

ANGUS COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 14 MARCH 2017

SCOTLAND'S DIGITAL PARTICIPATION CHARTER

REPORT BY SHARON FAULKNER, HEAD OF HR, IT & ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

ABSTRACT

This report provides information in relation to Scotland's Digital Participation Charter.

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee agrees that the Council should adopt and sign Scotland's Digital Participation Charter.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS COMMUNITY PLAN/SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT/COPORATE PLAN

This report contributes to the following local outcome(s) contained within the Angus Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement:

COMMUNITIES THAT ARE PROSPEROUS AND FAIR - Angus is a good place to live in, work in and visit

COMMUNITIES THAT ARE LEARNING AND SUPPORTIVE - Our children and young people are confident individuals, effective contributors, successful learners and responsible citizens
Adults maximise their potential through learning opportunities

The alignment with the Council Plan is to:

- maximise the proportion of digital transactions and reduce face to face transactions
- extend our use of digital technologies to improve customer service and reduce costs
- review our workforce to ensure it is led and managed effectively, is the right size and shape, is motivated and has the skills, knowledge and tools needed.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The Digital Participation Charter establishes a framework for organisations across the public, private and third sectors to work together to ensure that everyone has the access, motivation and basic digital skills required to participate fully in our digital world.

3.2 Across Scotland, approximately 800,000 people do not have the basic digital skills needed to use the internet effectively. Research shows that the people suffering online inequality are more likely to be facing other forms of exclusion and inequality eg disability or low income. Supporting more people to go online and develop basic digital skills is crucial to ensure existing inequalities are not increased.

3.3 Digital is also now a primary route for engagement with our citizens and we are investing significantly in making the transition for our services to become digital by design. This will not only help to meet citizens expectations of how they should be able to engage with our services in the internet era but also offers significant opportunities to reduce expenditure while increasing service efficiency and effectiveness.

3.4 The Council clearly has a key role to play in increasing digital participation by ensuring that our employees and volunteers have basic digital skills and by providing learning and support to communities to help them get the skills they need to take advantage of online opportunities.

4. THE CHARTER

4.1 COSLA and SCVO have written to the Council to gauge our interest in signing up to the Charter. Twelve other local authorities are already signatories.

4.2 Signatories to the Charter are asked to commit to:

- Ensuring that all staff and volunteers have an opportunity to learn basic digital skills and that they take advantage of this opportunity;
- Encouraging and supporting staff and volunteers to help other people learn basic digital skills and help other organisations to embrace digital tools;
- Contributing resources and practical support for digital participation initiatives in Scotland wherever possible;
- Channelling efforts through the national Digital Participation Programme so that activity can be co-ordinated for maximum impact and measured consistently;
- Using common language based on digital participation and basic digital skills to make our thinking and actions as clear as possible.

4.3 The council is already active in supporting staff and citizens in learning basic digital skills, for example, through our Agile Angus programme and the work of the Angus Welfare Reform Group. It is therefore envisaged that we will be able to meet these commitments within existing resources.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. Costs for development activities will be met from existing resources.

6. CONSULTATION

The Chief Executive, Strategic Director – Resources, Strategic Director – Communities, Strategic Director – Children and Learning, Head of Corporate Improvement & Finance and Head of Legal & Democratic Services have been consulted on the terms of this report.

NOTE: No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

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