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EQIA	19

Ref. No.	
Category:	
People	
Place	
Corporate	Yes
In Constitution	

Dorset Council's Digital Vision 2020

Policy Details

What is this policy for?	<p>The digital vision and delivery plan set out the council's digital aims and ambitions, how these will be realised and the measures we will use to know we have achieved them.</p> <p>Our vision is to become a digital council in a digital place, putting people and their needs first using design and modern technology to improve people's lives. We will do this by focusing on the two themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • becoming a digital council • enable Dorset to be a digital place <p>The vision provides a framework for a broad range of activity that will enable us to improve our digital maturity</p>
Who does this policy affect?	<p>NHS Dorset communities Dorset residents Voluntary sector Business communities Service providers Members</p>
Keywords	<p>Future Dorset Dorset Reloaded Digital Vision ICT EAP 5G Skills Inclusion Accessibility Internet Broadband</p>
Author	<p>Name : Dr Deborah Smart Job Title: Corporate Director Digital and Change Tel: 01305 224711 Email: Deborah.Smart@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</p>

Does this policy relate to any laws?	
Is this policy linked to any other Dorset Council policies?	<p>Economic growth strategy Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership People strategy Assets management strategy Climate and Ecological emergency strategy Transformation plan</p>
Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)	<p>Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) An EqIA was carried out to identify the impacts both externally on communities and internally on employees.</p> <p>For communities there was a mixture of positive and negative impacts based on Dorset resident’s ability to access and use the internet.</p> <p>For employees the impacts were a mixture of positive or neutral unclear</p> <p>For a number of the protected characteristics were neutral or unclear based on limited or no data being available to assess the impacts.</p>
Other Impact Assessments	<p>Financial Implications The actions set out in the delivery plan will be financed through appropriate funding streams which are already accounted for within the Medium term financial plan (MTFP) including the transformation fund and capital allocations for ICT. These alongside Government or Local enterprise partnership (LEP) grants mean the delivery plan is full funded</p> <p>Climate implications This digital vision improves connectivity across Dorset, supports the development of first class digital services for the council and the ability for excluded members of the public to consume them.</p> <p>It contributes to the council transforming the way it works through the adoption of the Dorset Workplace. These actions are believed to contribute to reducing travel, reducing paper and have other positive contributions to support reduction in carbon consumption.</p> <p>Risk Assessment Having considered the risks associated with this decision, the level of risk has been identified as:</p> <p>Current Risk: High Residual Risk: Medium</p> <p>The council has a corporate risk, identified as high, which is ‘failure to adequately manage the financial position leads to an overspend which is untenable in the medium term’. The projects and activities contained within the digital vision and described within the delivery plan aim to mitigate this risk by focussing resources where needed to deliver Dorset Council’s digital transformation.</p>

This will be managed through the council's transformation governance, monitoring and reporting progress of all key programmes, reporting from DartBoard to Corporate leadership team (CLT) then through to Cabinet and Senior leadership team (SLT) at Leadership Performance meetings

Well-being and Health Implications

Improving digital connectivity and reducing the digital divide can play an important role in supporting people to live healthy lives.

It contributes to the ability for the council within social care and health partners to take advantage of digital equipment, remote monitoring and other emerging technologies to support improvements to health and well-being outcomes

Status and Approvals

Status	Live	Version	
Last review date	6 April 2021	Next review date	6 April 2024
Approved by (Director)	Aidan Dunn, Executive Director, Corporate Development	Date approved	6 April 2021
Member/ Partnership Board Approval	Cabinet	Date approved	6 April 2021

Our Vision

#DigitalDorset



Dorset
Council

Our Digital Vision #DigitalDorset

Foreword

Cllr Peter Wharf

Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development & Change

Digital as a way of working is not just about the technology; it is always first and foremost about people. The recent COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the value that digital can bring to our lives.

Our challenge as a council is to continue to think innovatively about how we use technology, taking a fresh look at how we deliver services listening to what our customers need, saving us all time and money.

The 5G project is a great example of our commitment and provides an exciting opportunity for Dorset to be at the forefront of next generation technology. Creating a smart rural place is about using data and technology to promote economic growth, protect our unique environment and improve the lives of peoples living and working in Dorset.

Digital has a key enabling role for our transformation and COVID-19 recovery work. We will continue to work collaboratively with our partners, councillors, employees, residents and businesses to realise our corporate vision and make Dorset a great place to live, work and visit.



Matt Prosser

Chief Executive Dorset Council

Having the privilege of creating a new Council has allowed us in Dorset to put digital ways of working at the heart of what we do and to deliver our corporate vision. We want to enable the majority of people or those acting on their behalf to access our services via digital means, ensuring our offer doesn't disappoint by putting the customer at the heart of our service design.

As a council we also provide many universal services to all, and there are some people and some groups in Dorset that cannot currently use digital services directly. Often these are some of the most vulnerable in our society.

Using the efficiency gained from digital service delivery, means that we can invest more time in supporting those who are vulnerable or in need, both to ensure they get the services they require and wherever possible ensure, with support, they can access as much help and support digitally as is feasible. Our digital champions are an excellent example of this.

Representing our residents, communities and businesses across the Dorset area, we will work tirelessly to ensure the continued investment in the infrastructure needed to keep everyone connected, not a small project in a beautifully rural environment. We are committed to this and in doing so making Dorset the natural place to do business.

Thank you for taking the time to read this document – I hope having done so you will understand what we are doing currently and also what we have plans for, to deliver Dorset's digital future, a great place to live, work and visit.



Introduction

In April 2019 Dorset Council was formed, bringing 6 councils together into one. The business case for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) identified the new council should 'optimise the use of digital to improve services and empower users'.

We want to create a modern, customer focused, 21st century council which operates in a thriving digital place. We were co-signatories of the [Local Digital Declaration](#) to signal our ambition.

Our Economic Growth Strategy has digital running through all five themes. We're developing this strategy at the same time as the Dorset Local Enterprise Partner Local Industrial Strategy which aims to boost productivity by £1bn by 2030. These strategies need innovation, digital skills and technology, all underpinned by cutting-edge digital infrastructure.

Creating a new council provides a fantastic opportunity to embed digital at the heart of the new organisation and do things differently.

For us, digital is a way of thinking and working, designing services around the needs of people, making the most of modern technology, and doing this responding to the urgent climate challenge.

We've started to deliver this vision, we have already:

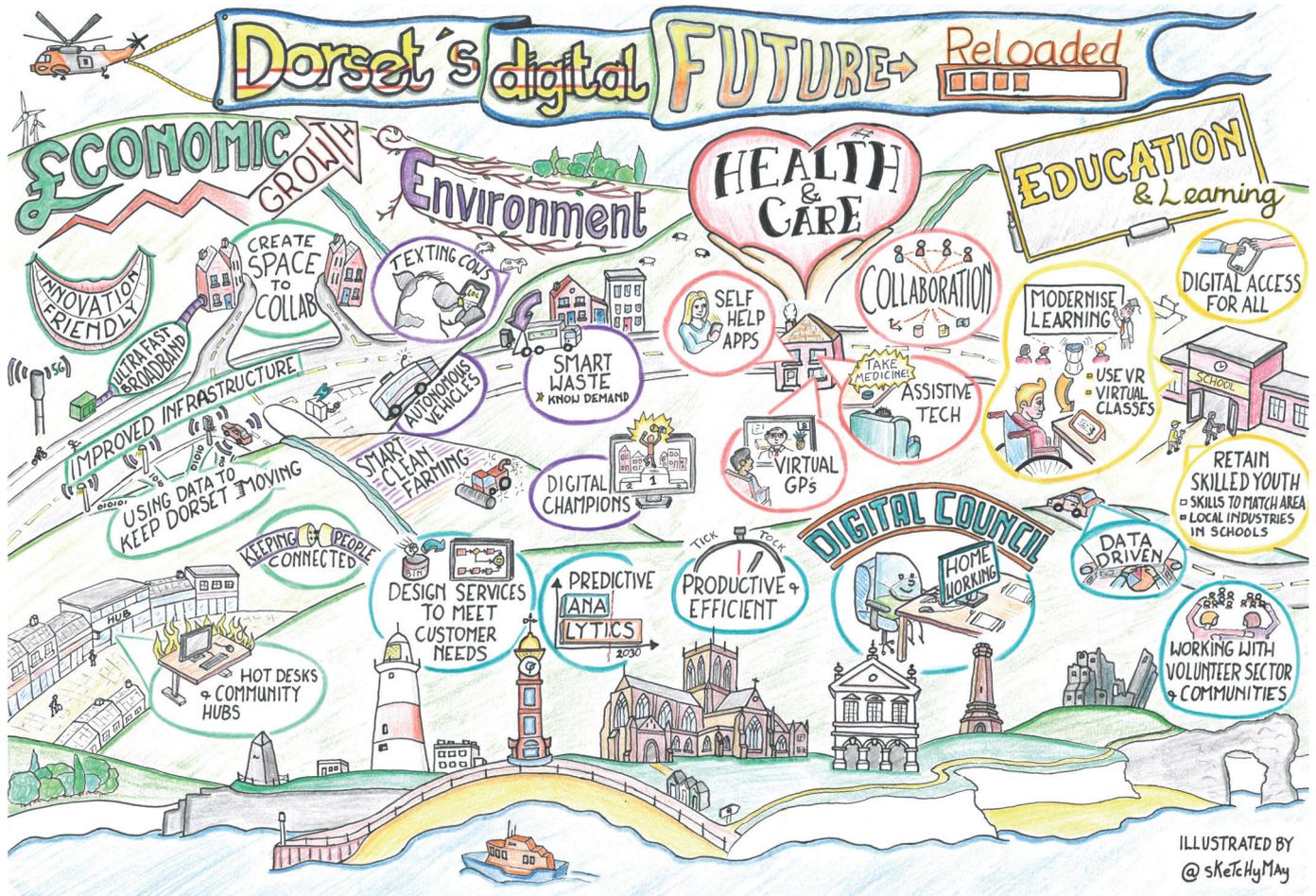
- introduced a new post 'Corporate Director for Digital and Change'
- created dedicated digital capacity to work alongside ICT Operations, Business Intelligence & Information Governance services
- adopted new tools, techniques and standards to design user-centred end to end services
- engaged businesses in developing our vision and work programme for a smart rural place
- worked with our partners to safely and securely share data to create the Dorset Care Record
- created networks of digital champions in the workforce and the community
- been successful with national funding to deliver local 5G pilots
- launched our digital podcast to run alongside the digital network
- started to use national components GOV.UK Notify and GOV.UK Pay
- adopted a cloud first approach to the council's core technology services

COVID-19 has been a major disruptor. It has forced the whole organisation to change in response. This has demonstrated that we can move quickly and revealed the opportunities of working in different ways and delivering services alongside our communities.

We want to seize the moment, harness our experience and learning, and implement our digital vision and the commitments we made in the [Local Digital Declaration](#) with greater pace.



Our digital future



Through discussion with our employee forum and people across the organisation, we want our council to be a place where we:

- have access to devices/technology that work and make it simple
- can work in different locations including more home working, reducing travel and improving work life balance
- have a different kind of office space that is shared, flexible, and makes it easier to collaborate and be creative
- have fewer face-to-face meetings and more virtual meetings or online collaboration
- feel safe and confident to try something new and can experiment with the latest technology
- use technology to remove administration overheads and for mundane tasks
- have safe, secure systems and the knowledge to prevent cyber-crime incidents
- work with partners to deliver joined up services and develop good working relationships
- let customers choose how they access services, how we communicate with them and make it easy to interact with us
- share our customer data across teams and services to deliver better services
- deliver services around outcomes and people, rather than our internal structures

- use technology to engage young people in service delivery
- make the democratic process more accessible
- have access to relevant good quality real time data to help us understand and make decisions
- produce trustworthy records and preserve the archives that are historically and culturally important
- have time to learn and develop our knowledge and skills

We've been talking to businesses, the voluntary sector and residents through our future Dorset engagement work. This work has generated ideas and priorities for Dorset. We want Dorset to be a place where we:

- have good connectivity, where and when people need it
- can attract investment and stimulate our economy
- attract and retain talent
- can support new business models and ways of working
- can utilise the latest technology
- include everyone and reduce isolation
- provide opportunity by developing people's skills and knowledge
- use technology to help reduce our impact on the environment
- have communities, public services and businesses working together
- share spaces to enable collaboration, innovation and reduce cost
- are transparent, ethical and secure in our use of data and respect people's privacy

About digital

The word digital is understood and interpreted in lots of ways. We use this definition in the public sector to describe what we mean by digital:

"Digital means applying the culture, processes, business models & technologies of the internet era to respond to people's raised expectations"

Tom Loosemore – Co-founder of the Government Digital Service

Our new behaviours framework and people strategy will help to create an enabling culture for digital and makes clear digital skills are for all.

"A truly digital council will be more connected and integrated, using digital to reimagine service delivery that is user-centric and meets users' needs – with citizens, communities and businesses reaping the benefits."

Council of the Future: A digital guide for councillors – Tech UK 2018



We see digital as not being about technology but what we do with it, led by user-centred design, to make a difference to people's lives.

Digital is about moving away from silo working to working together with a focus on people and their needs. It is about working in an open way, sharing data, information and knowledge. It is about developing new skills and delivering new customer experiences and reducing our impact on the environment when designing and delivering services.

The vision supports our council values:

- we are an advocate for Dorset on a local, national and global stage
- we work together with our communities and our partners to make things happen
- we put people first and design services around their needs now and in future
- we are open, accessible and accountable
- we use time and money wisely
- we value people and build on their strengths



Vision

Our vision is to become a digital council in a digital place, putting people and their needs first using design and modern technology to improve people's lives.

We aim to become a council with a digital mindset across the whole organisation from the political and officer's leadership through to the frontline. We will be absolutely focused on users' needs and climate conscious in the decisions we make when designing services.

We will constantly challenge ourselves to improve and consider new ways to deliver services, making sure we are doing the right things in the right way. We will establish the behaviours and leadership to create the right conditions so that creativity and innovation become the norm.

We will provide digital leadership across Dorset to set community aspirations. We will develop and support relationships with digital leaders, businesses and investors to promote culture change.

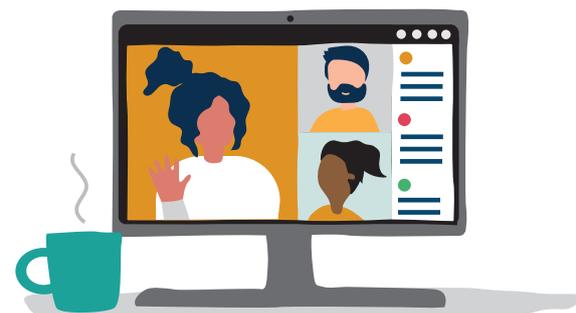
This vision will help us create a vibrant, safe, healthy and prosperous Dorset supporting delivery of our council plan.

We will do this by focusing on the two themes:

Becoming a digital council

We will:

- design end to end services based on understanding people's needs and involving them throughout
- deliver online services that are so good people prefer to use them, enabling us to deal with those people who need more support
- use technology to become more efficient and productive, automating processes and using assistive technology
- use data and intelligence to support decision making, understand need, target our efforts, and to manage and prevent demand



- change how we think and behave, to become more creative, innovative and adaptable
- demonstrate digital leadership across the organisation and wider local public sector

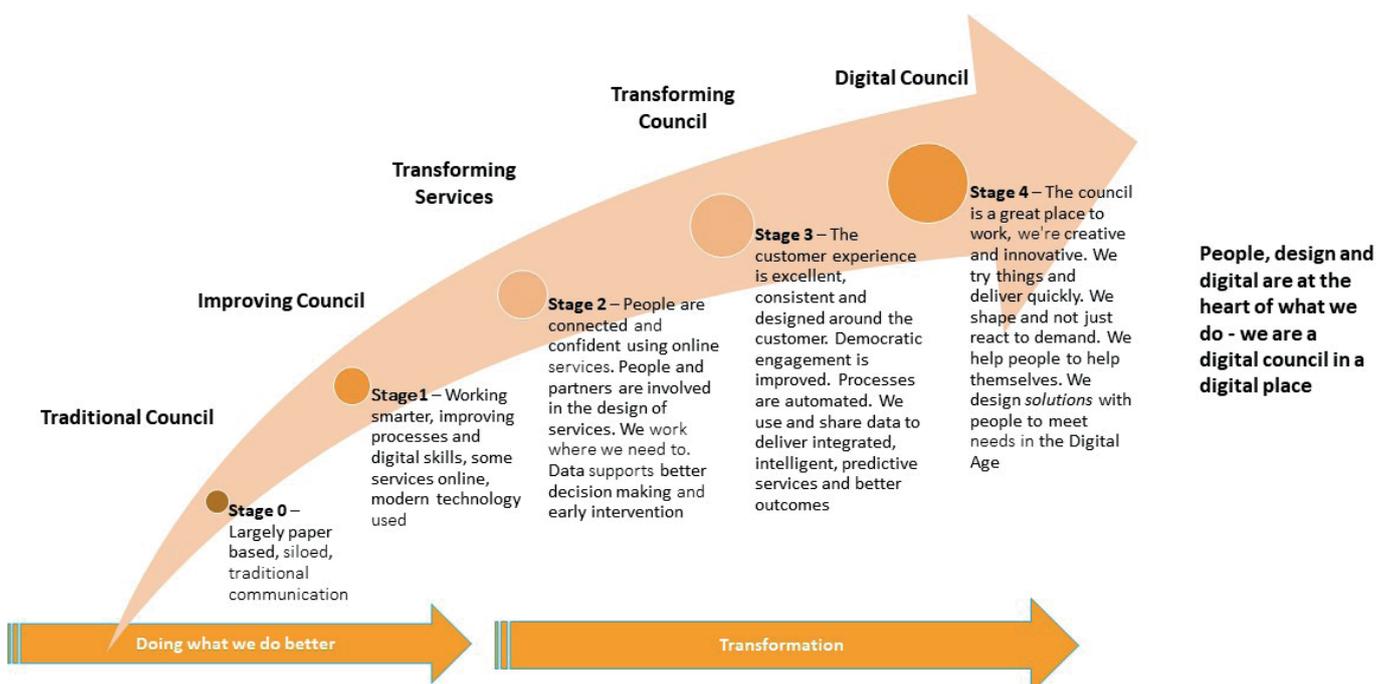
Enable Dorset to be a digital place

We will:

- raise digital skills across businesses and residents to allow them to interact digitally and businesses to have access to people with the digital skills they need
- facilitate a digital infrastructure in the county to connect people and places, where and when they need it, enabling economic growth, and for people and communities to help themselves
- demonstrate digital leadership by setting community aspirations and expectation, creating culture and building capability
- stimulate investment from the private sector
- increase transparency and citizen participation in policy development and decision making
- support businesses, the public sector and residents to use technology to make a real difference to people's lives

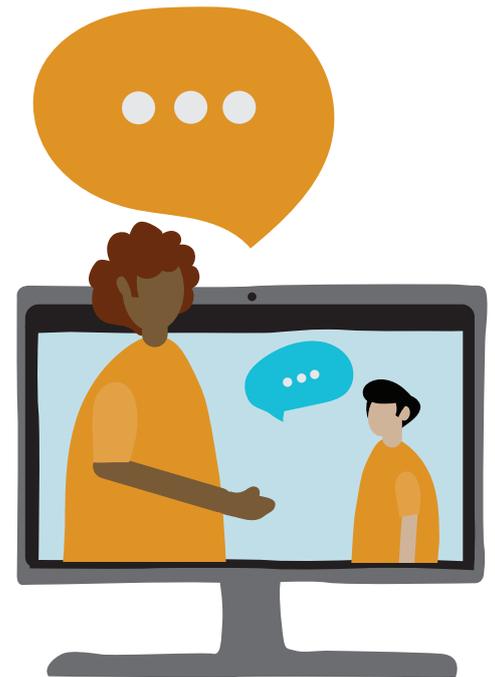
Achieving the vision

We have developed a maturity curve to enable a dialogue with people about our digital vision and think about the opportunities to get started with change. From early workshops we have examples of activity across stages 1-3 with the majority in stage 1.



Since then we have responded to COVID-19 and we have:

- had 2500 employees working from home using technology to connect and collaborate as a workforce
- used a variety of communication methods with the public to meet different needs
- responded as an organisation with agility and pace
- set up new online services
- provided devices to connect the most vulnerable in our communities
- used data and intelligence for community shield
- improved senior leadership communication and engagement with employees
- helped democratic meetings to operate virtually
- found creative and innovative solutions to problems
- all worked as #onecouncil to deliver services absolutely focused on the needs of users



We feel that we have made a greater shift into stage 2. We want to seize the opportunity to retain the positive learning and further inspire the workforce around the potential of digital to think differently about how we deliver services.

To deliver our vision we have identified five cross cutting enablers:

Digital skills and inclusion.

Designing future services.

Technology and infrastructure.

Data and intelligence.

Culture and leadership.



Digital skills and inclusion

Citizens Online reported that the council has made outstanding progress in many areas to support digital inclusion (May 2019). But there is more work to do to close the gap working with partners across Dorset and addressing specific areas of need.

Nationally, 54% of the population uses the internet to work, yet the Lloyds Bank Digital Consumer Index 2019 found that more than half of UK employees (53%) do not have the digital skills they need for work. A Dorset Chamber of Commerce and Industry survey last year showed almost half Dorset businesses need help with business skills.

We have a network of 75 digital champions in the community and 175 in the workplace to support the development of digital skills. In the council we have deployed O365 and MS Teams. In a recent staff survey the confidence in using MS teams was 78%, we want to increase this.

There is a national shortage of engineers to build the full fibre network which the government proposes will be complete in 2025. Openreach has developed fibre training facilities but this will not meet the national need or provide engineers for other network providers.

Developing digital skills and ensuring maximum digital inclusion is a clear priority for us. We will:

- continue our 'Routes to Inclusion' work with communities to help people develop digital skills. We will help people to use new online services and create embedded digital champions across the public sector workforce as per recommendations from Citizens Online.
- create a Digital Skills Partnership working with the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport to drive digital skills for businesses, and work with partners to create a Fibre Training Centre in Dorset.
- supercharge our employee and councillor digital champions working with Changing Social and 365TRIBE, to redefine the role, raise its importance, and develop a more rounded set of skills to cascade knowledge. This will help the adoption of technology across the whole council as part of our Dorset Workplace Programme.
- develop cohorts of 'design champions' across the organisation to enable employees to continually improve services focused on user needs, using data and customer insight as evidence.
- work with NHS colleagues, businesses and the education sector to establish a Digital Academy in Dorset that provides knowledge and skills in design, agile, latest technologies, and digital leadership.
- develop our technical skills to fully exploit our core technology platforms to provide modern digital services, developing excellence by using professional skills frameworks to ensure technical roles keep pace with future needs.

Designing future services

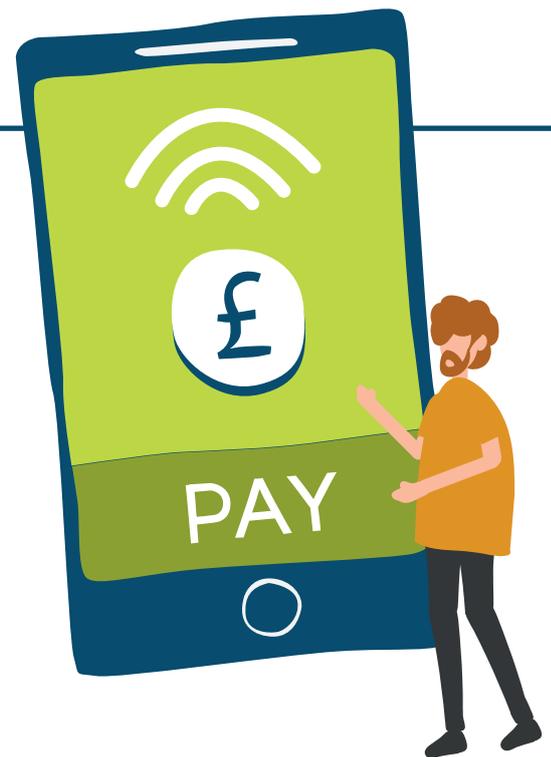
Over the last 12 months we have had 2.76m people use the council's website, with the contact centre handling 330,000 enquiries. We have a range of online services available for people to self-serve 24/7, from quite simple contact forms through to complex end to end services that are automated as much as possible. The top 10 online services have an average usage of 70%, reducing demand on services and the contact centre.

We want to be a strong, customer-led and delivery focussed council, making best use of our resources, our people and ever mindful that we must do better with less to protect the public purse. We want people and communities to be able to help themselves, maintaining independence.

We need to be an organisation who delivers the services that our customers want and need, irrespective of any challenges we may face now and in the future. Our emerging Customer Access Strategy supported by our Customer Promise will detail how we do this.

We will:

- challenge ourselves to deliver services differently, supporting our ambition for transformation. We will work in multi-disciplinary, agile teams to design end to end services based on data and user research to understand customer's needs acting as #onecouncil.
- develop our customer engagement strategy to include those not online, target our communication messages using data and knowledge of our customers, and nudge behaviour change to encourage greater use of online channels.



- provide a single access point online for customers to deal with the council and track progress. This will provide a more personalised and consistent experience that meets accessibility legislation.
- continue to adopt standards to provide service directories and good information and advice working with the voluntary sector. Encourage the use of accredited self-enabled care apps through our work with ORCHA, supporting people to help themselves.
- consider how we can use technology to build on the strength and assets in communities and neighbourhoods to connect and support each other, learning from our work during COVID-19 and the TRIBE project.
- demonstrate how new technology can enable business growth and new service delivery models through pilots in, but not limited to, agri-tech and aquaculture, increasing visitors to sensitive coastal areas and connected care homes and ambulances.

Technology and infrastructure

95.1% of Dorset homes and businesses now have access to superfast broadband but only 4.89% have full fibre, compared to 23% nationally. Just 1% of Dorset has no mobile coverage but only 42.6% of A and B roads in Dorset have acceptable signal on all the 2G mobile networks. Less than 66% of premises have 4G coverage from all four major providers.

Dorset needs good connectivity to attract entrepreneurial talent looking to move from the south east. Our existing businesses and communities need to keep up to date as new technologies are rolled out. The government has pledged £5bn investment towards full fibre technology and Dorset Council needs to be ready to take full advantage of this when details emerge.

We continue to converge our legacy council infrastructure, applications and devices to enable us to operate as a single organisation following local government reorganisation. We currently have:

- 5,839 network users,
- 6,077 corporately issued devices (laptops, PCs, tablets and smartphones)
- 239 network connections going into sites

To connect people and places and exploit technologies across Dorset and within the council we will:

- complete the superfast programme by 2021 and bid into the government's next programme to deliver full fibre broadband to the final 20%.
- Stimulate investment from the private sector and deliver the 5G programme, exploring further mobile infrastructure and 5G opportunities.
- identify opportunities to use new and emerging technologies such as robotic process automation and machine learning, to free up officer time for frontline services and help us meet increasing demand. We will continue to explore robotics in care and widen our collaboration with others such as the NHS, sharing our learning to influence our peers.
- implement a digital platform that will help us build re-usable components to develop service interactions, join up our data, and use open standards to enable integration of new technologies such as Internet of Things (voice, sensors), to monitor and trigger proactive service delivery. The platform will be flexible and scalable beyond the boundaries of the council, providing a solid foundation to build on.
- put in place assurance processes to meet the [Government Service Standard](#) and re-use common design patterns to give us the agility and pace we need when delivering digital work.
- make sure all changes to the application and website landscape support the business objectives and

move us from siloed instances of change. Where we cannot replace line of business applications by common components in the digital platform any future selection must be done in alignment with the [Technology Code of Practice](#).

- make sure our technology services are safe and secure and achieve appropriate compliance accreditation to provide assurance to our communities and partners that we can be trusted to handle personal data. We will develop our capability to identify and mitigate security risks and conduct regular exercises to make sure we are able to respond effectively to emerging threats.
- provide converged and flexible technology platforms that remove the friction from adopting new ways of working; focusing on delivering better user experience, improving the availability of technology services, maintaining and driving value from the application portfolio.
- supporting dispersed working and collaboration, removing the need for paper and printing, applying appropriate record retention and destruction policies.

Data & intelligence

We want to be a council that uses data and intelligence to drive informed, transparent, decision-making, moving away from retrospective performance reporting. We want to move towards the use of predictive analytics and ultimately prescriptive analytics to improve outcomes.

We want to join up our data to have one version of the truth that is available to the wider organisation to use, and develop a culture of embedding the use of data and insight into strategic and operational management practice and designing better public services.

The council collects significant amounts of diverse data, for example:

- social care for vulnerable children
- waste collection, procurement
- Council Tax collection
- planning applications

This 'big data' offers an opportunity for greater understanding and analysis to provide better insight for decision making.

We continue to use data analytics to try to predict events from drug abuse to the likeliest locations for house fires, to school children most at risk of not completing their education. These insights help to equip us with the enhanced ability to take a preventative approach, putting in place interventions to try and stop problems rather than providing costly services in response.

Data and geographical location will play a key role in delivering a 'smart rural Dorset', where internet of things devices capture and send data to help us understand what is happening. Using technologies like machine learning, artificial intelligence and data visualization will help understand and improve areas such as carbon emissions, asset management and traffic flow.

We will do this by:

- growing our capability and skills in the insight and intelligence function, including technical systems knowledge, data knowledge, business intelligence and development of new data scientist roles.
- improving the quality of our data and educating the workforce on the importance of data and geographical location, what it's telling us and the questions that come from the data. We will explore the idea of performance champions across the Council to help us do this.



- educating and reassuring our customers how their data will be used making sure the rights of individuals privacy are maintained and to provide partner organisations with the confidence that information is shared appropriately, working with our corporate information governance group.
- merging data sources and reporting capabilities into a common approach to ensure consistency of performance reporting and enable evidence-based decision making, with the development of interactive dashboarding solutions for end users where required.
- establishing a common approach for business intelligence utilising data warehousing, enabling the combination of data sets to better target resources and earlier intervention. This will allow for deeper population level analysis and provide frontline professionals access to a more comprehensive picture of the people receiving their services.
- continuing to work with health colleagues to develop the Dorset intelligence and insight service (DiiS), a data service linking health and social care data across the system, aiming to create a shared data pool which will automatically combine data and provide end users with intuitive and clear self-serve solutions, supported by information sharing agreements underpinned by the Dorset Information Sharing Charter.
- starting to publish data openly where possible in reusable formats in the most appropriate places for our users and continuing to develop our use of geographical information systems.

Culture and leadership

COVID-19 has demonstrated the benefits of agile governance and that services focused on the needs of our customer lead to increased customer satisfaction and a workforce that is proud to work for the council. It has shown that we can be innovative, outcome focused and deliver at pace.

Establishing the right culture and leadership is fundamental to delivering our digital vision and enabling the organisation to innovate. We need to embed our council values and behaviours to enable this, we will:

- continue to take a [design-led](#) and [agile approach](#), embedding it at the heart of our transformation approach and service improvement work. This will help us to deal with uncertainty and constant change, stimulate innovation and continuous improvement, and empower people to fail fast, learn and move on. We will adopt the following principles, to:
 - work as multi-disciplinary teams
 - start with user needs and discovery
 - identify worthwhile problems to unlock greater impact and savings
 - allow time to explore the art of possible
 - build on local capability & strength
 - think big, start small
 - backup hypothesis with evidence and insights
 - work in the open
- develop campaigns and challenges to encourage and nurture ideas and creativity, provide the support they need and help share learning. This will inspire people about how others are delivering services very differently to encourage cross-fertilisation of ideas.
- work with partners across the [Health and Care system](#) to identify gaps in our current Digital Offer making sure we focus on real-life problems and support innovation. This will take the form of a 'Living Lab' approach and will see academia and developers working on the things that matter to the people that need support. Working in this way will create the environment necessary to truly collaborate.

- integrate digital aspects into the Leadership and Management development programmes that are being developed. This will enable managers to model behaviours, practice virtual leadership and have confidence to experiment and lead on digital across the wider system of Dorset.
- talk about our work on Yammer, the intranet and through our external Digital Dorset brand. Share our learning of what's worked and what's not, open show & shares virtually, and increase our blogging.
- continue to nurture the digital network and actively develop and support relationships with digital leaders, businesses and investors to understand and promote culture change.
- make the most of national funding opportunities to enable investment and innovation in Digital in Dorset.

Conclusion

This is an ambitious vision. The response to COVID-19 has shown that when we work as #oneteam and deliver services around the needs of our users, we achieve increased customer satisfaction, improved staff morale and pride in the council. We need to make sure we retain this and build on it.

To deliver the vision, digital activity will be governed either by the Senior Leadership team or the digital place programme board to make sure it has the leadership it needs to drive it forward at pace.

We will develop a single prioritised pipeline of work across the organisation to ensure the right resources are focused on the right work. We will adopt a design-led and agile approach to enable us to deliver incrementally, respond to change and focus on people's needs.

This is the moment for us to exploit digital to drive opportunity across Dorset.

Key statistics

Online Services – 2019 figures

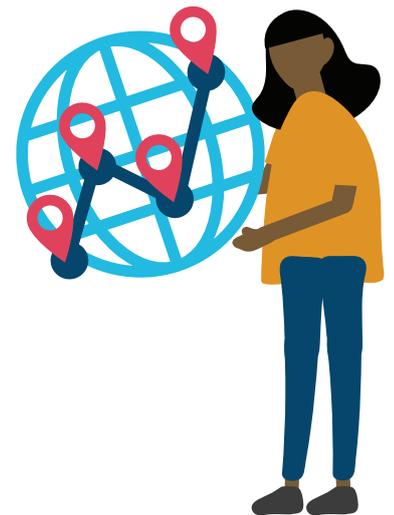
- 230,000 visitors to the council website average per month, 55% by mobile device
- Contact centre handled 330,000 enquiries over the last 12 months
 - 250,000 telephony
 - 32,800 emails
 - 20,500 face to face
 - 16,900 social media
 - 9,800 webchats
 - 70% of contact for services available in the contact centre is completed online

Digital skills – as at June 2020

- 175 employee digital champions
- staff confidence in using MS Teams average 78%
- Feb 2020 team's usage = 900 active users, June 2020 = 3400 active users



- 75 digital champions in the community
- 30k people digital excluded in Dorset

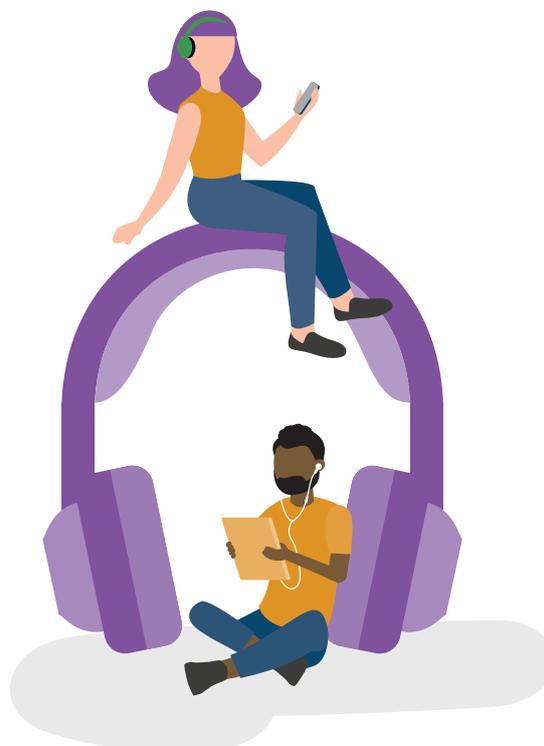


Infrastructure

- 5,839 Dorset Council network users
- 4,377 Dorset Council devices (laptop or PC)
- 1,700 mobile devices (smartphone or tablet)
- 239 network connects into sites as part of the council network
- £2m employee travel costs
- 95.1% of premises within Dorset Council contracts can access superfast broadband, 4.89% of premises within Dorset Council contracts can access full fibre
- less than 66% of premises have 4G coverage from all 4 major providers

Dorset Council Residents Survey 2019

- 14% of residents identified improving digital connectivity as mattering most
- 62% of residents use social media platforms, with Facebook ranking highest
- 49% of residents prefer to access council information through the website, 25% through a Google search



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Before completing this EqIA please ensure you have read the guidance on the intranet.

Initial Information

Name:	Lisa Trickey
Job Title:	Service Manager Digital Strategy & Design
Email address:	Lisa.trickey@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk
Members of the assessment team:	Emma Powell Lisa Trickey Susan Ward-Rice
Date assessment started:	August 2020
Date of completion:	February 2021
Version Number:	

Part 1: Background Information

Is this (please tick or expand the box to explain)

Existing	
Changing, updating or revision	
New or proposed	✓
Other	

Is this (please tick or expand the box to explain)

Internal (employees only)	
External (residents, communities, partners)	
Both of the above	✓

What is the name of your policy, strategy, project or service being assessed?

Dorset Digital Vision

<https://moderngov.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=651&MId=4999>

What is the policy, strategy, project or service designed to do? (include the aims, purpose and intended outcomes of the policy)

Our vision is to become a digital council in a digital place, putting people and their needs first using design and modern technology to improve people's lives. We will do this by focusing on the two themes:

1. **Becoming a digital council**

- design end to end services based on understanding people's needs and involving them throughout
- deliver online services that are so good people prefer to use them, enabling us to deal with those people who need more support

- use technology to become more efficient and productive, automating processes and using assistive technology
- use data and intelligence to support decision making, understand need, target our efforts, and to manage and prevent demand
- change how we think and behave, to become more creative, innovative adaptable and inclusive
- demonstrate digital leadership across the organisation, wider local public sector and Dorset

2. Enable Dorset to be a digital place

- raise digital skills across businesses and residents to allow them to interact digitally and businesses to have access to people with the digital skills they need
- facilitate a digital infrastructure in the county to connect people and places, where and when they need it, enabling economic growth, and for people and communities to help themselves
- demonstrate digital leadership by setting community aspirations and expectation, creating culture and building capability
- stimulate investment from the private sector
- increase transparency and citizen participation in policy development and decision making
- supporting businesses, the public sector and residents to use technology to make a real difference to people's lives

The vision provides a framework for a broad range of activity that will enable us to improve our digital maturity. This EQIA is intended to act as an umbrella with further supplementary EQIA's for the different pieces of work, building on this EQIA with specific elements rather than duplicating it.

For example, we will deliver work to:

- increase connectivity across Dorset
- develop people's digital skills
- implement a digital platform
- develop business intelligence capabilities
- redesign services
- facilitate internet access – e.g. virtual day centres

What is the background or context to the proposal?

Dorset Council is a relatively new council, formed in April 2019, when a local government reorganisation created a new council area. In the work towards creating Dorset Council a Local Government Reorganisation Case for Change document was produced and a key element to this included the need to embrace digital in the new council to:

- Support 21st century councillors, helping them to be more strategic, more digitally aware, and better able to connect with a broader cross-section of society.

- Develop a culture of empowerment and innovation in which staff are encouraged to work with more entrepreneurial spirit, to achieve financial efficiencies and improve services.
- Optimise their use of digital to improve service delivery and reach out into the community – using cloud-based platforms and channel shift to automate processes, improve transactions, empower service users, and build collaborative relationships with Dorset’s rapidly expanding digital sector.
- Build capacity and capability around data and analytics so that they can use data to understand how demand for services is changing to improve planning and manage demand more effectively.
- Redesign their approach to customer services so that they can rely to a far greater extent on multi-disciplinary teams and generically trained staff to resolve requests for service quickly and efficiently.
- Standardise, simplify and share ‘back office’ services to maximise the achievement of benefits.

In 2018 the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) initiated the Local Digital Declaration which contains 5 principles for Councils to embed which Dorset Council was co-signatories of:

- We will go even further to redesign our services around the needs of the people using them. This means continuing to prioritise citizen and user needs above professional, organisational and technological silos.
- We will ‘fix our plumbing’ to break our dependence on inflexible and expensive technology that doesn’t join up effectively. This means insisting on modular building blocks for the IT we rely on, and open standards to give a common structure to the data we create.
- We will design safe, secure and useful ways of sharing information to build trust among our partners and citizens, to better support the most vulnerable members of our communities, and to target our resources more effectively.
- We will demonstrate digital leadership, creating the conditions for genuine organisational transformation to happen, and challenging all those we work with to embrace this Local Digital Declaration.
- We will embed an open culture that values, incentivises and expects digital ways of working from every member of our workforce. This means working in the open wherever we can, sharing our plans and experience, working collaboratively with other organisations, and reusing good practice.

In addition, our learning from the COVID19 pandemic has shown the value digital can bring to our lives:

- the importance of data to target resources where most needed
- working with communities using collaboration tools to deliver services together
- providing alternative and digital ways to access services and deliver them efficiently such as library click and collect and business grants
- increased democratic engagement using virtual meetings
- provision of devices to young people and adults to keep people connected

- reduction in travel and carbon emissions using technology to work from home

But also highlighted digital inequalities. Whether there is lack of access for home schooling, ability to access public services online, or just connect with others to support wellbeing.

Many of the projects/pieces of work in the digital vision delivery plan are specifically intended to support 'inclusion' of specific groups whether that's young people who haven't got access to devices, residents who don't have skills to get online, or the provision of access to good connectivity.

It is worth highlighting that the digital vision isn't about making every one use council services online, using the efficiency gained from digital service delivery means that we can invest more time in supporting those who are vulnerable or in need to ensure they get the services they require.

Part 2: Gathering information

What sources of data, information, evidence, and research was used to inform you about the people your proposal will have an impact on?

As this strategy is both internal and external the following data has been used:

Employees

- Dorset Council workforce profile data (August 2019 & November 2020)
- Employee feedback surveys (HIVE)

Residents of Dorset

- Census and Office for National Statistics (2011-2018) taken from [Dorset Insight](#) State of Dorset 2019
- EqIA - [How well Dorset Council responded to meeting the needs of vulnerable groups during lockdown](#)
- Councillor roundtable discussions - [COVID-19 and community vulnerability - Summary of Councillor discussions](#)
- 2020 Dorset Council & Citizens Advice - Hearing and Visual impairments survey
- Help & Kindness [Report on pilot project looking at the local print & assets in Dorset communities](#)
- User research by Helen Timms in the Digital team with community and voluntary organisations in Dorset to understand barriers to getting online
- 2020 Dorset Council residents survey which included new specific questions around digital
- Government Digital Inclusion [Strategy](#)

Visitors to Dorset

There were over 30 million visitors to Dorset 2019 (staying and day visitors) (source: Dorset Council's Visit Dorset Team). Less than 1% of these tourist visitors used the Tourist Information Centre's on a face to face basis.

- COVID-19 impact on tourism [report](#)

Businesses (large, SME and sole traders)

- During business breakfasts to develop the Economic Growth Strategy
- [Economic Growth Strategy equality impact assessment - Dorset Council](#)

Children and Young people in Dorset

- The “what would make Dorset the best place in the world to grow up?”, a competition that ran in 2020 asking children and young people up to the age of 18 to submit ideas in a variety of formats
- Young researchers post-COVID 19 barriers to education 2020 to 2021 [research](#)
- Equality impact assessment for children not in education, employment or training (not currently published)

Also factored in has been the outcome of stakeholder engagement such as Future Dorset and Dorset Reloaded events including partners like the NHS, representatives from the community, members of the public, the voluntary sector, and the business community.

National sources/research

- Lloyds Bank UK [Digital Consumer Index](#) 2020
- Office of National Statistics 2019 – [digital inclusion](#)
- University of Liverpool – Hesselstine Institute [Policy Briefing](#)
- Carnegie UK trust – notwithstanding [report](#)
- [Skills for life survey](#)
- Thinkbroadband speed and coverage [information](#)
- [House of Commons December 2020 research briefing on full fibre broadband in the uk report](#)
- [Ofcom 2020 Online Nation report](#)
- [Ofcom 2020 UK home broadband performance report](#)
- [Ofcom 2020 Communication Market report](#)
- [BT impact of high speed broadband](#)
- Study undertaken by Tsatsou (2019) - [Digital Inclusion of people with disabilities](#)
- [Research](#) involving 50 people from Gypsy and Traveller communities across the UK by Friends, Families & Travellers (FFT) in 2018

What did this data, information, evidence and research tell you?

What we know about the Dorset Council workforce

The following data relates to all employees at Dorset Council but not school employees, as the Digital vision does not include schools or academies.

Employees are encouraged to provide diversity monitoring data, but they are not obliged to do so. It should also be noted that for some protected characteristics we are unable to provide data, due to it not being collected or it being so small there is a risk of identifying.

The data below was collected at two different times. The data for age, disability, ethnicity and sex were collected on the 1 November 2020. The data for sexual orientation and religion and belief were collected as part of an [EqIA](#) undertaken in August 2019.

Sex	Overall workforce (Amount/%)
Male	1,654 (36.88%)
Female	2,831 (63.12%)

Race and Ethnicity	Overall workforce (%)
White British	68.03%
White Other	2.52%
Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic	1.25%
Prefer not to say	8.18%
Not declared	20.02%

Disability	Overall workforce (%)
Disabled	2.70%
Not disabled	58.73%
Prefer not to say	6.62%
Not declared	31.95%

Age	Overall workforce (Amount/%)
14 – 24*	220 (4.91%)
25 – 39	1,069 (23.8%)
40 – 49	1,071 (23.8%)
50 – 59	1,427 (31.8%)
60 – 64	444 (9.90%)
65+	254 (5.66%)

* Employees aged between 14-16 are 'Casual Swim Helpers'

Sexual Orientation	Overall workforce (%)
Heterosexual	37.13
Lesbian / Gay	0.58
Bisexual	0.16
Other	0.27
Prefer not to say	7.04
Not declared	54.82

Religion and Belief	Overall workforce (%)
Christian	15.14
Buddhist	0.14
Hindu	0.02
Jewish	0.02
Muslim	0.02
Other	0.72
No religion	10.99
Prefer not to say	4.02
Not declared	68.93

There are approximately 1000 members of the workforce that do not have access to a corporately supplied device or ICT network account to access systems such as the intranet where employee news, policies and other corporate information is stored and feel excluded.

Analysis of the employee survey results show that 90% of respondents would want to work flexibly for one day a week or more (53% said a few days a week, 29% said every day). Furthermore, 72% of respondents felt that 80-100% of their role can be effectively carried out away from their 'traditional' workplace environment. Respondents were asked to identify what the biggest benefits to working in a different way had been for them.

The three highest responses were:

- Less time travelling (61% of respondents)
- More flexibility (49% of respondents)
- Better work life balance (48% of respondents)

The employee survey also sought feedback on what challenges employees have faced over recent months. The three highest responses were:

- Feeling isolated from colleagues (55% of respondents)
- Getting access to resources/information to work from home (27%)
- Internet connectivity (22%)

We have feedback from members of the workforce who have a disability that working from home has had a positive impact on them. Making them feel included and able to participate in the workplace on an equal footing using the technology and accessibility features in Microsoft tools.

Employees have identified they need time and support to develop digital skills and improve their confidence using technology (employee forum consultation).

What we know about the Dorset Council population

Data on the population of Dorset can be found on [Dorset Insight](#). However, some of the key headlines are:

- Population total of 376,480 of which:
 - 51.1% is female (192,380)
 - 48.9% is male (184,100)
 - 28.6% is aged 65+ years (107,810)
 - 55.4% is aged between 16-64 years (208,740)
- 95.6% identify as White British
 - 4.4% identify as Black and minority ethnic
 - 1.7% main language is not English
 - in 2018 1,045 NINos (National Insurance numbers) were all allocated to adult overseas nationals this is a decline of 7.5% on the allocated in 2017
- 65.1% of the population identify as Christian
- 25.4% have no religion
- 80.9% of residents report having very good or good health
- 11.9% of residents provide unpaid care
- 182,677 residential properties in Dorset
 - 72.4% are owner occupied
 - 13.7% are privately rented

- 40.5% of dwellings are detached and 15.6% are flats/maisonettes
- 15.2% have no car or van in the household
- 170,602 residents aged 16-74 in employment
- 4,491 households include an Armed forces person
- 12,110 parents identify as being a lone parent

It should be noted that for some of the protected characteristics listed in Part 4 of this EqIA, statistical data does not exist at a local authority area.

Information from the 2020 resident's survey suggests 37% prefer to contact the council via phone. However, 33% are happy to use email and of those that had internet 86% of residents are shopping online, and 82% doing online banking showing that there is opportunity to develop our online offer for people to use.

There were significant differences by age in the method respondents would prefer to use if they wanted to contact the council. Respondents aged 75 and over were more likely to prefer to contact the council by telephone. Respondents aged 16 to 34 were more likely to prefer to contact the council by email and by using social media. Respondents aged 35 to 54 were more likely to prefer to contact the council via their website

There were significant differences by deprivation in the method respondents would prefer to use if they wanted to contact the council. Respondents from the most deprived Indices of Multiple Deprivations (IMD) quintile (group) were more likely to prefer to contact the council in person.

Women and respondents aged 75 and over are less likely to use the internet. Respondents who do not use the internet were asked what was preventing them. The most common reason for not using the internet was not being interested, with 72% giving this reason. 22% were prevented from using the internet due to not having equipment and 16% due to lack of skill. 13% did not use the internet due to another reason, including age and not having a reason to use the internet.

There were significant differences by age in where respondents use the internet. Respondents aged 16 to 34 were more likely to use the internet using public wi-fi when out and about, at someone else's house, in other community facilities, in the library and at school, college or university.

There were significant differences by ethnicity in where respondents use the internet. Respondents from ethnic groups other than White British were more likely to use the internet at work and in other community facilities.

There were significant differences by deprivation in where respondents use the internet. Respondents from the most deprived IMD quintile were more likely to use the internet at work, using public wi-fi when out and about, at someone else's house and in the library. Respondents from the most deprived and the second most deprived IMD quintiles were more likely to use the internet in other community facilities.

Of the respondents who use the internet, 88% have a smartphone or mobile phone that connects to the internet. 76% have a laptop at home and 69% have a tablet or an iPad at home.

A survey was also undertaken by Dorset Council and Citizens Advice in September-October 2020 on how people with visual and hearing impairments coped during lockdown (March-May 2020). 228 people responded to the survey, 164 primarily had a hearing impairment and 88 primarily had a visual impairment, some had both. In addition, as part of the survey 4 people who described themselves as profoundly deaf participated in British Sign Language (BSL) conversations.

The consultation asked participants whether they could access a digital device, 32% of those respondents with a visual impairment did not have access, whilst 18% of those with a hearing impairment did not have access. 84% of the 65+ group and 100% of the 75% group with visual impairment did not have access to a device.

Of those people with a visual impairment who do not have access to a digital device, 21% responded that it was because they needed support to use one compared to 15% who were hearing impaired. 56% of people with a hearing impairment said they could not use one and a slightly lower proportion of respondents (54%) with a visual impairment could not use one.

The survey also asked respondents where they found information or advice about COVID-19. The vast majority of respondents with a visual impairment (86%) found information or advice through the television, with family and friends being the next highest at 66%, followed by national radio at 44%. The highest sources for those with hearing impairment were television (74%), followed by family and friends (53%) and internet searches (49%).

What we know about the Dorset Council area

The Heseltine Institute analysis of OFCOM data suggests 40% of people in the south-west are non-users of the internet or limited users. It is well accepted that digital deprivation is closely associated with social deprivation. Weymouth and Portland contain communities with nationally very high levels of deprivation including employment and income. Using MOSAIC data, Westham ward in Radipole has the highest level of digital exclusion.

Children and young people have identified the following themes as important to living in Dorset in the 2020 competition:

- Renewable/green energy sources e.g. wind, water and solar
- Solar powered busses/cars
- Electric cars
- Recycling and reuse – sustainability
- How we manage litter/refuse
- Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) – developing skills and jobs
- Healthy/active

The young researchers post COVID report identified young people have been negatively affected by COVID-19. The biggest barrier that young people faced in planning their education was not knowing what opportunities were available (61%) followed by cost (41%). 50% of young people didn't have opportunities to speak about future choices in their place of learning.

The EQIA for children not in education, employment or training quotes the number of 16 to 24 year olds claiming out of work benefits has doubled in the Dorset Council area since January 2020 from 670 to 1,765 in December 2020¹. As a proportion of all 16 to 64 yr olds claiming in December 2020, 16 to 24 year olds represented 19% a small rise from January 2020 of 18%.

The economic growth strategy cites the proportion of workers in Dorset with Level 4+ skills (e.g. Higher National Certificate - HNC) is lower than the south west average despite demand increasing for higher skills to fill jobs. The proportion of businesses finding it hard to find skilled employees is rising.

45% of Visit Dorset area businesses are planning to rethink their product or marketing strategy to aid business recovery post COVID-19, including:

- International Education – online courses new markets and move to more digital
- Greater online content – either virtual tours, live feeds, moving events online and recognising the importance of digital activity going forward.

Current (February 2021) superfast broadband, defined as 30 Megabits per second, coverage in Dorset is: 95.4% (nationally 97.2%). At the conclusion of the Superfast Dorset contract with Openreach at the end of 2021 we will still have many thousands of homes and businesses with poor, unreliable broadband.

Gigabit capable networks (usually described as full fibre) are the next generation of connectivity. Dorset's current gigabit coverage is 7.2%, compared with a national figure of 38.5%.

Mobile coverage in Dorset is poor, only 42.6% of A and B roads in Dorset have what Ofcom deem to be an acceptable signal on all the 2G mobile networks. Less than 66% of premises in Dorset have 4G coverage from all four mobile operators.

What national research and sources tell us

The BT report on the impact of highspeed broadband highlights the opportunity for increased business productivity due to flexible working reducing premise overheads, lower travel costs and carbon emissions, healthier work-life balance, increased access to skills with a wider skills pool available. Investing in infrastructure enables improvement in productivity and clean growth, but government research suggests that consumers will still need to be persuaded to take up connectivity and understand the opportunities it can provide.

¹ Source for 3 points: Claimant Count, Office for National Statistics via NOMIS

Recent research by the University of Liverpool suggests that the digitally excluded number could be even greater considering there are very narrow users of digital systems (facebook/tiktok) and changes in life circumstances that impact on access. It is very difficult to exactly state the number in Dorset.

The skills for life survey highlights 45% of people aged 16-65 read at literacy level 1 or below, this could impact ability to enter contracts for broadband and mobile phones.

The Carnegie report challenges the assumption that all young people are frequent, confident, able users of the internet and digital technology. Those who are vulnerable, particularly those at points of transition in their life (unemployed, homeless, in care, in secure accommodation) are most at risk of falling outside of the digital mainstream.

We know from the Office of National Statistics that people who are connected and have digital skills will benefit from greater earnings, employment chances, retail savings, communication, and wellbeing.

The Lloyds consumer index detail the barriers to being online are complex, motivation is still a factor. Behavioural data shows that only 7% of over 70s are likely to have the capability to shop and manage their money online. In fact, 77% of this age group have Very Low digital engagement. It is not just the elderly who are under-equipped though; 52% of those offline are between 60 and 70 years old, and 44% of those offline are under the age of 60. Often, it is the most vulnerable and disadvantaged who are the most likely to be digitally excluded.

- People with an impairment are 25% less likely to have the skills to access devices and get online by themselves
- People with an annual household income of £50,000 or more are 40% more likely to have Foundation digital skills, than those earning less than £17,499
- 4-in-10 benefit claimants have Very Low digital engagement.

The Government Digital Service have published [guidance](#) on how to make content particularly on websites accessible. For example, writing for age 9 as half the UK workforce have a reading age of 11 and below, using the right type of colour and images, including video voice overs and subtitles, avoiding jargon and acronyms.

Conclusion

There are multiple complex reasons why people may not be online, and we need to develop a variety of ways to encourage people to get online to gain opportunities around employment, financial and wellbeing. There is a need to focus on areas of deprivation, groups where there may be low literacy, that we have a higher than average older population but be aware this also affects young people.

The impact of Covid-19 has demonstrated the absolute necessity to have reliable, resilient, and up-to-date digital infrastructure to support economic activity and

provide community services. Internet connectivity isn't available consistently across the county – particularly mobile phone coverage.

There are positive impacts on the environment and peoples work/life balance by using technology to work from home, but people's digital confidence and skills need to be developed to enable this. Access to main Council systems is vital to the workforce feeling included and there is a significant group who are unable to do this.

We are not maximising the potential of people who are shopping and banking online already to use online council services and still prefer to use the phone, this will require education and behavioural change in the way they contact the council to free up council resources for those who need more support.

We need to ensure our online services are accessible to all and work well when accessed on mobile devices as these are the most used devices.

Digital, connectivity & skills will be important to aid Dorset's economic recovery from COVID-19 and there will likely be new opportunities and jobs as a result, however, young people are interested in STEM jobs but are not receiving the information they need to make learning and career decisions that will help us develop and retain talent locally.

Is further information needed to help inform this proposal?

No

Part 3: Engagement and Consultation

What engagement or consultation has taken place as part of this proposal?

Stakeholder engagement and consultation through events including partners like the NHS, representatives from the community, members of the public, the voluntary sector and the business community. During business breakfasts, Future Dorset and Dorset Reloaded events, officers have sought and listened to views that have fed into the work.

There has also been extensive input from councillors through initially the Digital and ICT Executive Advisory Panel (EAP) and subsequently the Place and Resources Overview Committee, an event with the Employee Forum, and Digital Business Partners talking to Directorate colleagues to help shape the vision and understand priority areas.

We also ran some focus groups with staff, a cohort of our Digital Champions, ICT operations managers (with representatives from across the Council) and our Digital Team.

Digital Vision has also been shared with the unions for comments and feedback.

How will the outcome of consultation be fed back to those who you consulted with?

Following publication of the digital vision, using our Digital Dorset brand we have a communications plan to ensure that stakeholders (workforce, residents, businesses) continue to have the opportunity to engage.

All methods of communication (social media, newsletters, press release, Dorset newspaper etc) will be used to ensure maximum reach to our stakeholders.

Feedback from completed consultations has been incorporated in the Digital Vision and this EqlA document, both of which will be publicly available and shared with stakeholders.

Please refer to the Equality Impact Assessment Guidance before completing this section.

Not every proposal will require an EqlA. If you decide that your proposal does **not** require an EqlA, it is important to show that you have given this adequate consideration. The data and research that you have used to inform you about the people who will be affected by the policy should enable you to make this decision and whether you need to continue with the EqlA.

Please tick the appropriate option:

An EqlA is required (please continue to Part 4 of this document)	✓
An EqlA is not required (please complete the box below)	

Part 4: Analysing the impact

Who does the service, strategy, policy, project or change impact?

- If your strategy, policy, project or service contains options you may wish to consider providing an assessment for each option. Please cut and paste the template accordingly.

For each protected characteristic please choose from the following options:

- Please note in some cases more than one impact may apply – in this case please state all relevant options and explain in the ‘Please provide details’ box.

Positive Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the proposal eliminates discrimination, advances equality of opportunity and/or fosters good relations with protected groups.
Negative Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protected characteristic group(s) could be disadvantaged or discriminated against
Neutral Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change/ no assessed significant impact of protected characteristic groups
Unclear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not enough data/evidence has been collected to make an informed decision.

Age:	<i>Communities: positive & negative</i> <i>Employees: positive</i>
What age bracket does this affect?	
Please provide details:	<p>Dorset communities:</p> <p>Negative impact - people over the age of 60 are more likely to be offline, and this is greater for the over 70s. Young people particularly those who are vulnerable are more likely to be offline.</p> <p>Positive impact - having a more connected Dorset would enable us to use advances in technology and proactive monitoring to help keep people independent that are older. Younger people may find it easier to access education/learning and employment opportunities.</p> <p>Employees: The recent pandemic has accelerated our digital skills with remote working and the use of technology. All employees have access to learning and development opportunities through the Learning Hub.</p>

Disability: (including physical, mental, sensory and progressive conditions)	<i>Communities: Positive & negative</i> <i>Employees: Positive</i>
Does this affect a specific disability group?	
Please provide details:	<p>Dorset communities:</p> <p>Negative impact - people with some sensory disabilities are less likely to be able to get online on their own. People with some disabilities will never be able to access digital services on their own.</p> <p>Positive impact - digital access to services can enable people with some disabilities to remain independent as people will be able to access more council services from home without the need to travel. Greater use of assistive tech and monitoring apps to help keep people independent and enable early intervention. Digital services can, with appropriate authentication, support carers or guardians to access digital services on behalf of those who cannot so they are not excluded or experience a different level of service as a result of their disability.</p>

In a study undertaken by Tsatsou (2019) - [Digital Inclusion of people with disabilities](#), digital inclusion made disability affected everyday tasks easier e.g.

- downloading supermarket apps to find suitable food for specific diets,
- ordering online prescriptions,
- online shopping,
- using digital readers (audio books, e-books) enabled visually impaired people to read more
- booking tickets online, instead of using a phone service was something of value for people with speech difficulties.
- using online videos (You Tube) for practical guidance was helpful for intellectual or cognitive difficulties

In addition, some participants of the research felt more socially included (escape from the stigma) and participated in more activities using online forums, events etc.

This was a small study carried out and research concludes that research is required across a broad range of disabilities and socio-economic and diverse groups.

The introduction of the customer platform will ensure the website is easier to use and compliant with accessibility legislation, along with ongoing independent assessment such as the ShawTrust.

The hearing and visual impairments survey undertaken by Dorset Council identified that 82% with a hearing impairment were able to access a digital device, and 68% with a visual impairment were able to access a digital device.

Employees:

Only 2.75% of our workforce have identified themselves as disabled, this fits with many organisations (nationally) who have similar declared rates of disability. This figure is significantly lower than the Dorset and national average (19%)².

Projects that are developed under this umbrella will undertake EqlAs to understand impacts including if accessibility audits need to be undertaken, Access to

² Disability facts and figures, Scope; 2019

	<p>work can be used for new or employees changing roles to ensure they have the right kit and software.</p> <p>The pandemic has highlighted that the use of technology and virtual working can have a positive impact and help feel to participate and feel included, particularly with the use of Microsoft accessibility features now available.</p>
Gender Reassignment & Gender Identity:	<p><i>Dorset Communities: Neutral / unclear</i> <i>Employees: Neutral / unclear</i></p>
Please provide details:	<p>Dorset Communities:</p> <p>This project aimed at all Dorset communities irrespective of gender identity. Projects being created under this vision include the Customer Platform, currently data around gender identity is not collected, there is an opportunity to review what data we ask and collect, this information will help to inform future services.</p> <p>Employees:</p> <p>Dorset Council does not currently collect data on employees for this category, however, we do not anticipate that at this present time, that there will be an impact on this protected group.</p>
Pregnancy and maternity:	<p><i>Dorset Communities: Positive</i> <i>Employees: Positive</i></p>
Please provide details:	<p>Dorset Communities:</p> <p>The development of digital projects could mean that this protected characteristic group could benefit from being able to do more at times that suit them when engaging with the council to suit their routines.</p> <p>Employees:</p> <p>Using technology allows employees to work more flexibly and remotely, so reducing travel times but also encouraging a better work/life balance. Employees on maternity, paternity and parental leave can be up to date (if they wish) through keeping touch days.</p>
Race and Ethnicity:	<p><i>Communities: Unclear</i> <i>Employees: Unclear</i></p>
Please provide details:	<p>Dorset Communities:</p>

	<p>We will ensure that communication and publicity materials illustrate diversity in a positive way and promote participation across all ethnic groups.</p> <p>Groups that have higher rates of literacy issues such as Gypsies and Travellers, may be less confident in securing connectivity contracts affecting the ability to get online. Research involving 50 people from Gypsy and Traveller communities across the UK by Friends, Families & Travellers (FFT) in 2018 found that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one in five Gypsy and Traveller participants had never used the internet, compared to one in ten of the general population • over half of Gypsy & Traveller participants did not feel confident using digital technology • only 38% of Gypsies and Travellers (33% if housed) had a household internet connection, compared to 86% of the general population. <p>In Dorset, 3% of our population identify as Gypsy & Traveller, we have 4 authorised (council managed) Gypsy & Traveller sites with a population of approximately 130 adults and children. In addition, there is a significant number of Gypsies and Travellers living on tolerated, unauthorised or private sites and in housing across the Dorset Council area.</p> <p>Dorset Council co-ordinates the Gypsy & Traveller Liaison Group, a partnership forum to address issues of social exclusion amongst Gypsy & Traveller communities, initial discussions have been held with this group about digital inclusion and there is an opportunity to explore this further.</p> <p>Dorset has much lower levels (4.4%) of ethnically diverse residents than the country as a whole (19.5%). The highest proportion (41%) of Dorset's ethnically diverse communities are classified as 'White other'. This classification includes people who identify as white but who do not have UK national identity, an example would be Polish.</p> <p>Employees:</p> <p>We do not envisage any impact on this protected group.</p>
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Religion or belief:	<i>Communities: Neutral Employees: Neutral</i>
Please provide details:	Dorset Communities:

	<p>We do not envisage any impact on this protected group.</p> <p>Employees:</p> <p>We do not envisage any impact on this protected group.</p>
Sexual orientation:	<p><i>Communities: Neutral</i></p> <p><i>Employees: Neutral</i></p>
Please provide details:	<p>Dorset Communities:</p> <p>We do not envisage any impact on this protected group.</p> <p>Employees:</p> <p>We do not envisage any impact on this protected group.</p>
Sex (consider both men and women):	<p><i>Communities: Neutral</i></p> <p><i>Employees: Neutral</i></p>
Please provide details:	<p>Dorset Communities:</p> <p>We do not envisage any impact on this protected group.</p> <p>Employees:</p> <p>We do not envisage any impact on this protected group.</p>
Marriage or civil partnership:	<p><i>Communities: Neutral</i></p> <p><i>Employees: Neutral</i></p>
Please provide details:	<p>Dorset Communities:</p> <p>We do not envisage any impact on this protected group.</p> <p>Employees:</p> <p>We do not envisage any impact on this protected group.</p>
Carers:	<p><i>Communities: Positive</i></p> <p><i>Employees: Positive</i></p>
Please provide details:	<p>Dorset Communities:</p> <p>There could be a positive impact on this group as connectivity can help to support wellbeing, and the use of online council services at times that are convenient to individuals.</p> <p>Employees:</p> <p>There could be a positive impact on this group as connectivity can help to support wellbeing, and the use of</p>

	online council services at times that are convenient to individuals.
Rural isolation:	<i>Communities: Positive</i> <i>Employees: Positive</i>
Please provide details:	<p>Dorset Communities:</p> <p>Those in rural areas are more likely to be impacted by poor connectivity/lack of infrastructure to get online which can reduce social isolation and improve wellbeing. People are more likely to be a distance away from digital support such as libraries and council offices.</p> <p>There will be a positive impact through continuing to improve access across Dorset.</p> <p>Employees:</p> <p>Those in rural areas are more likely to be impacted by poor connectivity/lack of infrastructure to get online. There will be a positive impact through continuing to improve access across Dorset.</p>
Single parent families:	<i>Communities: Positive</i> <i>Employees: Positive</i>
Please provide details:	<p>Dorset Communities:</p> <p>There could be a positive impact on this group as connectivity can help to support wellbeing and social inclusion, and the use of online council services at times that are convenient to individuals.</p> <p>Employees:</p> <p>There could be a positive impact on this group as connectivity can help to support wellbeing and social inclusion, and the use of online council services at times that are convenient to individuals.</p>
Social & economic deprivation:	<i>Communities: Positive</i> <i>Employees: Positive</i>
Please provide details:	<p>Dorset Communities:</p> <p>Those facing social and economic deprivation are more likely to be unable to obtain the benefits of being online and risk being digitally excluded. The focus on developing digital skills across Dorset and providing ways to get online will have a positive impact.</p> <p>Employees:</p>

	Those facing social and economic deprivation are more likely to be unable to obtain the benefits of being online and risk being digital excluded. The focus on developing digital skills across Dorset and providing ways to get online will have a positive impact.
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Armed Forces communities	<i>Communities: Neutral</i> <i>Employees: Neutral</i>
Please provide details:	Dorset Communities: We do not envisage any impact on this protected group. Employees: We do not envisage any impact on this protected group.

Part 5: Action Plan

Provide actions for **positive**, **negative** and **unclear** impacts.

If you have identified any **negative** or **unclear** impacts, describe what adjustments will be made to remove or reduce the impacts, or if this is not possible provide justification for continuing with the proposal.

Issue	Action to be taken	Person(s) responsible	Date to be completed by
Race/Ethnicity	New advocacy worker is being appointed to work with Traveller/Gypsy communities to explore what support may be needed particularly to enable children's virtual education/learning in these communities.	Susan Ward-Rice – Corporate Policy & Performance Officer	December 2021
Workforce	A pilot to understand the best way to provide access to council systems for mobile staff without corporate issued devices.	Tamsyn Harwood – Organisational Development Coordinator	September 2021
Disability	Work with internal disabled groups to understand and provide the right support to use technology.	Sarah Battisby – Wellbeing Lead	April 2022
Rural Isolation	Use the digital place board to take a strategic approach, working with partners to influence the consistent availability of infrastructure/connectivity across the county to enable everyone to benefit equally.	Deborah Smart – Corporate Director Digital & Change	Long term
Digital Exclusion	The Digital Skills and Adoption programme are exploring different ways to support access through and is contained within the delivery plan of the digital vision, this will target protected groups.	Penny Syddall – Programme Manager	Long term

EqIA Sign Off

Officer completing this EqIA:	Lisa Trickey	Date:	21.2.2021
Equality Lead:	Pete Bartlett	Date:	
Equality & Diversity Action Group Chair:		Date:	

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