabilities, the following specific actions have been set out. While this strategy does not recommend specific solutions or approaches, all actions need to be considered in the light of the emerging sociological, economic and technological trends.
- 9.3 These actions are grouped around the main digital themes with further initiatives being developed within work streams to support the delivery of the actions.

	Actions	Linked Digital Themes	Date
1	Digital Enablers		
A	Join up data across Council services.		2015 - 2018
B	Deliver Open Data to support and enable improvements in public service.		2015 - 2018
C	Adopt cutting edge analytics Council wide.		2015 - 2016
D	Expand the use of digital and social media channels.	Digital Inclusion / Digital Services	2015 - 2018
E	Extend the Council's online offer through the increased use of the Wolverhampton Council 'My Account'.	Digital Services	2015 - 2017
F	Improve the usability of the Council's digital channels including the web.	Digital Services	2015 - 2016
G	Adopt a cloud first, mobile first approach for the delivery of digital solutions.	Digital Services / Digital Leadership	2015 - 2018
2	Digital Services		
A	Reduce and consolidate ICT systems across the Council.		2015 - 2018
B	Enable efficient and accessible face-to-face access to Council Services.		2015 - 2018
C	Create adaptability in critical IT systems supporting vulnerable clients.		2015 - 2018
D	Expand the use of digital and social media channels.	Digital Inclusion / Digital Enablers	2015 - 2018
E	Extend the Council's online offer through the increased use of the Wolverhampton Council 'My Account'.	Digital Enablers	2015 - 2017
F	Improve the usability of the Council's digital channels including the web.	Digital Enablers	2015 - 2016
G	Adopt a cloud first, mobile first approach for the delivery of digital solutions.	Digital Enablers / Digital Leadership	2015 - 2018
3	Digital Inclusion		
A	Digitally enable Council public buildings.	Smart City	2015 - 2017
B	Stimulate innovation in public services through open data and information sharing initiatives.		2015 - 2018

C	Harness the opportunities offered by geographic and location based data services.		2015 - 2017
D	Increase and improve access for all, and particularly vulnerable groups.		2015 - 2018
E	Use digital channels to revitalise democracy.	Smart City	2015 - 2017
F	Expand the use of digital and social media channels.	Digital Enablers	2015 - 2018
4	Smart City		
A	Stimulate and support the provision of high quality, next generation internet connectivity, including wi-fi and broadband, across Wolverhampton and the wider Black Country		2015 - 2017
B	Digitally enable Council public buildings.	Digital Inclusion	2015 - 2017
C	Use digital channels to revitalise democracy.	Digital Inclusion	2015 - 2017
5	Digital Leadership		
A	Ensure robust yet agile Information Security and Information Governance practices.		2015 - 2018
B	Protect privacy.		2015 - 2018
C	Manage online identity securely.		2015 - 2018
D	Develop “Digital by Design” policies.		2015 - 2017
E	Adopt a cloud first, mobile first approach for the delivery of digital solutions.	Digital Services / Digital Enablers	2015 - 2018