Sheffield City Council

Lead Officer of Report: Mark Gannon, Director of BCIS

Tel: 34529

Report of:	*Eugene Walker, Executive Director Resources*
Report to:	*Cabinet*
Date of Decision:	*20th September 2017*
Subject:	*Digital Inclusion Strategy*

Is this a Key Decision? If Yes, reason Key Decision:-		Yes	☐	No	x
- Expenditure and/or savings over £500,000			☐		
- Affects 2 or more Wards			☐		

Which Cabinet Member Portfolio does this relate to?
Neighbourhoods and Community Safety

Which Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee does this relate to?
Safer and Stronger Communities

Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken?		Yes	☐	No	x

If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given?   *(Insert reference number)*

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?		Yes	☐	No	x

If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-

*"The (**report/appendix**) is not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph (**insert relevant paragraph number**) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)."*

Purpose of Report:

To present a Digital Inclusion Strategy for the Council and an accompanying action plan, setting out how the Council and its partners intend to tackle digital exclusion in the city.

Recommendations:

That Cabinet:
1. That Cabinet approves the Digital Inclusion Strategy shown at Appendix 1 as a statement of the Council's strategic approach to digital inclusion.
2. That Cabinet approves the accompanying Digital Inclusion Action Plan.
3. That Cabinet delegates authority to the Director of BCIS to make amendments to the action plan on the basis of further development and consultation with stakeholders.
4. That Cabinet notes that the implementation of any of the proposed actions may be subject to further decision making in accordance with the Leader's Scheme of Delegation.

Background Papers:

UK Government Digital Strategy 2017
EU's Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI)
RSA Inclusive Growth Commission – Final Report
Sheffield City Region – 'A Better Future Together'
Good Things Foundation – 'State of the Digital Nation'
Go ON UK Digital Heat map
SCC Financial Inclusion Strategy

Lead Officer to complete:-		
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.	Finance: Pauline Wood
		Legal: Deborah Eaton
		Equalities: Adele Robinson
	Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.	
2	**EMT member who approved submission:**	*Eugene Walker*
3	**Cabinet Member consulted:**	*Cllr Olivia Blake*
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Decision Maker by the EMT member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.	
	Lead Officer Name: *Mark Gannon*	**Job Title:** Director BCIS
	Date: *September 2017*	

1. PROPOSAL

What is Digital Inclusion?

1.1 We live in an increasingly digital world where many people are already benefitting from the internet, digital TV and mobile communications. Cities are some of the most digitally advanced, digitally driven places on the planet. This creates a huge range of business and social opportunities with rapidly changing products, services and ideas. It also offers further opportunities to learn, save money and keep in touch. When individuals are digitally active it can improve the accessibility of services and support to people who find themselves physically and emotionally isolated, whilst also providing employment opportunities both in digital careers and other industries that make use of digital technology.

1.2 However, there are sections of Sheffield's communities that do not benefit from the internet or have the skills to do so and as such can be deemed as digitally excluded. Digital inclusion therefore includes both access to information technology (including the internet) and the ability to use it, and is experienced by different people in different ways.

1.3 Digital inclusion remains a challenge for some people in Sheffield and it can have detrimental impact on residents. The associated problems can be significant for citizens and families and may be symptomatic of wider social isolation, economic or health concerns for example. Therefore, becoming a more digitally inclusive city will contribute to reducing inequality and enabling all residents to thrive.

1.4
However this strategy does not purely focus on the digital skills of residents. It also recognises that we a have significant challenge in relation to overcoming a lack of basic digital skills within the councils workforce and therefore there is an urgent need to develop the digital skills of both our own staff and leaders.

1.5 The Government's Digital Inclusion Strategy has identified four main barriers that people face to going online, with an additional fifth barrier identified locally. These barriers form the basis of the accompanying action plan:

- **Skills** – people may be able to access social media such as Facebook or Skype, however this masks the fact that many lack basic ICT skills, including how to operate MS Office or use email for example. Lacking digital skills makes it harder for a person to access employment and training opportunities and compounds the levels of financial and other exclusion that they face.

- **Motivation** – many people who are not online may not necessarily see the benefits for them and having an internet connection is of little value unless you have a reason to want to use it.

- **Access** – the cost of kit and connectivity i.e. broadband packages, stops people from getting online. Finding affordable and flexible methods of connectivity is very difficult and currently, for many excluded groups, the additional cost of line rental is a barrier.

- **Trust** – Going online can be a daunting experience for many as they open themselves up to new risks. To keep people online it's vital that they can rely on trusted sources to get the help, support and assurance they need to build their confidence in a digital world. The internet will never be 100% secure and staying safe online needs to be a basic digital literacy skill.

- **Cultural Barriers** – Sheffield is a culturally diverse city and with this diversity comes additional challenges to digital inclusion. This may for example mean that some people and communities do not understand the benefits available due to language issues or have not had experience of/access to the internet as part of their everyday lives.

1.6   In the context of the strategy, it is useful to consider Digital Inclusion as spectrum, with 'basic' digital skill such as the ability to use and enjoy email, social media and online banking for example at one end and the highly skilled aspects that would feed into the city region's Creative and Digital Industries (CDI) sector at the other. The focus within the strategy is on what the council and its partners should do at the 'lower' end of the spectrum and that the shortage in high end skills will be addressed by the work of Creative Sheffield and the prevailing Digital Coalition.

2.   HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE?

2.1   SCC is committed to maximising the economic and social wellbeing of the city, driving economic growth, tackling inequalities and supporting thriving neighbourhoods and communities. Ensuring that we fully utilise the potential of digital inclusion in its widest sense is critical to this. Digital inclusion has been shown to have a number of social and economic benefits and these are explored in greater detail in the strategy and appended below.

In addition digital inclusion is intrinsically linked to and has a key role to play in delivering the priorities and ambitions contained with the council's Corporate Plan:

- • Strong Economy
- • Tackling Inequalities
- • An in-touch organisation
- • Better health and wellbeing
- • Thriving neighbourhoods and communities

The principles behind digital inclusion also mean that by its very nature it is linked to a number of wider council policies and strategies e.g. the Financial Inclusion Strategy, Tackling Poverty and the Fairness Commission recommendations. It will also go hand in hand with the development of our Customer Experience Programme so that we are equipping our residents with the digital skills that will help them make the most of our digital services offer.

3.   HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?

3.1   Consultation for the development of the strategy has focussed on engaging

those council employees who are currently working in or have experience of working within the digital inclusion agenda. In addition there a number of opportunities to work with partners and business across the city to shape the approach further and to deliver the action plan. Conversations are either planned or will be held with interested parties to meet the council's and city's ambitions for digital inclusion.

4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

4.1 <u>Equality of Opportunity Implications</u>

4.2 In carrying out its functions, the Council needs to be mindful of the Public Sector Equality Duty ('PSED') contained within Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. This is the statutory duty to have due regard to the need to:
   a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited under the Act;
   b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
   c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant characteristic and persons who do not share it.

4.3 This includes having due regard to the need to:
   a) Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
   b) Take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
   c) Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low;
   d) Tackle prejudice; and
   e) Promote understanding

4.4 The relevant protect characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

4.5 The actions set out within this report are compliant with and will further the Council's adherence to the PSED.

4.6 Overall it is anticipated that the Digital Inclusion Strategy will have a significant and overall positive, impact on communities across Sheffield, including those that share Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 as set out above. An EIA will be conducted to confirm this belief.

4.7 <u>Financial and Commercial Implications</u>

4.8 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report as it presents a strategic approach to digital inclusion focussed on improving co-ordination of existing effort across the city. However, any new initiative within the strategy will be costed and the financial implications will be brought for approval as appropriate.

4.9   Legal Implications

4.10   The Localism Act 2011 provides local authorities with a "general power of competence" which enables them to do anything that an individual can do as long as the proposed action is not specifically prohibited. This power is broad enough to encompass the production of the Strategy.

4.11   The implementation of any of the actions set out in this report may be subject to further decision making in accordance with the Leader's Scheme of Delegation, and the legal implications will be considered fully at that time.

5.   **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

5.1   The 'As-is' option: this would see no new strategy for digital inclusion adopted for the city. Much of the valuable work that currently takes place across the city to support people to access and benefit from using the internet would continue. However, the new opportunities for working together with Google Garage, Good Things Foundation, and businesses for example, to raise awareness of digital inclusion, provide digital skills training and target support more effectively would be lost. As would the potential to embed digital inclusion within the council's approach to tackling wider social injustice such as fairness and financial inclusion.

5.2   Indeed the council's Financial Social Inclusion Strategy makes specific mention of digital inclusion as an important enabler in addressing poverty and financial inclusion "*local intelligence also points to digital exclusion being closely linked to financial exclusion*".

5.3   No alternative options were therefore considered, however the council's approach to digital inclusion should be seen in the context of the overarching digital agenda and the council's ambitions and priorities in this area.

6.   **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

6.1   The introduction of a Digital Inclusion Strategy and action plan will provide the city with an opportunity to build on the excellent work that is already being done to improve the digital inclusiveness of its residents by organisations such as 'The Good Things Foundation', 'Heeley Development Trust', 'Barclays Digital Eagles' and in house activity led by council teams and Portfolios such as Lifelong Learning, Libraries and Children's Services.

6.2   The strategy is designed to recognise that whilst the council cannot and does not have the resource to deliver against this agenda on its own, it is uniquely placed as a community and city leader to co-ordinate and provide the strategic leadership necessary to co-ordinate both existing and planned activity across the city. It also acknowledges that there is a need for greater links to be made at the strategic level e.g. with the Digital Skills Action Plan current development by Creative Sheffield.

6.3   Increasing the number of residents who are digitally active and included will have significant benefits from an economic and social perspective. As outlined in the strategy below (Appendix 1).

Appendix 1

Sheffield: A Digitally Inclusive City

1. Introduction and context

We live in an increasingly digital world where many people are already benefitting from the internet, digital TV and mobile communications. Cities are some of the most digitally advanced, digitally driven places on the planet. This creates a huge range of business and social opportunities with rapidly changing products, services and ideas. It also offers further opportunities to learn, save money and keep in touch. When individuals are digitally active it can improve the accessibility of services and support to people who find themselves physically and emotionally isolated, whilst also providing employment opportunities both in digital careers and other industries that make use of digital technology.

Technology has radically transformed the way that services are delivered in recent years – people want services e.g. council tax payments, and information to be accessible digitally - and this trend will continue. Broadband access has been described as the 'fourth utility'.

But rapid change can make it difficult to keep up and people miss out on the opportunities that having confidence, the skills and access to, that digital technology can create.

Public and private services are increasingly moving to a 'digital by default' delivery model as people become more and more used to accessing services digitally (e.g. online) and accessing those services when it best suits them rather than the traditional nine-to-five opening hours. This does not mean that people will no longer be able to access our services through traditional means such as face to face or via telephone, but rather that people will be offered a range of choices to suit their own individual preferences when contacting the council or using our services. This is often more convenient and more efficient for customers.

Using digital technology to deliver public services can improve quality, better target services so that people are more likely to get the right service to meet their needs, improve accessibility and reduce costs. In this context, those who don't use digital technology risk being excluded from the economic, social and financial benefits that the majority of citizens are accessing, further worsening existing, entrenched inequalities.

For example, with the implementation of various aspects of the Government's welfare reforms already affecting a large section of the community who are deemed to be vulnerable, the public sector will have to work hard to ensure that these individuals, as well as other vulnerable people, do not slip further into isolation.

Sheffield's City Council is committed to tackling inequalities by supporting those with the greatest needs and helping and enabling people to achieve their full potential. Through Sheffield's 'Tackling Poverty Strategy', we have identified that 'affordable safe access to the internet and the ability to use it can save people money and increase their ability to search for and apply for work, develop skills and access the services they need.'

As a council, we are committed to promoting and ensuring Digital Inclusion for our communities but there is only so much that we can do on our own. We invite our partners

across the public, private and voluntary sectors to work with us and to commit to achieving our vision that. -

"Sheffield is recognised as a leading digitally inclusive UK city where everyone who wants to be online has the skills, access, motivation and trust to seize the opportunities, benefits and advantages of the digital world".

2. A Digitally Inclusive City: Our Plan

To achieve this we have set out a number of priorities that will help us work towards a more digitally inclusive city. However we're only going to make real progress if we address all of these issues.

Our Priorities

- Greater use of community facilities e.g. community centres and libraries to provide training opportunities and access to broadband
- Explore potential to provide a range of innovative approaches to overcome barriers to broadband access e.g. affordability
- Work with partners to develop a wider city region vision and strategy for Digital Inclusion focussing on the required skills for a prosperous city region
- Ensure new infrastructure developments (e.g. housing developments) include broadband provision where appropriate
- Develop a recognised Sheffield digital brand and associated campaigns including for example a 'Big Switch' style campaign to identify the most appropriate broadband packages
- Work with partners to make the best use of knowledge and resource to deliver the best outcomes for Sheffield with a particular focus on developing the digital skills of Sheffield residents and SCC employees, ensuring our support is targeted and recognises that different localities have different needs
- Identify and explore funding opportunities to drive forward Digital Inclusion work
- Establish a 'Digital Community' that will allow for the sharing of best practice and current activity
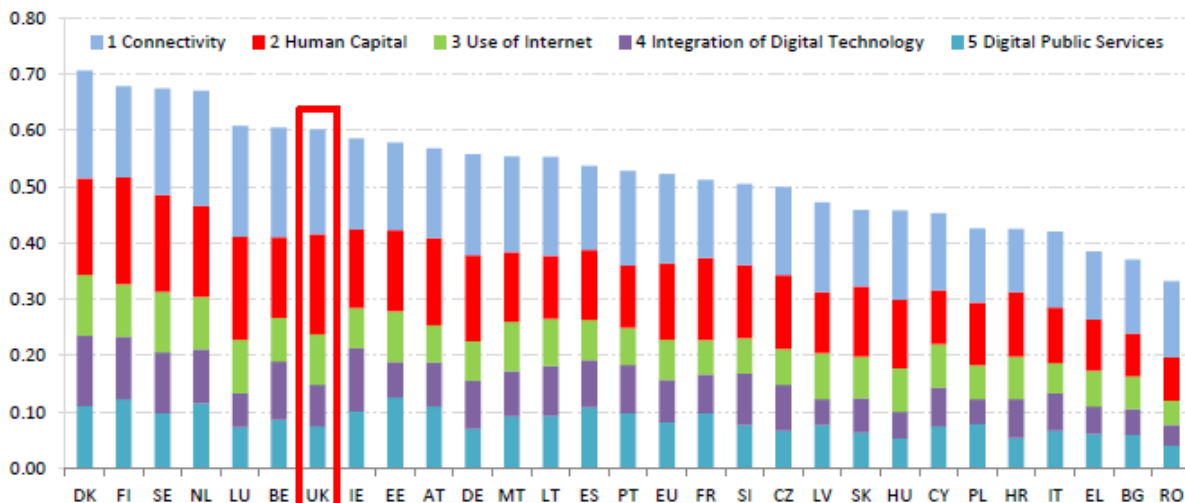
Digital lives: Why digital inclusion is vital for Sheffield's future?

Digital Inclusion is a cornerstone of the Government's Digital Strategy launched during March 2017, stating "that for the UK to be a world leading digital economy that works for everyone, it is crucial that everyone has the digital skills they need to fully participate in society....enabling people in every part of society – irrespective of age, gender, ability, ethnicity, health conditions or socio-economic status – to access the benefits of the internet"[1].

At the national level the UK is currently ranked 7th out of 28 in the EU's Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI). The DESI assesses digital inclusion across five areas – Connectivity, Human Capital (Skills), Use of Internet, Integration of Digital Technology and Digital Public Services.

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[1] UK Government Digital Strategy 2017

Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) 2017 ranking

Chart legend: 1 Connectivity | 2 Human Capital | 3 Use of Internet | 4 Integration of Digital Technology | 5 Digital Public Services

Countries (x-axis): DK FI SE NL LU BE UK IE EE AT DE MT LT ES PT EU FR SI CZ LV SK HU CY PL HR IT EL BG RO

Digital Inclusion as a means to support Inclusive Growth

Inclusive Growth recognises that job creation in itself and even economic growth in a broader sense, does not necessarily bring people out of poverty or enable them to participate more equitably in our economy and society. There are serious questions about the dependence of economic growth since the 2008 financial crash, on low paid and highly flexible employment i.e. zero hour contracts, and the type of recovery we have witnessed in recent years has exacerbated the pre-recession problem of 'in-work poverty'.

In Sheffield we have already recognised and begun to address the complex challenges of delivering sustainable growth whilst driving down inequality through the 'Our Fair City' campaign for example - the work of the council and partners around tackling poverty, and the Sheffield City Partnership's commitment to developing an inclusive and sustainable growth strategy over the coming year. Promoting Digital Inclusion is another example of how we can address these challenges and to ensure that we are taking positive steps to enable individuals and communities to participate fully and positively in the city's economy and wider society.

The RSA's Inclusive Growth Commission final report advocated for whole system change to deliver inclusive growth, arguing that people should be connected to economic assets (via digital, transport and housing) to support the an integrated economic and social policy.

Sheffield City Region recently published "A Better Future Together" and this highlights the importance of building our digital skills base and the importance of digital connectivity to delivering sustainable inclusive growth for the region.

A digital Sheffield

The [UK online digital heat map](#) shows that the likelihood of digital exclusion in Sheffield is deemed to be medium. This is in line with neighbouring local authorities but not in comparison to other Core Cities such as Nottingham, Manchester, and Leeds, where the likelihood of digital exclusion is deemed to be low.

Sheffield as a city is unique both physically and geographically and this partly explains why we compare so poorly to other UK cities. Whilst Sheffield has some of the best access to 4G technology in the UK, access to broadband speeds above 10mpbs is still problematic across the city's geography, although significant work has been done via, for example Superfast South Yorkshire, to increase availability and take up of high speed broadband. But this is only part of the answer and we must do more to promote digital inclusion.

Economic impact

'The economic impact of Basic Digital Skills and inclusion in the UK' considers the investment required over a 10 year period to equip 100% of the UK population with basic digital skills - £1.31 billion would be required from 2016 to 2025. It goes on to estimate a benefit of almost £10 for every £1 invested. [2]These findings suggest that investing to increase peoples digital skills would represent a good investment for Sheffield.

Sheffield's economy is becoming increasingly focussed on digital with a thriving Creative and Digital Industries (CDI) sector in the city. Digital exclusion and a corresponding lack of digital skills therefore may be a drag on the productivity of our population and our businesses. Having more people with digital skills and more digital businesses will be critical for creating growth and more jobs. Digital technology will transform many other sectors in the city's economy, from manufacturing to healthcare to professional services.

There is a real risk therefore that if we do not address this issue, we will not be able to maximise Sheffield's potential for future prosperity.

Social and health impact

For Sheffield initial research has shown that approximately one in five people in Sheffield are digitally excluded, 60% of whom are over 65 years old. But digital exclusion is not limited to older generations. Increasingly our school children are expected to complete homework on line for example and without access to the internet, there is a real danger that we are putting our children's future prosperity and life chances at risk. [3]

Indicators show that those who are digitally excluded also tend to be disadvantaged socially and financially, and it is estimated that in some wards of Sheffield, up to 50% of the population are potentially non-internet users.[4]

Digital exclusion also affects some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in our society:

- Those in social housing – 37% of those who are digitally excluded are social housing tenants

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[2] Cebr Study commissioned by Good Things Foundation 2015
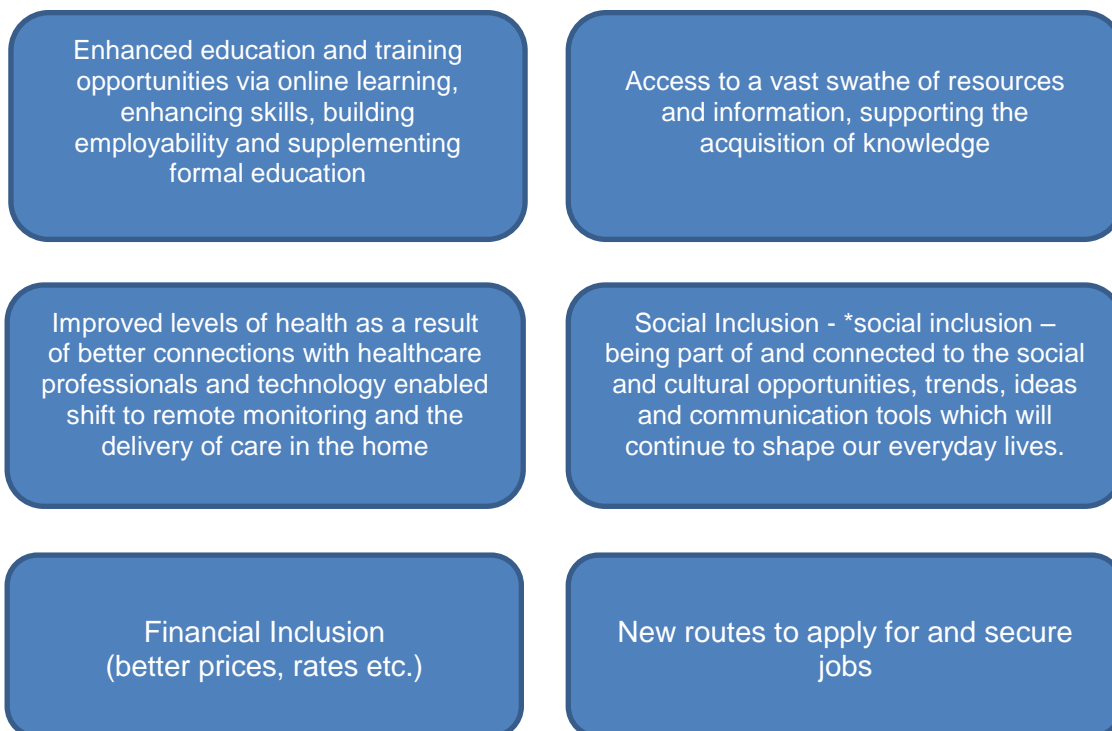[3] Sheffield Community Network Programme
[4] Sheffield Community Network Programme

- 44% of people without basic digital skills are on lower wages or are unemployed
- 33% of people with registered disabilities have never used the internet.
- 53% of people who lack basic digital skills are aged over 65, and 69% are over 55
- 6% of people who lack digital skills are between 15-24 years old. Only 27% of young people who are offline are in full-time employment.
- Offender and ex-offenders have been shown to have a significantly reduced level of risk of re-offending when digital skills training and support is used to complement existing approaches. [5]

This means that large sections of our communities are missing out on the benefits of being digitally included, including for example:

Figure 1: Benefits of Digital Inclusion

Digital skills are important not just for individuals but also for the wider economy. People who acquire digital skills can benefit through wider choice and lower prices available when managing their daily lives online. They may also be able to benefit from being able to use the internet to stay connected to family and friends, which helps to reduce social isolation.

Enhanced education and training opportunities via online learning, enhancing skills, building employability and supplementing formal education	Access to a vast swathe of resources and information, supporting the acquisition of knowledge
Improved levels of health as a result of better connections with healthcare professionals and technology enabled shift to remote monitoring and the delivery of care in the home	Social Inclusion - *social inclusion – being part of and connected to the social and cultural opportunities, trends, ideas and communication tools which will continue to shape our everyday lives.
Financial Inclusion (better prices, rates etc.)	New routes to apply for and secure jobs

Other benefits from achieving digital inclusion include:

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[5] UK Government Digital Strategy 2017

Earning benefits – research shows that people in work who acquire digital skills achieve a rise in earnings of between 3%-10%.

Employability benefits – evidence shows that having digital skills helps improve the likelihood that a person can find a job or progress to a better paid job.

Confidence - for many it is hard to imagine living in a world without the internet and using computers, tablets or smart phones as part of our daily lives, whether professionally or personally. However, for those that have never taken part in the digital world, it can be isolating and damaging to people's self-image. Access to the internet and improved digital skills has been proven to give individuals a significant confidence boost that has a positive impact on their day to day lives.

People who had taken part in IT skills training later in life described getting a substantial confidence boost as a result.

Reduced social isolation – Cities are traditionally quite young places (e.g. students, young professionals) and Sheffield is no different but it also has lots of other communities in neighbourhoods across the city and so we could have a mix of the very digitally connected and the very digitally disconnected which may compound social isolation.

Social isolation is a significant problem in the UK, especially amongst older people. During 2015 Age UK launched the "no one should have no-one" campaign. In this they pointed out that 2.9million people aged 65 or over felt that they had no one to go to for support or help. Whilst basic digital skills can help people to stay in contact and connect with their community, their friends and their families, it is not true for all cases and can in fact heighten the sense of social isolation they feel. The same is true of people with disabilities, who are another group of people that are also significantly impacted by digital exclusion.

Financial inclusion/savings – at best financially excluded people end up paying more than they could or should and at worst they risk becoming socially isolated. Whilst there are many causes of financial exclusion, digital exclusion is becoming a particular issue as more products and services become "online only" or "digital by default". However, we recognise that care needs to be taken to ensure that the council's increasing provision of online services does not exacerbate and perpetuate existing inequalities in the city.

The council's Financial Inclusion Strategy identifies the links between digital exclusion and people who face financial difficulties in their daily lives. Digital inclusion therefore can lead to access to cheaper financial services, wider choice of products, improved financial independence and online payments.

The Good Things Foundation's 'State of the Digital Nation' report identified that people who used online shopping for purchasing groceries, clothes etc. on average saved £744pa.

3. Barriers to Digital Inclusion
The Government's Digital Inclusion Strategy has identified four main barriers that people face to going online, with an additional fifth barrier identified locally:

Skills – People may be able to access social media such as Facebook or Skype, however this masks the fact that many lack basic ICT skills, including how to operate MS Office or use email for example. Lacking digital skills makes it harder for a person to access employment and training opportunities and compounds the levels of financial and other exclusion that they face

Motivation – many people who are not online may not necessarily see the benefits for them. Pushing people to do something that doesn't interest them doesn't work. Let's face it, doing government transactions online is not the most inspirational digital activity and is unlikely to be the motivator that gets someone to go online. In contrast, keeping in touch with your grandchildren who live abroad might be. Nobody wants to learn digital skills for the sake of it, and having an internet connection is of limited value unless you have a reason to want to use it.

Access – the cost of kit and connectivity i.e. broadband packages, stops people from getting online.

Finding affordable and flexible methods of connectivity is very difficult and currently, for many excluded groups, the additional cost of line rental is a barrier. There exist some problems with broadband connectivity in parts of the south west and north of the city and in the more rural parts of Sheffield. Superfast South Yorkshire is currently working in the city to provide fibre broadband coverage in 99% of the city by the end of 2018.

Trust – Going online can be a daunting experience for many as they open themselves up to new risks. To keep people online it's vital that they can rely on trusted sources to get the help, support and assurance they need to build their confidence in a digital world. The internet will never be 100% secure and staying safe online needs to be a basic digital literacy skill. This again links to the point above and relating to the need for people to have an understanding of what accessing digital means in terms of safety, use of their personal data and other aspect.

Cultural Barriers – Sheffield is a culturally diverse city and with this diversity comes additional challenges to digital inclusion. This may for example mean that some people and communities do not understand the benefits available due to language issues or have not had experience of/access to the internet as part of their everyday lives.

There has also been recent research conducted by the Sheffield Clinical Commissioning Group on access to acute services and issues around digital exclusion for groups such as the homeless and also asylum seekers and refugees were found to be an area of concern.

4. **What is currently being done to promote Digital Inclusion in Sheffield?**
There is a significant amount of activity throughout the public, private and voluntary sectors across Sheffield to tackle digital exclusion and to help people and organisations go online:

- We have been developing a partnership with Google which has seen one of their most successful ever implementations of the Google Garage concept. Additionally. Sheffield is the first city in the world to benefit from a Google Bus which is visiting different parts of the city over the coming months to offer digital skills development for individuals and small businesses,
- The Good Thing's Foundations 'Learn My Way' initiative,

- The city councils Library Services People's Network, which provides 250 free to use internet connected PC's and free Wi-Fi,
- Barclays Digital Eagles Programme; and
- The council working alongside the Heeley Development Trust to deliver digital skills training in Housing Associations.
- The council's Children, Young Peoples and Families (CYPF) service are working to promote internet skills and tools through education and community engagement with schools, the VCF and national groups.

But digital inclusion remains a complex issue. For example, we can support people to get the skills they need to use digital technology but it does not mean that people will be able to afford to access the internet at home and information regarding free internet access can be difficult to find. Motivation is also a significant issue with people often not clear on what benefits of being online will bring to them. Helping to describe these benefits through case studies will be important as part of our overall approach.

Whilst there is a lot of activity taking place in the city, we know that our approach to increasing digital inclusion in Sheffield has been fragmented, and we don't have a clear picture of what difference this is making to people and communities across the city; with no way of measuring impact. This strategy will help us to be better at targeting our interventions, and to encourage greater take up of digital activities and services across the city. Better clarity on our strategy and the outcomes we want will also enable us to measure the impact of our interventions.

We also need to recognise that we are behind other cities in this area and we need to catch up if we are to maximise the opportunities for people, services and the economy. This means accelerating what we're already doing, delivering more and delivering in partnership. We need to learn from what has worked well elsewhere, for example -

- In Leeds, the City Council has established the "100% Digital Leeds" programme. This is creating a social movement for digital inclusion, mobilising support in communities across the city to reach people who need the most help to develop digital confidence and skills.
- In other cities such as London (Smart London Plan), Manchester (Go ON Manchester) and Birmingham (Digital Birmingham), digital inclusion has been incorporated into their approach to smart cities, ensuring that projects are co-ordinated to offer their communities the best possible solutions for their digital inclusion needs. As part of the developing Sheffield Digital Coalition, we will take a similar approach to embed inclusion across all our of smart city projects.

Some examples of digital activity in Sheffield include:

- The Sheffield Digital Skills Action Plan as a key area of activity as we continue to promote Digital Inclusion across the city. This plan will serve as a catalyst and ongoing reference point to examine how we as a city respond to the challenges and utilities the opportunities that digital gives.
- Council Housing Services Digital Boost Project – This project is being delivered alongside Heeley Development Trust (HDT) and provides free IT classes to Council tenants. Café

(Computing as a family experience) which is funded by Raspberry Pi Foundation is a key activity being provided by CYPF. Café trains secondary school pupils to teach primary school pupils, digital skills.

- UTC City Centre – focussed on creative and digital technologies alongside advanced engineering and manufacturing. The UTC is developing the next generation of digitally skilled people with a career focussed learning approach, working in partnership with a wide range of local engineering and creative and digital employers.

- NHS – GP surgeries are now obliged to provide some services online, such as appointment bookings and repeat prescriptions. 48 code clubs available in the cities schools (for ages 9-11) including code clubs at Central Children's Library, Crystal Peaks and Ecclesall. Further codes clubs are due to be launched at Manor and Parsons Cross libraries over the coming months, and;

- The Sheffield based Good Things Foundation deliver a number of high profile projects to promote digital inclusion both within the city and nationally - the 'Digital Housing Hub', improving skills and employability via 'Learn My Way', helping communities with English as a second language – 'English My Way' and supporting people to manage their finances more effectively - 'Money My Way'.

Digital Inclusion Action Plan (draft)

The below action plan is a mix of the aspirational and the practical and proposes a number of actions to address the barriers to Digital Inclusion identified earlier. There is a need to recognise that in order to achieve a digitally inclusive city; the Council must work in partnership with businesses and other public and voluntary sector organisations to deliver this.

It is important to note that this Action Plan, and indeed this Strategy, is a starting point on our journey to be a digitally inclusive city and will be further developed as we build our capabilities and relationships in delivering the Strategy.

Barrier	Focus	Context	What SCC and/or partners will do
Access	Explore potential to provide a range of innovative approaches to overcome barriers to broadband access e.g. affordability and cost of equipment	The cost of broadband packages can be prohibitive for many and as a consequence are reliant on free broadband provided in public buildings or shops or use expensive mobile tariffs. The same is also true for the cost of computers and/or tablets.	• Encourage more organisations to provide equipment loans or computer give-aways for example through promotion of the GetOnline@Home scheme • Work with the councils key partners to provide recycled computers for Sheffield community organisations and housing tenants
Access	Greater use of community facilities to provide training opportunities and access to broadband	Existing community facilities include libraries and schools but both either close their doors early i.e. 15.30 or in the case of community libraries, are only open on certain days/times during the week. This prohibits possible access to a large number of computers that could be used for digital skills training in the community.	• Explore possibility of working with schools to provide digital training to carers/parents and access to internet enabled computers • Establish feasibility of providing (free public) broadband access in community centres, housing offices

Barrier	Focus	Context	What SCC and/or partners will do
			and libraries
Skills	Sheffield Digital Inclusion strategies, policies and action plans	DI seen as a spectrum from basic skills right through to advanced skills required by local tech companies/CDI sector. Recognised need for a more coherent approach to DI across the city and city region – lack of a strategic leader is hindering Sheffield in this space and CDI sector locally, is being hampered by digital skills gap – losing people to Manchester and Leeds where there is a clear focus and vision for the importance of digital skills.	• Work with partners to develop a wider city region strategy and plan for Digital Inclusion as part of the Digital Coalition work that compliments existing strategies e.g. Creative Sheffield Digital Skills Action Plan • Approach Sheffield/city region based digital companies to act as sponsors for digital inclusion activity, either through use of expertise or through physical resource where appropriate
Skills	Council colleagues and Elected Members also need to be encouraged to develop their digital skills.	Recognition that there are a significant proportion of SCC employees that could benefit from digital skills training.	• Promote online independent digital skills training to all council officers and elected members • Develop SCC digital skills programme • Identify SCC digital advocates/champions and provide support to realise digital skills agenda • Provide support to Members to become digital advocates

Barrier	Focus	Context	What SCC and/or partners will do
Access	Ensure new infrastructure development e.g. housing include broadband provision where appropriate	As noted within the strategy, broadband is now seen as the 4th utility and yet the required infrastructure is not included as a condition for housing development by SCC Planning Authority. Ensuring that this is factored into the build process will negate the need for disruption/remedial works further down the line.	• Ensure Sheffield's Local Plan reflects the need for broadband infrastructure as the fourth utility in planned and future housing developments (both social and private)
Trust Motivation	Develop a recognised and trusted Sheffield digital brand and associated campaigns	Development of a recognised brand will help to create a sense of a digital community within the city and could for example promote 'Big Switch' style campaigns. Other cities e.g. Manchester and Leeds both have recognised brands and days dedicated to digital skills and digital industry.	• Create an ongoing local digital campaign, in line with national campaigns, to promote the benefits of going online • Explore creating a common brand for all organisations with public access computers and Wi-Fi that is incorporated into the council's day to day communications activity
Access, Motivation	Communication and engagement	There is currently a great deal of activity to deliver digital inclusion across the city however this is largely conducted in isolation rather than in a co-ordinated manner to avoid duplication. The communications plan will raise awareness of this activity e.g. the location of available training sessions and	• Ensure that residents and businesses know where to access training to positively impact their lives and be motivated to use online channels • Work with Super-Fast South Yorkshire to develop a citywide communications plan to promote Digital Inclusion

Barrier	Focus	Context	What SCC and/or partners will do
		sign post people as appropriate.	activity • Promote all Public Access Computers and Wifi spots and digital skills provision, including in a range of community languages
Skills	Work with partners to make best use of knowledge and resource to deliver the best outcomes for Sheffield and its residents	Recognition that Digital Inclusion is a subject matter that cannot be addressed solely by the council and whilst the council does not have the resource (financial, staff) we do have an in depth knowledge of our communities and therefore have a significant USP to offer potential private sector/commercial partners to develop this agenda further and to develop a more comprehensive, coherent approach to digital inclusion across the city – the city council act as facilitators of a wider network.	• Work with education and voluntary sectors to facilitate, support and develop training to encourage citizens to build their digital skills • Map provision and analyse gaps of current digital skills training provision • Work with Google Garage and South Yorkshire Housing Association to develop a joint venture for digital mentor/champions training • Encourage engagement from private companies and universities within the city who may be interested in supporting digital inclusion through their social responsibility activity • Link into universities, colleges and skills to ensure curriculum reflects

Barrier	Focus	Context	What SCC and/or partners will do
			digital skills needs • Continue to promote the Google Bus offer and seek to leave a legacy from this resource
Other	Identify and explore funding opportunities to drive forward Digital Inclusion work	Available funding and resource for DI activity is limited and would need to be met from existing budgets. Therefore any future/additional activity would benefit from the attraction of external funding and to this end, the action plan will focus on identifying	• Explore availability of DCMS funding for Digital Inclusion as part of the Adult Skills budget • Utilise existing Fairness Commission funding to target DI related activities
Other	Establish a 'Digital Community' that will allow for the sharing of best practice and current activity	Clear that there is a lot of 'localised' activity linked to DI across the council. This activity would benefit from the creation of a digital community to share best practice and to ensure work is developed in a co-ordinated manner. This community may take the form of a virtual community through an online presence or as a physical body.	• Foster and support the development of active Digital Leaders at all levels of the organisation • Hold a Digital Policy workshop for those working/with an interest in this area to outline the digital vision for both the council and the city, and to co-ordinate activity • Explore the potential to fund a co-ordinator to support the implementation of this Strategy and Action Plan.