

Name of meeting: ECONOMY AND NEIGHBOURHOODS SCRUTINY PANEL

Date: 5th MARCH 2020

Title of report: KIRKLEES DIGITAL UPDATE

Purpose of report:

- To update the Panel on progress following the Scrutiny meeting in February 2019.

Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	Yes
Key Decision - Is it in the <u>Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports)</u> ?	Yes
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	Yes
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name	Karl Battersby
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?	n/a
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?	n/a
Cabinet member portfolio	Cllr Peter McBride Cllr Graham Turner

Electoral wards affected: All

Ward councillors consulted: Cllr Peter McBride and Cllr Graham Turner have been consulted

Public or private: Public

Has GDPR been considered? Yes, n/a

1. Background and Context

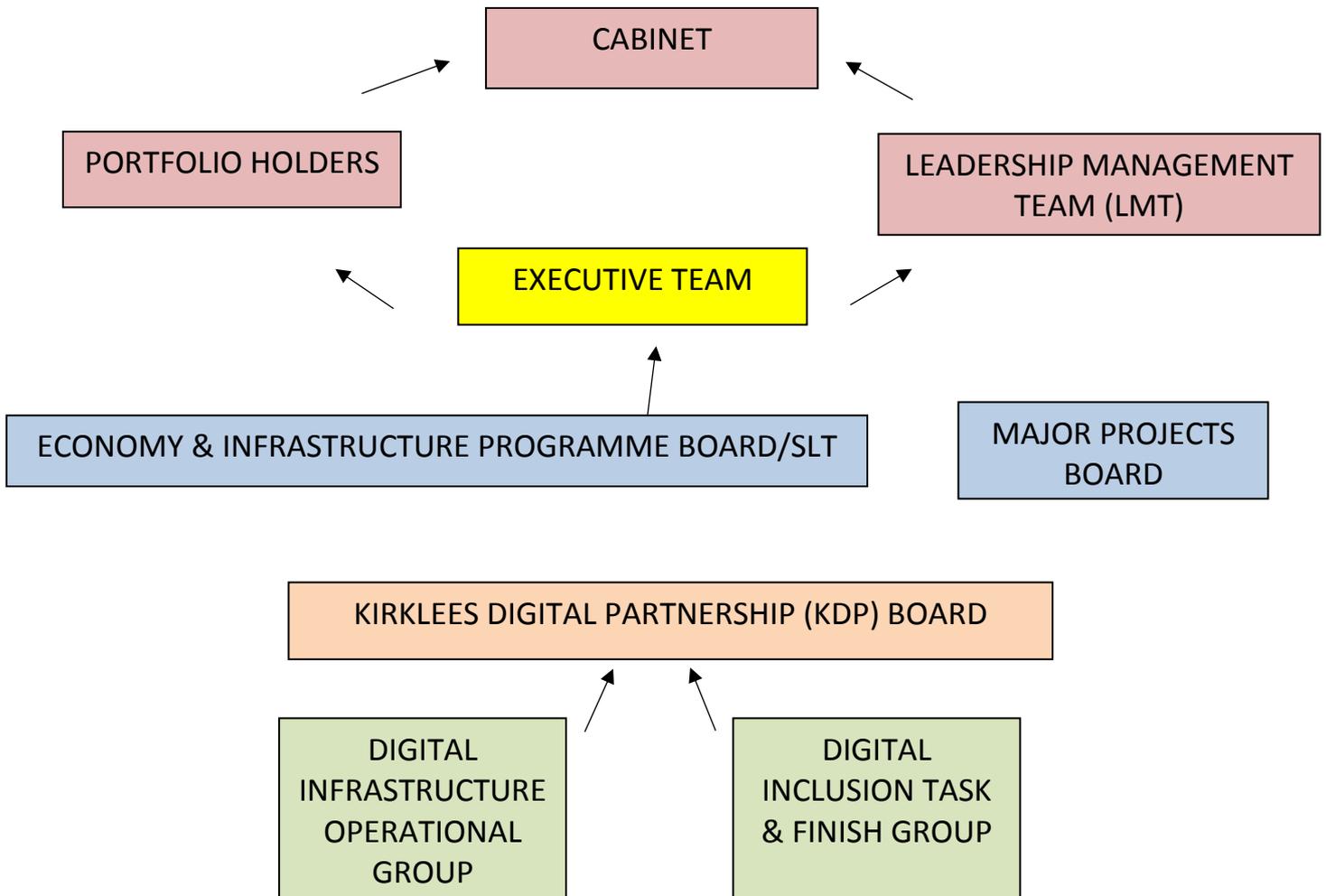
With emerging technological advancements requiring a base layer of fibre infrastructure and digital exclusion hampering economic growth, it's vital to increase our connectivity to keep pace. The backbone of the digital economy is connectivity. Critical to Kirklees' ability to capitalise on the opportunities offered through digital transformation is universal coverage of high quality, fast and reliable digital broadband networks.

Building on the foundations of the Digital Plan presented to Scrutiny on 14th February 2019, a Digital Work Programme has now been formulated in order to establish work streams, governance and relationships that are consistent with the Council's corporate plan and necessary in order to deliver the emerging Technology Strategy and its ambitions.

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the digital programme, the chain of governance that has been established, what we are trying to achieve and the streams of work that are being undertaken.

2. Governance:

2.1



2.2 Kirklees Digital Partnership Board (KDPB)

A digital partnership board has been established in order to:

- Approve, review and drive delivery of the Technology Strategy and Digital Work Programme
- Monitor and review the delivery of agreed outcomes and the impact of the Technology Strategy and Digital Work Programme in line with the Kirklees Economic Strategy
- Maximise inward investment for Kirklees through regional engagement, identifying and promoting opportunities for obtaining devolved funding and bidding for other funding
- Share intelligence and data
- Identify investment opportunities
- Identify challenges, areas of development, mitigating risks
- Support collaborative working
- Ensure quality, effective and efficient digital delivery

2.3 Digital Infrastructure Operational Group (DIOG)

To support and consider matters at a more operational level, a Digital Infrastructure Operational Group has been established. This group comprises of both Council officers and private sector infrastructure suppliers. It is utilised to facilitate the roll out of digital infrastructure across Kirklees, in particular full fibre and 5G. Its main objectives are to:

- Monitor and review infrastructure rollout programmes across the District
- Share programme and current progress
- Maximise supplier rollout to premises; including harder-to-reach areas
- Support collaborative working and barrier busting
- Share intelligence and data (internal / external)
- Identify and resolve challenges (all parties)
- Identify issues for escalation, highlighting risks to the KDP Board

2.4 Digital Inclusion Task & Finish Group

This group has been created to support the Kirklees Digital Partnership Strategic agenda. Kirklees' aspiration is to achieve 100% Digital Kirklees, facilitating and supporting investment from broadband suppliers to stimulate competition and support economic growth.

The purpose of the Digital Inclusion Task & Finish Group is to:

- Develop a strategic approach, linking to the Kirklees Economic Strategy (KES) and Employment and Skills Plan
- Develop a clear position as to how broadband suppliers can best support the Kirklees approach
- Maximise and target existing funding for digital skills
- Aspire to 100% of Kirklees residents having the minimum Basic Digital Skills
- Establish a co-ordinated approach to tackle digital exclusion

3. Technology Strategy

A Technology Strategy has been developed by I.T which is shaped by a high level set of outcomes and ambitions, these represent a combination of both the Council's digital focus as an organisation, plus the wider digital agenda throughout Kirklees as a district.

"We will work together to deliver innovative, effective and sustainable technology services that are designed around our diverse places and the needs of our people, partners and businesses."

3.1 Ambitions

Getting the basics right

We will provide the right tools and technology for people to efficiently and effectively do their job requiring little intervention from the IT service, ensuring their needs are at the heart of the service we deliver.

Enabling resilient and available infrastructure

We will develop an internet first approach for partnership working built on highly-available, ultrafast connectivity with resilient services in key locations across Kirklees.

Commissioning applications fit for the future

We will collaborate with services in their redesign and transformation, rationalising the applications and enabling the efficiency of business processes designed around the needs of people.

Using data intelligently and securely

We will ensure the accurate, secure and timely collection of data to derive intelligence and value for the council and partners and empower people to make informed decisions.

Developing inclusive technology and skills

Working with partners across sectors, we will invest in new technology and skills to develop a digitally capable workforce and improve skills and opportunities for residents to support them in the internet age.

Connecting people, business and technology

We will facilitate significant infrastructure investment across Kirklees to support business growth, inclusive connectivity for people and wide-ranging capabilities via internet connected devices.

Delivering class leading internet services

We will create and deliver class leading services designed around the people that use them, in ways that meet the needs and expectations of the internet age.

4. Digital Infrastructure

In May 2018 the Government pledged for 15m Fibre-To-The-Premises (FTTP) connections by 2025 (60% UK coverage) and full coverage by 2033. In January 2020 The Rt Hon Baroness Nicky Morgan gave a speech confirming the aim for nationwide deployment of full fibre and gigabit-capable broadband by 2025, and that the government will pass legislation to make rollout quicker and easier. The ongoing working partnership with operators is essential in the effective and timely delivery of infrastructure across the district.

Negotiation of wayleaves for access to land, negotiation regarding street works and accessing existing infrastructure are commonly cited barriers to progression in infrastructure deployment. Kirklees Council are committed to barrier busting in order to expedite the roll out of full fibre infrastructure and for the realisation of benefits that this will bring for the district.

Kirklees currently engage with a number of suppliers with a view to coordinating and facilitating digital infrastructure deployment, acting as a point of contact and assisting them in the delivery of better connectivity for the local area. Regular engagement allows for streamlining of the process, obtaining of permissions and decreases the likelihood of inefficiency and delays. Kirklees Highway's department endeavour to meet weekly with infrastructure suppliers in order to keep abreast of the ongoing build programmes. Monthly operational groups are then utilised to discuss the wider agenda and to tackle barriers where necessary.

4.1 Infrastructure Suppliers

- City Fibre

City Fibre have a £30m commercial Fibre to the Home investment across 9 Ward areas (Newsome, Colne Valley, Lindley, Ashbrow, Almondbury, Golcar, Dalton, Crosland Moor and Netherton and Greenhead) within Kirklees. This will include circa 60,000 premises. Their current build programme spans 2019 - 2021.

They currently have 5,000 homes that are full fibre to the premises (FTTP) capable with 8,000 to follow shortly. They have announced further investment in Dewsbury and Batley.

- Fibre Nation

FibreNation has been working in the Kirklees area since July 2019. The full fibre infrastructure will give internet suppliers access to a gigabit-capable network, allowing them to provide customers in Dewsbury, Batley and Heckmondwike, with access to speeds capable of downloading an HD film in just seven seconds.

The first properties went live in February 2020 and it is anticipated that work will be completed by 2022.

- Openreach

Flockton and Kirkburton have been announced as areas that will be targeted by Openreach and their full fibre build programme. These areas have been selected as part of their “rural Britain” scheme in which they are aiming to deliver network upgrades in communities that are harder to reach and less densely populated.

- Virgin Media

Current schemes are planned for Chickenley and Birstall from approx. March 2020 to a similar time in 2021. The build programme aims to reach approx 10,000 homes.

5. Development of the Digital Work Programme

5.1 Consultancy support

Kirklees Council have been working with Regional Network Solution (RNETSO) consultants. They have experience in evaluating public sector digital strategies, the delivery of broadband in rural areas and expertise in the service layer which looks at social and digital inclusion, commercialisation, education and smart energy.

RNETSO supported two internal engagement sessions for service directors and senior management that were held in September and November 2019. The aim of these sessions were to:

- Discuss how digital infrastructure will enable future innovation
- Stimulate thoughts on how service areas can collaborate to maximise the benefits and minimise the risks for our residents and businesses
- Identify barriers to facilitating digital investment, mitigate the risks and understand how we can maximise the opportunities

Work is ongoing with RNETSO with a full day workshop being arranged with Officers in spring 2020.

5.2 Digital Project Work

To continue the stimulation of conversation surrounding Digital, the Digital Team are undertaking service specific sessions to further explore how the implications of this rapid investment and the Kirklees Technology Strategy could play into agendas, strategies and forward plans.

Examples of the areas of work that are being explored are:

- Digitally connected town centres: Opportunity to explore and promote the “Smart City” concept and link up with regeneration works/ Huddersfield and Dewsbury Blueprints
- Removing barriers to digital infrastructure investment (limits of construction) and planning for infrastructure growth by determining sites for data centres, masts and aerial infrastructure in advance of demand
- Ensuring that digital infrastructure expansion and provision is at the heart of planning applications and transport schemes
- Commercialisation of Council assets
- Identifying and addressing the final 20% of properties that aren’t expected to be covered under private sector infrastructure build programmes
- Research into the benefits and emerging technologies associated with 5G
- Capitalising upon the Trans-Pennine Project (£12.1m), utilising points of presence built at Huddersfield and Dewsbury with a further point planned in Slaithwaite
- Continue to engage with Building Digital UK (part of the Department for Culture, Digital, Media & Sport) to ensure Kirklees Council remains aligned with central government direction/funding.

5.3 Demand Stimulation (Gigabit Rural and Digital Enterprise Vouchers Schemes & Events)

Promoting the use and maximising the benefits of our excellent digital infrastructure is key to ensuring we create innovative and productive business who are forward looking. Over the next twelve months the Business Team will be;

- Working with the Digital Project team to map business 'not spots' and use this information to target the promotion of our national and regional digital vouchers schemes.
- Undertaking ongoing promotion and signposting to national and regional voucher schemes via our SME Growth Managers, Employment and Skills Team, Business Hub Kirklees and our social media account.
- Working with partners to deliver business facing events aimed at raising awareness of the benefits of increasing digital capacity and capability which strengthens business growth.

5.4 Digital Skills

Increasing digital skills is a catalyst for driving productivity in firms, reducing inequality and enabling every person to realise their potential. Over the next twelve months the Digital Inclusion Group will:

- Work with partners and key stakeholders to develop a co-ordinated and strategic approach to tackling digital exclusion, linking to the Kirklees Economic Strategy (KES), Learning and Skills Plan and Technology Strategy
- Deliver a consistent digital inclusion message to key stakeholders across the district, ensuring that officers across the Council are aware and support this messaging
- Develop a clear position as to how broadband suppliers can best support the Kirklees approach
- Influence and maximise existing funding for digital skills

6. **Implications for the Council**

6.1 Working with People

Kirklees Council are working alongside digital infrastructure suppliers in supporting and enabling the rollout of full fibre build programmes across the district. We have established good working relationships with existing suppliers and actively engage with and support private sector interest within the district

6.2 Working with Partners

In a regional capacity, Kirklees regularly engage with the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) and York Council on digital infrastructure projects and in particular have worked as a collective to deliver Phase 1 & 2 of Superfast West Yorkshire. The remaining parts of phase 2 are now being delivered as fibre to the premise. The award of the DEFRA funded phase 3 is currently pending.

In terms of wider digital outcomes Kirklees work with the combined health bodies including the two trusts; NHS CCGS and LOCALA. We also contribute to regional outcomes through work with West Yorkshire and Harrogate ICS.

In terms of our Education partners, Kirklees Council have consulted with Huddersfield University and Kirklees College as part of the ongoing development of the Technology Strategy. The authority also provides managed internet services to 130 schools in Kirklees that all connect into the JANET University network. We continue to work proactively in providing digital advice and support to any school in Kirklees who approach us.

6.3 Place Based Working

We expect that digital providers will cover a large proportion of the district through their targeted build programmes. Their business models generally aim to connect as many properties as possible within geographical locations however there is a limitation on this insofar that it needs to be commercially viable for the private sector.

As an authority we intend to focus work on interventions to address those areas/ locations that are not reached by the private sectors and the “digital not spots”.

6.4 Climate Change and Air Quality

The majority of the council's digital work programme is considered to have little to no impact on climate change or air quality.

The infrastructure build programmes that are being carried out by suppliers are likely to have a small detrimental impact on carbon and air quality insofar as the presence of physical works being carried out and therefore the use of vehicles and machinery that is required to facilitate this.

Total mitigation of any build works are outside the authority's control. Digital providers, as with other utility companies (e.g. gas, water, electricity, and telecoms) have a statutory right to carry out work in the public highway in order to install or maintain apparatus in the highway. Works by utility companies are regulated by the New Roads and Street Works Act [1991]. For planned works, utility companies are required to give advance notice to the council, as the highway authority, so that the council can co-ordinate the works.

Kirklees Council is working closely with digital providers in order to minimise any delay and disruption to our networks arising from their programmes, including facilitating joint working between digital providers and weekly/fortnightly build meetings. Forward planning and coordination with providers allows for appropriate temporary measures to reduce the risk of congestion and disruption and therein reduces the impact on carbon and air quality.

The long term potential benefits, when fully exploited, of full fibre infrastructure and 5G will have a significant positive impact in terms of de-carbonisation and air quality. For example from a sustainability perspective, sensors can be deployed to monitor air pollution in dense traffic areas. If those sensors were linked directly to road traffic systems they would have the potential to alter the flow of traffic dependant on the need. The unison of technologies then has the potential to tackle problems such as pollution. The idea of technologies working together is conceptualised as “Smart Cities”.

“Smart Cities” as a concept is heavily reliant on a network that is capable of handling vast amounts of data. Full fibre infrastructure is therefore pivotal in opening up the art of the possible in terms of what technology can be utilised for in the future. .

6.5 Improving outcomes for children

Schools and colleges are now able to access faster and more reliable broadband. The pupils in lessons will benefit through the ability to access the newest technologies as they are developed.

The education sector is already being transformed through digital technology. Full fibre will accelerate new more flexible ways for students to learn remotely and to use interactive e-learning tools.

Whilst the pace of change in technology is so great that we cannot currently predict with any great certainty what new technologies are going to be available, having full fibre infrastructure in place future proofs Kirklees for any potential advancements that could benefit children's education, health and social mobility.

6.6 Other (eg Legal/Financial or Human Resources)

The council have taken a number of opportunities in order to increase resourcing and therein improve the governance for the Digital Work Programme.

A new Digital team have been established within the Major Projects service that comprise of x1 Project Manager and x2 Project Officers. The digital team work closely alongside IT services and Business and Skills in driving the work programme forward and managing the day to day delivery of its objectives.

At present the work programme has been almost entirely absorbed by the operational costs of individual services. To this end a resource request is intended to be presented to the respective senior leadership teams. This will be in relation to Highways, Asset Management, Business and Skills and Legal. Enhanced resources are crucial in moving the programme forward.

7. **Consultees and their opinions**

Due to the infancy of the Digital Work Programme, the roll out of digital infrastructure and its benefits, the consultees have been restricted to stakeholders so far.

We are involved with providers such as City Fibre and Fibre Nation and their promotion and awareness raising to businesses and local residents in Kirklees.

Next steps and timelines

- Technology Strategy to be finalised and circulated
- Engagement sessions between individual services and the Digital and IT teams (supported by RENTSO) to explore how the Technology Strategy and its ambitions can be integrated within all individual forward plans and objectives
- Continuance of work with digital providers to keep abreast of their build programmes and barrier busting
- Identification of digital funding streams
- Exploration of new and innovative technologies with “Smart City” focus in mind and how that can be introduced to the district
- Continue to engage with Building Digital UK (Dept for Culture, Digital, Media & Sport) to ensure Kirklees Council remains aligned with central government direction/funding.

8. **Officer recommendations and reasons**

Officers recommend that the contents of this report and presentation are noted, along with any observations made by third party interest, and that the next steps as proposed by officers are endorsed.

The next steps will allow the Council to continue to develop the digital work programme in accordance with the emerging principles of the Technology Strategy and in line with the Kirklees Corporate Plan.

9. **Cabinet Portfolio Holder’s recommendations**

The portfolio holder(s), Councillor Peter McBride and Councillor Graham Turner have been consulted on this report and endorse the contents.

10. **Contact officer**

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11. Background Papers and History of Decisions

Kirklees Digital Plan, Economy and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Panel 14 February 2019
(Attached as an appendix)

12. Service Director responsible

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