

ANGUS COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 28 AUGUST 2018

OVERVIEW OF STRATEGIC DIGITAL ACTIVITY

ABSTRACT

This report provides an overview of work ongoing across council services to support delivery of digital activity. The strategic digital working group meets monthly to ensure that the cross cutting themes of infrastructure, services and skills to support businesses, citizens and visitors. This work is to support the Council's objective to be a Digital Business by 2020 and the Scottish Government's aim to make Scotland a world-class digital nation by 2020. This is the first information report and covers the period to the end of July 2018.

1. NATIONAL AND REGIONAL DIGITAL PROGRAMMES

1.1 The Scotland Superfast DSSB programme had a target of 95% of premises to have access to fibre by the end of 2017. In early summer, confirmation was received that this target had in fact been exceeded with access for 95.5% of premises across Scotland. This is in comparison to the Open Market Review and State Aid Public Consultation in 2012 which determined that commercial deployment alone would have only achieved 66% coverage.

1.2 The programme will be superseded by the Reaching 100 Programme (R100) which will further extend coverage of Next Generation Access (NGA) Broadband to support Scottish Government's commitment to deliver superfast broadband access to 100% of premises in Scotland. R100 is currently going through procurement with anticipated announcement late 2018/early 2019. During this time the DSSB programme is continuing to deliver access to fibre for premises through a Gainshare programme which, as a result of increased uptake of services, allows an additional £15.6M to be invested across Scotland.

1.3 The below table outlines the continued increase in access to fibre for premises.

		Target premises with access to fibre 31 December 2017	Actual premises with access to fibre target 31 December 2017	Actual premises with access to speeds greater than 24Mbps at 31 December 2017	Actual premises with access to fibre at 31 March 2018	Actual premises with access to speeds greater than 24Mbps to 31 March 2018
Angus	69.7%	93%	92.7%	89.5%	93.5%	90.4%
Scotland	66%	95%	95.5%	92.7%	Info. not available at this time	Info. not available at this time

1.4 As part of the ongoing work across the Tay Cities Region a verbal Expression of Interest has been submitted to Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) for their Local Full Fibre Network (LFFN) Programme. The four Tay Cities councils are working in collaboration to prepare a bid for submission to Wave 3. The LFFN Programme aims to stimulate investment in full fibre networks by harnessing public sector connectivity and aggregate private sector demand to stimulate the market to build new and extend existing fibre networks. The programme looks to support different deployment delivery methods including;

- Public Sector Anchor Tenancy
- Gigabit Voucher Scheme

- Public Sector Building Upgrade
- Public Sector Asset Reuse

1.5 An Expression of Interest was submitted to the WIFI4EU fund however the portal had received significant demand resulting in the Innovation & Networks Executive Agency (INEA) postponing the first call for applications. A new call for applications will be launched in Autumn 2018.

2. DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

2.1 As well as supporting the national programme for delivery of fibre we are working on a number of additional infrastructure projects to support connectivity. We are utilising radio links/ fibre links and wifi to connect premises. This also includes additional investment in masts and equipment to maximise connection. We are also testing out opportunities to use newer technology such as Television White Space (TVWS) to connect our most geographically challenging areas.

2.2 Connecting Schools: over the next 12 months approximately £750,000 will be invested to provide dedicated internet connection to each secondary school and their cluster primary schools. This is in the form of fibre and radio links. In addition, internal wireless access points in schools will be upgraded and increased, where required, to ensure each building has sufficient coverage and capacity to provide a platform for the use of web-enabled devices and associated services. The success of this project will directly support the aims of the [Children and Learning Digital Strategy](#) to ensure our learning centres are connected and equipped to help Angus citizens be suitably skilled in the use of digital tools. There are four key workstreams to deliver this:

1. Craigowl Hill

This part sees a mast built on Craigowl Hill. Construction of the mast itself and associated works have been delayed slightly, but are now well underway with an expected completion in mid-August. This will also provide radio broadband links to our primary schools at Mattocks and Murroes. We will also be connecting Tealing Primary School via Craigowl and are investigating connecting Birkhill/Liff/Auchterhouse/Airlie/Newtyle and Tannadice Primary Schools through this mast.

Timescale:

- July – ground works and construction of radio mast
- August - installation of radio kit on mast
- Mid-August - go live

2. Panmure Testimonial

This will involve the erection of radio equipment on the Panmure Testimonial monument, linking with Carnoustie High School, to provide radio broadband to our primary schools at Monikie and Newbigging. Planning permission has been obtained. The contractor has been engaged and SSE sub-contracted to supply power. Heads of Terms are being agreed with the landowner and a contractor engaged to undertake necessary tree works. This part of the project will now move to finalising legal agreement between the council and the landowner.

3. Fibre Links/wifi Upgrades

This is the largest work package of the project and is progressing on schedule.

Recent milestones include:

- completion of procurement process
- survey of schools' current wifi provision
- completion of back office infrastructure design and configuration
- installation of fibre connections to six of seven sites
- initial testing and completion of proof of concept
- install of additional cabling and new wireless access points across Brechin schools cluster. Schools completed: Andover PS; Maisondieu PS; Tannadice PS; Aberlemno PS.

Work is underway to replace the access points in Brechin Community Campus. Edzell and Stracathro schools have had their wifi hardware installed in the schools in anticipation of a radio link being completed over the coming months.

Next steps include:

- July - complete install of new access points at Brechin Community Campus
- July - complete final configuration work
- July to August - internal cabling work in all schools
- September to April - rolling programme of installations and commissioning:
 - Monifieth cluster
 - Montrose cluster
 - Arbroath north cluster
 - Arbroath west cluster
 - Kirriemuir cluster
 - Carnoustie cluster
 - remaining rural schools
 - Forfar cluster

4. Bulg Hill – Edzell and Stracathro Primary Schools

We are proposing to install a mast and radio equipment on Bulg Hill to provide a service to Edzell and Stracathro primary schools. The kit will be powered by wind/solar panels to reduce the environmental impact. This part of the project is still at the planning stage. The first key task is to have an initial survey undertaken to ensure line of sight to the required locations has been completed.

- 2.3 Connecting Businesses: Kirkton Industrial Estate, Arbroath and Orchardbank Business Park, Forfar can now provide radiolink broadband to businesses located with line of sight. Ongoing engagement will continue over the coming months to increase awareness of the service available. We have been testing the use of TVWS with some of our hard to reach schools with varied success. We are still reviewing the ability to utilise this technology to support rural businesses. The previously noted Gigabit Voucher Scheme is available to businesses and can also support connection for residents as an additional benefit. We are currently mapping the areas where this could support fibre roll-out to areas with slow broadband speeds.
- 2.4 Connecting Citizens: Farrpoint have been engaged to support the above work necessary to ascertain appropriate technological solutions for the area. This will include engagement with council services, local digital providers in the area and other relevant partners to allow us to deliver connection to our citizens.

3. **DIGITAL SERVICES**

- 3.1 As a council we are working towards a vision that digital services are so good that people prefer to use them to alternative channels. New or changed services will be digital by design, co-designed with a range of customer groups and will provide customers with convenient access to services.
- 3.2 Services can be measured to ensure that they are as efficient as possible in meeting the needs of the customer whilst delivering the service that is required. This will also allow us to consider digital opportunities in-conjunction with future capability Internet of Things (IoT) and Big Data.
- 3.3 We are currently working on a number of projects including:
- Webforms
 - Introduction of webchat
 - Deliver of reporting against assets e.g. streetlights, roads.
 - Garden waste process improvement and Paperless billing

- 3.5 We have a large number of webforms live (currently 41) which enable customers to access services 24/7 and we have been listening to customer feedback to improve their usability. For example there are now guidance pages at the start of all our online forms, we have improved online processes such as Applying for a Special Uplift and are improving the online form for Apply for Free School Transport as part of our continual content review, based on user feedback and web analytics
- 3.6 Angus Council takes part in the Better Connected review which is a survey of local government websites. Angus Council Website gained 2 stars (out a possible 3) in the Better Connected review for accessibility. We have met with the disability forum to establish an action plan for improvement and work with the members of the group to assist with design and testing of the website
- 3.7 As part of our Process Redesign and Process Automation (PRPA) project we have been redesigning processes to take advantage of new technologies and to completely automate processes such that no staff involvement is required. This has included customer facing processes such as Revenues and Benefits Change of address, which also reduces back office staff involvement, and internal processes such as those related to engaging new employees which was a labour intensive manual task.
- 3.8 An example of both Process Redesign and Process Automation, as well as a drive for improvement based on customer feedback is our Garden Waste process. This year, significant redesign was performed to remove manual issuing of the stickers and labels to customers. This process is now fully automated from the customer requesting the service, to the sticker being sent to their chosen address without input from council staff. Based on customer feedback, we have also moved to a rolling year from date of subscription.
- 3.9 Angus council has a large number of customers, currently over 30,000 signed up to the on line MyAccount which provides a single sign-in for over 40 online council services, auto-completion of customer contact details on online forms and a way to manage all of your requests, subscriptions or payments through the MyAngus page. We have recently added functionality so that customers can view their own council tax details online and this is being tested at the moment ready for release based on customer feedback.
- 3.10 Digital services is also important for businesses in the area and can have significant benefits for those in the tourism sector e.g. online booking, social media and marketing. In order for this to be maximised it is important that work continues to improve and increase the physical infrastructure.
- 3.11 The New Telephony System will start to be rolled out from mid August onwards, the first two sections being transitioned will be Finance (Angus House) and Revs & Bens (Bruce House). A provisional schedule is being created to transition the rest of the Council (including Schools) by the end of the calendar year. As part of this process every member of staff will be issued with a new extension number and external numbers will change. This will provide an opportunity to publish the ACCESSLine number to service users and deliver the One Council One Number approach. Many services have already been contacted about the transition process into the Contact Centre and for those that haven't they will be contacted soon.
- 3.12 The Housing Service is moving its customer portal on line from 5th November 2018 for our 7600 tenants, linked to 'My Account', starting with service requests, repairs reporting and estate management monitoring. This will be followed by self-service housing applications and choice based lettings, as well as rent accounting and webchat functionality in February 2019.

4. DIGITAL SKILLS

- 4.1 As technology and services transform we are mindful of the need to ensure that everyone is supported with access to the right skills. This will include training for employees but also require us to work with partners to improve digital participation and support those who are not digitally engaged.

- 4.2 Work with our communities across Angus in developing digital skills continues to be successful with an increase in the number of participants attending our Digital Skills Academy, offering free IT and employability training for job seekers. Those attending also receive an accredited qualification. Our Communities team in conjunction with Angus Alive have also developed an exciting digital volunteers programme aptly named 'Digi-Ken'. This will formally launch in early August and provides training and support to volunteers to help others across Angus develop the necessary skills building capacity within our communities. This complements more formal provision through one-to-one provision or small group settings in cafes, libraries etc; providing practical assistance for people to deal with immediate tasks and learning opportunities that enable people to develop their digital skills without reliance on additional support.
- 4.3 To support this, in our schools we are currently undertaking work across the themes of Digital Skills (staff and young people), Learning & Teaching, Leadership; and Infrastructure & Hardware.
- 4.4 Our Organisation Development team are working across the council to support access to e-learning for all employees with a current focus on employees who traditionally do not require frequent access to technology. This has included delivery of on-site training to employees by providing access to hardware to complete mandatory online training and in some instances increased support for one to one IT skills.

5. DIGITAL COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT

- 6.1 Communication of progress is vital. In recent months we have undertaken a number of opportunities to share information. These have included:
- Lunchtime learning sessions with staff to update them on digital mapping of services and an update on the progress of the national fibre roll-out via DSSB.
 - Shared learning at the Shaping the Future event to provide staff with information on digital transformation, connectivity, services and skills.
 - Updates to the webpages. Information updates can be found at www.angus.gov.uk/digitalangus
 - Featured case studies and fibre cabinet launches with Digital Scotland.
- 6.2 Angus Council is committed to using social media to communicate directly with our customers. Social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, give us the opportunity to create and participate in online communities or networks to encourage and facilitate engagement and discussion.

Unlike our website, which relies on people coming to us for information, social media allows people to opt to receive information from us, respond to it and share it with others using online and mobile channels and devices. It can therefore be a particularly successful communication tool during incidents, such as periods of severe winter weather.

Our approach to social media, which includes photographs, animations and images has seen a marked increase in residents engaging with the council on Facebook and Twitter. During the recent poor weather, also known as the Beast from the East, the council's social media pages noted an average of 220,000 unique visits per day. The figure has remained steady over the last two months and we are now actively engaging with an average of 23% of our citizens on these platforms.

REPORT AUTHOR: Kirsty Macari, Senior Sector Officer – Economic Development
 EMAIL DETAILS: ECDEV@angus.gov.uk