

DIGITAL INCLUSION STRATEGY 2016-20



City of **Stoke-on-Trent**

Making Stoke-on-Trent a digitally inclusive city



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Foreword

Introduction

The expansion of internet connectivity and the proliferation of online services are changing the way that many people choose to access services and interact with each other. More strands of daily life are becoming 'digital by default' in the expectation that people will increasingly go online to communicate, to access information about their lives and to buy the goods and services they need. This dramatic transformation offers customers more intuitive, accessible and responsive service delivery, while service providers are able to use digital platforms to steer customer contact through more cost-effective channels. For public services, digitalisation creates opportunities to reduce customer demand for frontline services and strengthen preventative approaches aimed at minimising costly interventions.

However, successful delivery of online services will rely on the ability of customers to access and interact with them in ways that suit their needs. The increasing reliance on digital technology not only requires citizens to be able to connect to the internet, but also means that they will need to utilise specific digital skills in order to get online and perform routine tasks. The available data shows that a significant proportion of adults and households in Stoke-on-Trent are currently unable to get online or unwilling to engage with online public services. The four main barriers to digital inclusion in the city are:

- **A high proportion of households cannot afford home broadband;**
- **Many adults lack basic digital skills and/or confidence to go online;**
- **A significant number of adults have physical or learning disabilities;**
- **Lack of awareness of the potential financial and social benefits of getting online.**

Without a concerted and co-ordinated citywide effort to address these issues, there is a risk that many people in Stoke-on-Trent will continue to be excluded from the benefits of online connectivity and will be left even further behind by the pace and scale of digital transformation.

The Digital Inclusion Strategy 2016-20 provides a detailed picture of the scale of the challenge facing the city and the opportunities that exist to improve outcomes for residents, businesses and taxpayers in terms of service delivery, efficiency and innovation. The action plan for 2016/17 is the first of four annual documents which will underpin delivery of the Digital Inclusion Strategy, and sets out a range of activities to help increase digital inclusion rates in the short term and pave the way for further actions and interventions in future years. The strategy also sets out arrangements for monitoring the impact of the activities in the action plan to ensure clarity and accountability regarding their implementation. The action plan will be updated and amended for the subsequent three years of the strategy to reflect performance against the chosen indicators, as well as changing priorities.

Digital inclusion vision and priorities

Enabling more people to access the internet has the potential to transform the way in which citizens access local services and make choices about aspects of their own lives, while simultaneously reducing demand for key services. Research indicates that digital inclusion can help to tackle a number of issues facing the city, including:

- **Financial inclusion and hardship** (managing money more effectively);
- **Health literacy levels** (making informed health and lifestyle choices);
- **Education** (improving literacy, numeracy and overall attainment);
- **Employment and skills** (finding and securing good quality work);
- **Social isolation** (using social media to connect people and communities);
- **Economic growth** (expansion of online commerce).

Elements of digital inclusion and the actions and approaches highlighted in this strategy span four of the five core policy priorities outlined in the Stronger Together Strategic Plan 2016-20, as well as a number of the strategic objectives underpinning each priority:



Support our residents to fulfil their potential

- Increase the number of people moving into work;
- Transform training and skills provision, supporting business growth and enabling local people to secure good quality work



A commercial council, well governed and fit for purpose, driving efficiency in everything that we do

- Deliver optimal efficiency in all our services adopting new delivery models that deliver maximum value for residents
- Deliver a customer focused approach to service delivery and transform accessibility of services



Support vulnerable people in our communities to live their lives well

- Improve quality of life, independence and choice for vulnerable adults
- Support residents to manage their money effectively, improving uptake of benefits for those who are eligible



Support our businesses to thrive, delivering investment in our towns and communities

- Foster enterprise and entrepreneurship to support new and emerging local business growth

Strategic drivers for improving digital inclusion in Stoke-on-Trent

A number of factors and pressures are combining to make digital inclusion an increasingly important strategic priority. The main drivers affecting the city are:

- **Welfare reform** - the roll-out of Universal Credit in the city requires claims to be submitted and managed online. Ultimately, about 48,300 residents will be affected by Universal Credit. Errors or delays relating to claims are likely to result in financial penalties and/or hardship for affected households, placing increased demand on local frontline support services.
- **Service transformation** – the city council is developing a range of more responsive and cost-effective services designed around digital platforms. Imminent improvements to the functionality of the council’s website will enable access to a wider range of transactional and information services at far less cost to the council and the taxpayer. Customer Access currently handles about 80,000 calls and 62,000 face-to-face contacts each month, many of which could be handled more quickly and efficiently via online channels.
- **Financial inclusion** – a significant proportion of the city’s population is both digitally and financially excluded. These households are more vulnerable to crises because they have fewer opportunities to become financially resilient. Research shows that access to cheaper goods and services online saves an average low-income household £516 a year. This could enable the 40,600 Stoke-on-Trent households with incomes below £16,000 to collectively save up to £21 million each year. Such a significant improvement in household finances would be likely to reduce demand for frontline services as fewer households would suffer costly and damaging financial crises.
- **Social inclusion and community resilience** – digital inclusion has been found to help address issues of isolation, as well as contributing to community cohesion and capacity building through the creation of active local social media groups. Using online services is also a component of the Stronger Together Community Pledges initiative, which is designed to strengthen community resilience by encouraging citizens do more for themselves.
- **Employment** – online skills are an increasingly important element of finding employment, with many posts now advertised exclusively online and three quarters of applications requiring digital skills. There is also a proven link between workforce digital skill levels and areas’ ability to attract employers, generate higher-value job opportunities, raise income levels and increase overall employment rates, which are all strategic priorities for the City Council.
- **Educational attainment** – evidence suggests that children from homes with internet access are more likely to perform better at school, and that access to digital teaching and learning tools in the classroom can improve attainment.
- **Economic development** – increased online connectivity has been identified nationally as a significant factor driving local economic growth, particularly among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

How the potential benefits of digital inclusion align with the Stronger Together priorities

This diagram shows how increasing digital inclusion rates in Stoke-on-Trent could deliver a wide range of significant benefits which would support the council's efforts to achieve its strategic vision for the city, as set out in the Stronger Together Strategic Plan 2016-20.



Economic Growth & Inward Investment
Redesigned council website and enhanced connectivity to online services and information increase awareness of key facilities and attractions in the city, boosting footfall, revenue and reputation. Increase in numbers of people accessing the internet drives up trade for local businesses. SMEs in the city exploit enhanced connectivity to expand their online commercial activity, boosting the local economy and ultimately creating employment and wage growth.

Planning & Regeneration
Improved online planning portal helps to improve efficiency and responsiveness of service, streamlining the planning and development process and generating increased inward investment in key employment sites in the city.

Adult Social Care
Improved access to local services and community social media networks for vulnerable adults including people with disabilities.

Children and Young People's Services
Digitalised services help to ensure that more young people leaving care are able to find work and access tailored support.

Operational Management
Improved online reporting of faults, repairs and environmental crimes improves the responsiveness and efficiency of services.

Public Health
Improved literacy, numeracy and digital skill levels contribute to increased health literacy in the city.

Learning Services
Home access to online learning tools help to improve educational attainment levels. Family & community education teaches ICT skills to digitally excluded families. Increased ICT skills lead to improved employability levels for school and college leavers and boost average income levels. Advances in online support transform provision of home school transport services for children and young people with special needs.

Policy & Performance
Improved engagement with local stakeholders. Enhanced business intelligence data for policy analysis.

Finance
The expansion of digital by default services unlocks significant savings which can be reinvested in other areas of service delivery.

ICT & Libraries
Libraries see increased usage for ICT skills mentoring and support sessions, Work Clubs and general ICT access.

Emergency Planning and Health & Safety
Online reporting and scheduling facilities improve the responsiveness and efficiency of services.

Housing & Customer Services
More people use online contact services, improving efficiency and customer satisfaction ratings and delivering major savings for the authority. Increased access to online services and accounts leads to administrative efficiencies and reduced rent arrears.

Revenues & Benefits
More people use online banking and access cheaper goods and services online. Universal Credit claimants are supported to manage claims online effectively. Access to online accounts for benefits, rent and council tax improves financial management and reduces levels of arrears/hardship.

Human Resources/OD
More council staff are supported to improve their ICT skill levels.

Communications & Marketing
Improved digital communications to relevant stakeholders increases impact of marketing and communications campaigns and improves engagement with residents and communities.

KEY:

- Public Health & Adult Social Care directorate
- City Director's Office
- Place, Growth & Prosperity directorate
- Housing & Customer Services directorate
- Children & Family Services directorate
- Policy & Performance/Comms & Marketing

Background to digital inclusion

The scale of the challenge in Stoke-on-Trent

Digital exclusion ranges from a lack of physical access to the internet to insufficient knowledge, skills or confidence to get online and carry out routine tasks and transactions. High-level analysis of digital inclusion in Stoke-on-Trent indicates that up to 60 per cent of the city's population are at risk of varying degrees of digital exclusion, and that one in eight adults in the city never uses the internet. The most recent available local and national data on digital exclusion indicates that:

- Nationally up to 63 per cent of social housing tenants do not access online services, mainly due to a lack of home broadband and/or ICT hardware. Social housing accounts for more than 25,000 households in Stoke-on-Trent.
- Low income is a major barrier to digital inclusion. About 38 per cent of households in Stoke-on-Trent (40,660) have incomes below £16,000 a year – the minimum needed to access basic goods and services. About 15,000 households have no internet connection and 7,000 have no mobile phone.
- There is a strong link between digital skills and basic literacy and numeracy levels. 30,300 working age adults in the city have no formal qualifications (19.2 per cent, rising to 72.5 per cent for over-65s). The national average rate for 18-64 year olds is 8.8 per cent, which would equate to 14,000 in the city.
- Older people who live alone or have lower incomes, lower education attainment levels, significant health problems or histories of worklessness or low-skilled work are disproportionately more likely to be digitally excluded.
- People with disabilities are less likely to have access to the internet or the skills needed to get online. National research suggests that up to one third of people who are registered disabled have never been online. In 2011, 56,500 adults in Stoke-on-Trent reported having health conditions which limited their abilities, including more than 29,000 with acute conditions. Of these, an estimated 4,000 people in the city have learning disabilities.

Other local authorities and agencies which have addressed digital inclusion have found that citizens who are most at risk of being digitally excluded also tend to be frequent and repeat users of services such as health and social care, welfare support and social housing, as well as being more likely to contact service providers directly, either in person or via the telephone. By reducing demand for these services, digital inclusion has the potential to deliver significant and wide-ranging economic and social benefits for individuals, communities and local services.

Addressing digital inclusion in Stoke-on-Trent

Evidence-based approaches to digital inclusion

The diagram below illustrates how approaches to digital inclusion will vary depending on the type and degree of exclusion involved. Available data indicates that up to 15 per cent of adults in Stoke-on-Trent experience multiple barriers to digital inclusion, including a lack of basic literacy and numeracy skills and online connectivity. However, others will require more targeted help either gaining access to the internet, acquiring task-specific digital skills, or building the confidence and motivation to go online to access digital services.

Digital inclusion profiling

Barriers to digital inclusion	Motivation / incentives	Confidence to transact online	Specific digital skills	Basic digital skills	Access + basic digital skills	Access + basic literacy, numeracy & digital skills
% of adults affected (estimated)	About 40%	About 40 %		Up to 10%	Up to 15%	
Digital inclusion profile	Have necessary skills and home internet access	Access at home or locally, but lack some skills needed to transact online		Not yet online, but interested	No skills, access or interest (multiple barriers to digital inclusion)	
Demographic profile	Working, home owner/ private renter, middle to high income	Working, private renter, mid-level income, more likely to be female		No specific age group or gender, social tenant, low income, either in low paid job or not working	Social tenant, very low income, few/no qualifications, not working (long term)	
Support needed to transact online	Information about the time and money-saving benefits of going online	Information, guidance and encouragement, plus informal learning opportunities		One-to-one support or formal learning programmes	Free online access with tailored one-to-one support	Intensive one-to-one support to complete basic online tasks; signposting to basic skills learning opportunities
Services affected	Marketing & Communications, ICT (website)	Libraries, Adult & Community Learning, ICT, Local Matters (social media pilot) Marketing & Comms		Libraries, Adult & Community Learning, local partners (e.g. Barclays, Age UK, housing assoc.s.)	Libraries (Work Clubs and mentoring support, Universal Credit support); local partners	
Outcomes	More people go online and use digital channels to engage with local services and their communities	More adults are able to carry out a greater range of online tasks, including accessing the new council website's expanded functions		Low-income households are able to access cheaper goods and services online and use social media to help prevent social isolation	Digital inclusion helps people gain formal qualifications, find work and progress towards financial inclusion	

The Digital Inclusion Strategy and accompanying action plan focus on four key areas of activity aimed at producing the greatest possible impact in terms of increasing digital inclusion rates among target groups in the city.

Improve digital skill levels among target groups

- Improve signposting to digital skills training and support. Provide clear advice about how to get help with digital skills and convenient access to ICT facilities.
- Provide a clear menu of provision. Develop a comprehensive list of support, training and advice services, ensuring they are co-ordinated effectively and matched to levels of demand.
- Additional digital inclusion support in libraries. The Libraries service represents the front line for ICT support in communities. To deliver significant improvements in digital inclusion levels, the city council will need to explore opportunities to scale up provision of ICT mentoring and support in libraries.
- Enhance workforce digital skills. Stoke-on-Trent residents comprise more than 60 per cent of the city council workforce, so any improvement in staff ICT skill levels will help to raise skill levels among the general population.

Enable access to online services

- Update asset mapping of ICT facilities for public use. Highlight the availability of ICT facilities and support in public buildings, as well as free Wi-Fi hotspots.
- Explore the provision of low-cost home broadband and/or Wi-Fi in city council-run residential properties.
- Expand provision for home visits. Explore how increased use of mobile technology can help those residents who are at higher risk of digital exclusion.
- Explore provision of free Wi-Fi hotspots at strategic locations around the city.

Incentivise and facilitate online transactions with the city council and partners

- Launch redeveloped council website, improving the range and functionality of online forms and transactions to reduce demand for direct access services.
- Communicate the shared benefits of digital services, highlighting the time and money saved by switching to online transactions.
- Encourage the use of online services as a means of strengthening community resilience. The Stronger Together Community Pledges encourage residents to do more for themselves by using online services to interact with the Council.

Facilitate the successful roll-out of Universal Credit

- Communicate the nature and scale of the changes involved. Ensure that people who will be affected by the roll-out are aware of the implications.
- Scale up provision of one-to-one ICT support to help with the minority of claimants who will not be able to submit and manage their claims online.

Current activity contributing to digital inclusion

Priority	Target group(s)	Current activity	Scale/capacity	Service area(s)
Improve digital skill levels among target groups	Acute (most excluded - low literacy/ numeracy) and low skill level groups	Library staff and volunteers work one-to-one to help customers complete online tasks	Delivered 370 one-to-one ICT and employment support sessions in 2014; 8 volunteers delivering over 600 hours of support a year, including 452 ICT support sessions in 8 months	Libraries
	Low ICT skills	Adults & Community Learning (ACL) provides ICT literacy courses	Team of 40 tutors reaches up to 4,500 learners a year (accredited and non-accredited courses)	Adult & Community Learning
		Work Clubs help jobseekers with online applications and CVs	16 Work Clubs in libraries helped 5,800 customers in 2014-15 (up from 2,500)	Libraries
		Social media pilot for community groups	Monthly workshops for up to 30 participants. Volunteers from SoT 6 th Form College	Local Matters team
		<i>Age UK basic ICT skills sessions</i>	<i>Free weekly sessions for up to 12 participants at a time with experienced ICT tutors</i>	<i>(Non-council activity)</i>
	<i>Staffs Housing offers basic ICT skills tuition</i>	<i>Tenants can access one-to-one support as needed</i>		
	Low ICT skills /confidence levels	<i>Barclays 'Tea & Teach' sessions at local venues</i>	<i>Monthly drop-in sessions and Digital Driving Licence programme</i>	Adult & Community Learning
ACL family learning sessions in schools		E-safety course delivered to 800 learners a year.		
Enable access to online services	Acute	Home visits from council staff equipped with tablets	2 income assessment officers trained to provide ICT support for benefit/DHP claims	Housing/ Revs & Bens
	No access to home broadband	Libraries and Smithfield offer PCs, free Wi-Fi access and support	136 general use PCs; 46 in ICT suites; 8 'quick use' PCs 10 Work Club laptops	Libraries/ICT
Incentivise and facilitate online transactions and interactions with the city council	All groups	Council is redesigning website as an accessible portal linking seamlessly to online services	1.09 million visits to the website in 2014, up five per cent on previous year's figure	ICT
	Some ICT skills, but low levels of motivation/ confidence	'Click & Easy' campaign promotes time and money-saving benefits of online transactions	8,500 linked online customer accounts (May 2015); 3,500 e-forms sent and 39% increase in online activity (May 2014-May 2015)	Marketing & Comms
Facilitate the successful roll-out of Universal Credit	Acute	Libraries service and Customer Access to offer one-to-one support for making online UC claims	Volunteer ICT buddies in libraries and additional support in place in Smithfield ICT suite	Libraries/ Customer Access
	All affected groups	Will form part of Welfare Reform Action Plan for the city	Universal Credit is forecast to affect about 48,300 residents, starting in Feb 2016 with single JSA claimants	Welfare Reform Group/ Hardship Commission
		<i>Housing associations are providing extra help for UC claimants</i>	<i>Tenants are able to access one-to-one support to enable them to complete UC forms and submit them online</i>	<i>(Non-council activity)</i>

Performance monitoring and review

Implementation of the Digital Inclusion Strategy will be measured using a range of performance indicators which can be combined to illustrate the scale of digital inclusion in Stoke-on-Trent. Data will be collected and reviewed annually (where available) to monitor the delivery and impact of the Digital Inclusion Strategy. The data will be reported in the subsequent Digital Inclusion Action Plan.

Performance indicators	Data sources	Lead service areas	Baseline performance levels	Digital inclusion goals for 2020
Improve digital skill levels among target groups				
Reduction in percentage of adults lacking basic digital skills	Website usage / ACL participation data	Adult & Community Learning (ACL)	c.4,500 adult learners (2015/16)	Halve the number of adults lacking basic digital skills
Work Clubs help people find work and gain digital skills	Work Club participation figures	Library service	1,300 attendances and 195 referrals each year (2014/15)	At least 6,000 adults participate in Work Clubs between 2016-20
Percentage of council staff completing digital skills courses	Organisational Development (OD)	OD / ACL	N/A	At least half of all council staff undertake a digital skills assessment or participate in training
Enable access to online services				
Number of online households in city	Experian Mosaic data	Policy & Performance	15,000 households with no online access (2014)	Halve the number of offline households
Percentage of adults who use the internet	ONS internet usage data	Policy & Performance	24,000 adults do not use the internet (May 2016)	Halve the number of adults who do not use the internet
Incentivise and facilitate online transactions with the city council				
Increased use of council website, online forms and linked accounts	Website data/ Revenues and Benefits data/ Finance data	Website team/ Revenues & Benefits/ Finance	1.09 million visitors (2015); 3,500 e-forms submitted (2016); 8,500 linked online accounts (2016)	Increase website usage and online interactions by at least 25 per cent
Facilitate the successful roll-out of Universal Credit				
Universal Credit claims submitted and managed online	City Council/ DWP	Revenues & Benefits/ Library Service	N/A (UC rolled out locally from Feb 2016)	At least 85 per cent of UC claims are submitted and managed online
Reduction in % of financially excluded households	Experian Mosaic data	Policy & Performance	Approximately 40,600	Halve the number of financially excluded households
Wider economic benefits of digital inclusion				
Size of the city's digital economy	Economic growth data	Economic Development team	TBC	Support 10 per cent growth of digital sector
Businesses with websites			TBC	At least 25 per cent more businesses have websites

Digital inclusion action plan 2016-17

Improve digital skill levels among target groups

OUTCOMES	BUSINESS BENEFITS	OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	LED BY	TIMESCALE
Most people are able to access online services and perform routine transactions (e.g. submit online forms)	The council is able to deliver efficiency savings by reducing demand for direct contact customer services.	More people use Adult and Community Learning courses to gain basic ICT skills	Provision of integrated basic skills courses(English, maths and ICT) and both accredited and non-accredited ICT courses to about 4.500 learners each year	Adult & Community Learning (ACL) / Communications	March 2017
	Customer satisfaction with services increases as channel choice makes interactions more convenient.	Council staff are encouraged and supported to refresh their ICT skills	Promote and deliver free accredited ICT skills courses for all staff who wish to participate	Organisational Development (OD)/ ACL / Internal Communications	March 2017
			Promote and deliver free 'skills check' sessions for council staff at Smithfield, linked to further learning opportunities	OD/ACL / Internal Communications	TBC
	Educational attainment levels improve in the city.	More people receive one-to-one support to perform routine online transactions	Train council staff to help tenants and benefit claimants to use online forms and transactions in local centres/libraries/home	Customer Services (local centres)	March 2017
				Housing/ Revenues & Benefits	March 2017
	Library usage increases as more people use ICT facilities to access services.	More people make use of ICT mentors and Work Clubs in Libraries to gain basic ICT skills and/or confidence	Library staff and volunteers aim to support 33 per cent more people through ICT mentoring and Work Club sessions by March 2017	Library service	March 2017
		More community groups benefit from free social media tuition sessions	Local Matters Team to support community organisations with social media/ website workshops in conjunction with S-o-T 6th Form College	Local Matters	March 2017
	Community engagement is boosted as more groups and individuals use social media.	Work with partner organisations to stage digital inclusion events in the city	Work with local organisations to maximise impact on digital inclusion and engagement with target groups	Library service/ACL / Local Matters	March 2017

OUTCOMES	BUSINESS BENEFITS	OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	LED BY	TIMESCALE
Support is available for those people who require extra help to get online due to health, disability or other significant barriers	People with significant health conditions or disabilities are among the most intense users of frontline council services. Internet access will significantly improve their quality of life, social inclusion levels and ability to interact with local services regarding their care.	Support will be provided to help people with disabilities to benefit from internet access in a convenient location	Explore what extra support is available to help people with disabilities to get online and perform routine transactions	Adult services	March 2017
			Engage with local support groups and others with knowledge of internet access needs of users with physical and learning disabilities	Policy & Performance/ Local Matters	March 2017
			Libraries service will work with local partner organisations to provide one-to-one support for users who require extra help to get online	Libraries	March 2017
	Access to the internet can help people with less limiting conditions to improve their skills and qualifications and find appropriate employment.	Users of adult social care will be able to use online services to make informed decisions about their care	Identify ways of providing extra support to enable residents to complete online self-assessments for social care support	Adult services	March 2017
			Library service staff will be trained to provide one-to-one support for customers who are unable to fill out the online Universal Credit application form	Libraries	January 2017
			Investigate use of digital inclusion volunteers to work with people from excluded groups to overcome fears and ICT skill problems	Local Matters / Libraries	March 2017
			All JET scheme participants undergo basic skills assessments and are supported to access appropriate ICT skills training where necessary	Cooperative Working / Adult & Community Learning	March 2017

Incentivise and facilitate online transactions and interactions with the city council

OUTCOMES	BUSINESS BENEFITS	OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	LED BY	TIMESCALE
People feel motivated to use the internet and online services	Rent and council tax arrears reduce as more low income families manage their finances online.	People in excluded groups will be helped and motivated to get online	Communicate the advantages of using the internet to transact safely and cheaply	PR & Communications / Web team / Libraries	March 2017
	More families use the internet at home, boosting children's educational attainment levels.	Parents are encouraged to help children with online school work and educated about online safety issues	Family learning sessions in schools will give about 800 parents a year a grounding in basic computer and online access skills	Adult & Community Learning	March 2017
			Library staff who are Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) trained will work with schools to promote online safety	Libraries	March 2017
	Access to cheaper online goods and services helps to reduce financial hardship.	Citizens understand that online transactions are safe and convenient and can save them money	Explore possible expansion of 'Click & Easy' branding for marketing campaign on how to make life easier by doing more online	Communications	March 2017
	Citizens are encouraged to do more for themselves by using online Council services	Build community resilience by persuading people to do more to help themselves	The Stronger Together Community Pledges include a pledge to use online services instead of direct contact with the Council	Policy & Performance / Local Matters	October 2016
Most people interact with the city council online	Increasing online interaction has the potential to save the council and the taxpayer money, while making services easier to access and more responsive.	Council website is more user-friendly and links seamlessly to online forms and transactions	Redesign council website to facilitate channel shift	ICT	December 2016
		More people use online forms for a wider range of routine processes	Expand range of forms and integrate seamlessly with new council website	ICT / Communications	March 2017
	Feedback from online interactions will help to further improve citywide service delivery.	Customers are able to use digital channels to exchange information with the council more easily online	Incorporate social media, newsletter and live chat facility within redesigned website	ICT	March 2017

Enable access to online services

OUTCOMES	BUSINESS BENEFITS	OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	LED BY	TIMESCALE
Most people have access to the internet at home or in a convenient setting	Affordable internet access will make it possible to improve the quality and responsiveness of services we deliver to housing tenants and private landlords in the city	Social tenants and low income households in the city have access to affordable means of online access	Explore potential to secure low-cost broadband deal for council tenants & others on low incomes	ICT / Housing	March 2017
			Explore available options to provide free-to-access Wi-Fi 'hotspots' in public places at strategic locations around the city	ICT / Operational Management / City Centre Partnership	March 2017
	Wi-Fi has the potential to boost online commerce	Market traders and customers can use Wi-Fi	Explore options for Wi-Fi at market sites to help boost footfall and online commerce	Markets/ICT	March 2017
Council buildings provide free computers, internet access and support to get online and enable users to perform basic tasks	The availability of free online access in libraries and Smithfield, along with dedicated support staff and volunteers, creates clearly defined pathways to skill progression, from initial one-to-one support through to formal tuition via accredited courses.	Residents who do not have access to home broadband can use a local library or other council-run site to get online, with support on offer from trained council staff	Improve awareness of locations of publicly available computers which are free to use and can access the internet (with info on numbers, booking requirements, etc.)	Facilities / Libraries	March 2017
			Explore options to offer free Wi-Fi and/or broadband-connected computers for visitors in publicly-accessible council buildings, along with staff who are trained to help people with online access	ICT / Customer Access	March 2017
	Free Wi-Fi provision alongside staff support will make it easier for people in the most digitally excluded groups to engage with the council online, access a range of goods and services and use social media, reducing the burden on frontline council services.		Smithfield 1 will house 20 public computers, with trained staff on hand to offer support and access to ICT tutors through ACL who will signpost users to additional learning opportunities	Customer Access / Libraries / Adult & Community Learning	January 2017
	Install additional quick use computers in Smithfield One for public use		Libraries	January 2017	
			Explore options around providing free internet access and ICT support at children's centres around the city	Children and Family Services	March 2017

Facilitate the successful roll-out of Universal Credit

OUTCOMES	BUSINESS BENEFITS	OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	LED BY	TIMESCALE
Most Universal Credit claimants are able to submit and manage claims online	More claims being submitted correctly and punctually will avoid extra demand being placed on frontline council services as a result of hardship due to benefit processing delays or financial penalties imposed for incorrectly submitted claims	All eligible claimants are able to submit claims online, and those for whom this is not a realistic prospect, even with support, are helped to submit claims via telephone (available as a last resort only, with prior permission of DWP)	Let people know what information they will need to complete applications, what facilities are available, and how to get one-to-one help if required	Communications/ Customer Access/ Libraries	Ongoing since April 2016
			Provide additional one-to-support to help people submit claims online in libraries, local centres and Smithfield	Libraries / Customer Access (DWP funded)	Ongoing since April 2016

Work collaboratively with partners to increase digital inclusion in Stoke-on-Trent

OUTCOMES	BUSINESS BENEFITS	OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	LED BY	TIMESCALE
Local partners collaborate to drive co-ordinated approaches to increasing digital inclusion in Stoke-on-Trent	Working more closely with local partners will enable effective sharing of best practice and experience on key issues, maximise the positive impact of contributions and ensure a joint focus on overcoming challenges and avoiding duplication and 'silo' working	Local partners across all sectors work together to share learning and expertise on digital inclusion issues and ensure that activity is targeted, effective and complementary	Identify and engage with potential partners from the public, private and voluntary & community sectors who share an interest in promoting greater digital inclusion or are already involved in delivering activities aimed at increasing inclusion rates. Explore opportunities for the creation of a joint task group to focus on local digital inclusion issues, share learning about challenges and opportunities and collaborate to maximise the impact of activities and initiatives	Policy & Performance Service	March 2017

APPENDIX 1 – Basic Digital Skills Assessment (Go ON UK)

Basic Digital Skills category	Action		Could you do this?		Have you done this in the last 3 months?	
			I have no idea what you're talking about	I could do this if I was asked to	I couldn't do this if I was asked to	I have done this in the last 3 months
Managing Information	Use a search engine to look for information online					
	Download/save a photo you found online					
	Find a website you have visited before					
Communicating	Send a personal message to another person via email or online messaging service					
	Carefully make comments and share information online					
Transacting	Buy items or services from a website					
	Buy and install apps on a device					
Problem Solving	Solve a problem you have with a device or digital service using online help					
	Verify sources of information you found online					
Creating	Complete online application forms which include personal details					
	Create something new from existing online images, music or video					

APPENDIX 2 - Basic Digital Skills Framework (Go ON UK)



Go ON UK – Basic Digital Skills framework					
	Managing information	Communicating	Transacting	Problem-solving	Creating
Description	Find, manage and store digital information and content	Communicate, interact, collaborate, share and connect with others	Purchase and sell goods and services, organise your finances and use digital government services	Increase independence and confidence by solving problems and finding solutions using digital tools	Create basic digital content in order to engage with digital communities and organisations
 Safety	Assess the accuracy of sources of information; use security tools when browsing; regularly update and run virus-checking software; manage parental controls	Understand how to manage your identities; protect yourself from scams; use the right security settings (including parental controls); protect your customer data	Use secure websites for financial transactions; protect your personal data; respect the privacy of others	Use accurate sources of support; avoid malicious websites, scams and pop-up windows	Be aware of copyright law; protect your personal data; respect the privacy of others
 Actions for individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a search engine to find the information you need • Search for deals on comparison websites • Bookmark useful websites and services • Store data on a device or in the cloud 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep in touch using email, instant messaging, video calls and social media • Post on forums to connect with communities • Communicate with organisations about their products and services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand and use marketplaces to buy and sell • Order your shopping • Book your travel • Manage your bank account • Set up and manage a Universal Credit account 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach yourself simple tasks using tutorials • Use feedback from other internet users to solve common problems • Access support services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a social media post • Create a text document such as a CV • Create and share a photo album • Create and share feedback about products and services
 Actions for organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Store digital information on suppliers and customers • Search for new suppliers to find the best deals • Understand who uses your website • Discover potential growth opportunities for your business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain customer and client relationships • Use social media to promote your business and connect with new customers • Improve your customer service by providing accessible product information and answers to frequently asked questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximise your selling potential through a website • Save time by applying for government business permits and licences • Manage invoices and accounts • Receive payments or donations • Protect yourself from fraud or scams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Save on business travel and be more efficient by using video conferencing • Quickly understand which products and services work based on online feedback • Interpret simple analytics to improve website performance • Get solutions to problems from safe, accurate sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an informational or e-commerce website • Create content (pictures, logos, text) to promote your organisation and reach customers • Use social media and create communities to engage with customers • Create resources to improve employee skill levels

APPENDIX 3 – Digital Inclusion Strategy page plan

Aims		Current picture	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enable all residents to benefit from convenient, affordable access to the internet; ▪ Ensure that people can gain the skills and confidence to access online services; ▪ Improve ICT literacy and skill levels across all age groups; ▪ Reduce demand for local frontline support services and customer services; ▪ Encourage low-income households to use the internet to save and manage money; ▪ Increase use of the City Council website, online forms and customer accounts; ▪ Facilitate roll-out of Universal Credit so that claimants avoid payment delays or fines; ▪ Support the use of social media to help reduce social isolation among vulnerable groups; ▪ Work with local businesses to grow the city's digital economy; 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Stoke-on-Trent has c.95% broadband coverage, but take-up is 63% (7th lowest in England); ○ Council has seen a 94% increase in linked online customer accounts in last 12 months; ○ 15,000 homes have no internet access and 24,000 adults (12.3%) do not use the internet; ○ 30,300 working age adults (18.9%) have no formal qualifications; ○ 40,600 households citywide (38%) have incomes below £16,000 a year; ○ Up to 63% of social housing tenants (estimated c.16,300 citywide) are digitally excluded; ○ 48,000 people will be affected by the Universal Credit roll-out; ○ 59,000 adults reportedly have health conditions which restrict their abilities. ○ An estimated 4,000 people in the city have learning disabilities; 	
Alignment with Stronger Together priorities and relevant strategic objectives			
Support our residents to fulfil their potential	A commercial council, driving efficiency in everything we do	Support vulnerable people in our communities to live their lives well	Support our businesses to thrive, delivering investment in our towns and communities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase the number of people moving into work; ● Transform training and skills provision, supporting business growth and enabling local people to secure good quality work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Deliver optimal efficiency in all our services, adopting new delivery models that deliver maximum value for residents; ● Deliver a customer focused approach to service delivery and transform accessibility of services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Improve quality of life, independence and choice for vulnerable adults ● Support residents to manage their money effectively, improving uptake of benefits for those who are eligible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Foster enterprise and entrepreneurship to support new and emerging local business growth
Digital inclusion outcomes			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ People are equipped with the skills to find and secure work online; ○ More people earn formal ICT qualifications; ○ Increase in connected households contributes to improvement in educational attainment levels; ○ More people benefit from informal ICT learning experiences for specific online tasks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ More people are able to access local services quickly and easily online; ○ The council's channel shift strategy unlocks significant efficiency savings; ○ The responsiveness and quality of council services improves; ○ Enhanced customer data drives continuing service improvements; ○ Residents are able to access the internet and use council computers for free at convenient locations across the city; ○ Council staff are encouraged and supported to improve their digital skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ More vulnerable adults are able to use the internet and social media to overcome social isolation; ○ Low-income households save an average of £516 a year by purchasing online goods and services; ○ Channel shift frees up more Customer Access staff to resolve complex enquiries; ○ Financial inclusion and resilience levels increase; ○ Universal Credit claimants are supported to manage their claims online. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Wi-Fi hotspots support City Centre business growth and help to drive increases in visitor footfall; ○ Increase in ICT skills attracts investment and employment to the city; ○ Local businesses benefit from growth of online commerce; ○ Local businesses are involved in shaping and implementing approaches to making Stoke-on-Trent a digital city.
Measures of success			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - % increase in connected households; - Work Clubs help more jobseekers to gain online skills and find work; - % reduction in people lacking basic digital skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - % increase in council website usage, online forms and customer accounts; - % increase in staff digital skills training; - % reduction in face-to-face and telephone enquiries from the public. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At least 85% of Universal Credit claims are submitted and managed online; - % reduction in financially excluded households. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - % growth in size of digital sector locally; - % increase in businesses with online presence;

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