Digital Inclusion:

Oxfordshire County Council 2023-24 Action Plan Updates

This document sets out the updates to the action plan for 2023-24 that supports Oxfordshire County Council's Digital Inclusion Strategy.

The Strategy is divided into three sections.

- Section One – Digitally Inclusive Communities
- Section Two – Digitally Inclusive Service Delivery
- Section Three – Digitally Inclusive Workforce

Section One: Digitally Inclusive Communities

Long-Term Ambition	Action	Directorate and Lead Officer	Updates
Digital access is not a barrier to education in Oxfordshire.	Collaborate with holiday activity providers to implement Digital Inclusion projects as part of wider holiday delivery, including using Libraries as venues.	Children, Education, and Families (CEF)	We have completed this action, and it has been integrated into business as usual.
	Liaise with the Education Endowment Fund (EEF) for guidance on impactful research-	CEF	This action has not been completed due to competing priorities. It will be reviewed to see if it

	based approaches so the right equipment, access and programmes can be promoted to families.		is appropriate to carry this over into the 24-25 action plan.
Vulnerable children and families have access to support to raise household digital capacity and address digital disadvantage.	Continue to provide a digital offer for 0-19 services, through single point of access and e-platforms and ensuring access for vulnerable families.	Public Health	Chat Health is used by Oxford Health to provide advice and support to families. This digital offer will continue with the newly commissioned Children and Young People's Public Health Nursing Service from 1st April 2024. Public Health will also be commissioning a Children and Young Person's digital platform for emotional health and wellbeing to launch in 2024.
	Support families with making applications from charities such as 'Aspire' for laptops as part of communicating with families about their internet access and equipment, seeking to ensure families are not disempowered if they do not have these.	CEF	Work is in progress on this action and will continue in 2024-25 with more focussed efforts.
	Continue to promote the use of the Mind Of My Own (MOMO) app with children and young people to enable them to use their voice and speak their own words via a digital platform.	CEF	Work is in progress on this action and will continue into 24-25 with a focus on using data.

	Continue to support Community Action Groups (CAGs) to host repair cafes across the county potentially helping to prevent residents from becoming digitally excluded by aiming to keep electronic devices (including internet enabled devices) in use for longer. This will be measured through the number of repair cafes held each year (reported annually).	Waste	We continue to support CAGs in hosting repair cafes. The data for April 22 – March 23 is: 21 groups (including three non-CAGs, but members of the repair cafe network) ran 172 repair cafe events enabling members of the public to 'fix not bin' broken household items, from electrical appliances and bicycles to clothes. Portable Appliance Testing (PAT): CAG offered 6 subsidised spaces for volunteers from CAG repair cafes to attend a certified PAT training delivered by PlugTest and hosted by Orinoco.
	Investigate funding options for digital inclusion to get laptops or mobile interactive devices in supported housing or for those facing homelessness so people can claim benefits, apply for jobs, and stay in touch with families and friends through online chat, reducing social isolation.	Adult Social Care	Work is going on in all the Alliance services, especially for people who sleeping rough and in high risk, to ensure that people they are working with are given a mobile phone to enable contact. During Covid, the Oxfordshire Homeless Movement funded tablets for people in homeless supported accommodation and funded Aspire to install WIFI in all rooms. There is signposting from the Oxfordshire Homeless Movement to partners offering computer access including the Getting Oxfordshire Online project. Please see link for support: I need help to get online The following provision is available at the Gatehouse:

			- Approximately 2 evenings per week (5:00pm-7:00pm) – open-access, internet-connected computers available to Guests (service users) at our community café. - Weekly for one quarter per year (5:00pm-7:00pm) – facilitated drop-in IT workshops, with tutors available to provide practical help on a wide variety of IT-related topics - Investment in a new, high-quality Guest wi-fi network that can be used in and around the building during waking hours (coming soon!) - Access to data SIM cards for mobile phones, and mobile data USB dongles for PCs - Links to the "Getting Oxfordshire Online" program via Aspire, to obtain refurbished laptops for Guests. - Signposting to further training is available. Connection Support: The Housing Support Prevention Service have a dedicated digital support worker who provides support across the County to people who are digitally excluded.
No one in Oxfordshire will be isolated from essential services by digital-by-	Promote any relevant support of pillars of the strategy through our networks – e.g., Promoting laptop donation to Get Oxfordshire Online (GOO) via the Greentech network.	Climate Action	This action has been completed, and has been integrated into business as usual as part of the Circular Economy workstream
	Develop a new website for domestic abuse services in	Public Health	We have completed a review and development of the OCC public facing website which has provided

default barriers, or a lack of connectivity.	Oxfordshire to provide improved access to services, clear referral pathways including for people with protected characteristics to improve visibility and access to information, advice, and referral pathways into services.		clearer access to commissioned services. Further website developments at a system level are being explored.
	Provide advice and support to enable people to access digital opportunities safely, and avoid frauds, particularly in community engagement and education work with schools and older people.	Trading Standards	This action has been completed and is now part of business as usual.
	Deliver scam awareness training in a non-digital way, to be measured through the number of people reached through prevention activities, including information on online scams.	Trading Standards	This action has been completed and is now part of business as usual. 3478 people have been reached through Trading Standards preventative advice and support.
	Research, identify and promote support around digital literacy for carers, including young carers.	Adult Social Care	We have developed an all-age carers strategy, which includes improved identification of carers, and are improving our online offer. This will be rolled over to 24-25. Digital inclusion for young carers https://www.carersfirst.org.uk/news-and-stories/digital-champions-programme-for-young-adult-carers/

	Encourage supported housing providers to provide support and training for older people or people with a disability to access and use online services.	Adult Social Care	Work is in progress for this action, and will be reviewed for next year's action plan.
	Work with local partner to securely recycle 50 OCC devices a year to be used by residents needing laptops.	Digital and IT	We donated 200 laptops to be used by residents in 2022. This action will roll over to 24-25.
Oxfordshire businesses and organisations can recruit, train, retain and support their workforce with the necessary digital skills.	Develop digital inclusion pages on Oxfordshire County Council's (OCC) website. The webpages are to include advice, guidance and information on digital scams, Live Well Oxfordshire, and link in with online sources of information that can assist residents and businesses in Oxfordshire.	Policy	This action has been completed with our new webpages: • Digital inclusion | Oxfordshire County Council • Digital Inclusion | Digital Infrastructure Programme (digitalinfrastructureoxfordshire.co.uk) Part of this action will continue into 24-25 for the pages on Live Well Oxfordshire.
	Build on the Digital Inclusion Charter to regularly bring together local partners to avoid duplication of effort across Oxfordshire and share best practice.	Policy	This action is a work in progress and will continue into 24-25. Further collaboration with Getting Oxfordshire Online will be built upon.
Broadband connectivity across Oxfordshire is one of the	Promote social tariffs from broadband suppliers via OCC's Social Media channels and track the engagement with posts: share this information with district and	Digital and IT	The Social Tariffs campaign has been planned and arranged with OCC corporate comms and will be launched in 24-25.

Long-Term Ambition	Action	Directorate and Lead Officer	Updates
best in the country.	parish councils so they can promote widely, and with other OCC digital inclusion activities.		

Section Two: Digitally Inclusive Service Delivery

Long-Term Ambition	Action	Directorate and Lead Officer	Updates
Innovative solutions to problems of digital exclusion are collaboratively developed and delivered in our services.	Use Office for Health Improvement Disparities (OHID) grants to provide technology to substance misuse service users, supporting them to progress towards recovery e.g., with job applications, housing applications, education, and training	Public Health	Personalised budgets within the Supplemental Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery Grant and Housing Support Grants are being utilised to purchase tablets and IT software to support people to engage in treatment, support training and employment goals, and maintain tenancies. There is a new grant for employment support starting in April 2024, and it is also planned to have a personalised budget element for this purpose. The Better Housing Better Health service offers home visits to people who may have no or limited access to digital resources and provides support to households in accessing home improvement grants and other resources which are only accessible online

	Explore asking appropriate service providers to evidence their commitment to tackling inequalities in Oxfordshire through improving digital inclusion in public health commissioned services (grants, contracts, frameworks), such as outlining their approaches to addressing digital inclusion in tenders.	Public Health	Printed material providing public health advice at times of extreme weather events - both heat waves and cold weather - will be available to ensure that those households who do not have access to online advice can obtain public health information. Printed materials include bookmarks that can be handed out through the library service. The BHBH service has been evaluated to understand the impact and benefits of its home visiting and telephone services. Service users and the service provider have been involved in this evaluation which has helped to identify the importance of a home visit to people with complex needs.
	Include digital inclusion in impact assessments, to ensure that policies do not increase the digital divide.	Policy	This action is a work in progress. Questions relating to Digital Inclusion will be considered for inclusion in the new impact assessment tools that are being developed, rather than as a separate impact assessment.
	Promote internal collaboration around digital inclusion through restarting the Digital Inclusion Working Group, to monitor progress against the Digital Inclusion action plan.	Policy	The internal Digital Inclusion working group has been meeting and will continue to review the action plans each year.
	Use any social value provision from supplier contracts within the	Digital and IT	This action is a work in progress, and will continue into 24-25.

	Digital and IT directorate to improve digital inclusion and track the total value of such contributions.		
	Ensure that all Digital and IT projects involving a procurement include the technical requirements for accessibility.	Digital and IT	This action has been completed and will be business as usual going forward, as it is now built into governance documents.
	Investigate and understand new National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines on homelessness and Digital Inclusion, to ensure that people experiencing homelessness can access online health, universal credit, and social care information and are supported to use online services.	Adult Social Care	Work is in progress for this action, and will be reviewed for next year's action plan.

Citizens of Oxfordshire are provided with a comprehensive, affordable, and accessible assistive technology offer that meets their needs.	Build on existing collaboration between Adult Social Care and iHub to develop and test innovative approaches to delivering and improving outcomes for vulnerable people, including investigating and promoting availability of Assistive Technology and technology enabled care equipment.	Adult Social Care iHub	This action is a work in progress, the innovation service sits on the Adult Social Care Digital board and input into new initiatives via this channel.
	Feature digital technology in accommodation development to increase independence.	Adult Social Care	Work is in progress for this action, and will be reviewed for next year's action plan.
Our Libraries and Heritage Service provides digital opportunities for people to connect and create, learn, and grow together.	Refresh public library IT provision (The People's Network) in all branches, to ensure local communities have high quality online access, printing facilities, and WiFi available in their local library.	Libraries	We are midway through a project to refresh our public library IT provision. We have been investigating various alternative hardware options, and are about to take that pilot phase into the public domain.

We are also exploring improved printing facilities, and have completed a project to update photocopier facilities across the network.

Libraries have continued to be part of the GigaHubs project, which has seenmultiple sites' connectivity markedly improved. |

			We have updated staff PCs to enable swifter and more efficient customer service. We have also invested in and successfully implemented a new booking system that has allowed us to more effectively manage longer customer enquiries, especially those linked to council validations/transactions.
	Review and enhance Libraries' Makerspace and digital engagement activity offer, so that new technology and digital resources are open to all.	Libraries	We are in the process of investing in some new equipment for our Makerspaces and have also agreed to update our Coding equipment to better support our Code club activities. We have recruited a new Group Library Manager, who has a background in digital engagement and we plan to review our approach in the coming months. We have engaged in discussions with Getting Oxfordshire Online and Virgin Media to develop our digital support offer. We have continued to delivery digital helper sessions in libraries across the county.
	Continue to grow the range of content and resources (including eBooks, eAudio, eMagazines and Newspapers, and e-Learning) that	Libraries	We have increased spending on online content and the proportional allocation to digital resources, given the growing demand in this area.

| | | | We have consistently reached new performance levels across eBooks, eAudio and eMagazines as the months have progressed – Digital loans now make c.10% of all lending activity, and we did >300k eBook and eAudio loans in 2022/23.

We have marketed this material via our social media channels and have plans to further highlight this fantastic content. |
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| | are free to access anytime at home, on the move, or through local libraries, via free library membership. | | |
| | Assess the current range of support and training provided by Libraries to help customers get online and function in a digital world, and develop that offer and signposting activity as community needs and the digital landscape changes. | Libraries | Due to competing priorities we have not been able to undertake a substantial review of activity in this area to date. However, we have continued to deliver Digital Helper events at libraries across the network.

We have engaged in discussions with Getting Oxfordshire Online and Virgin Media to develop our digital support offer.

We have rolled out various digital training for Libraries staff to increase their knowledge and confidence (including on the subject of online safety).

We have also highlighted to all libraries the recently redesigned 'Learn My Way' website from the Good Things Foundation, which provides free bite-sized learning for beginner digital skills but is |

			also suitable for all levels of understanding. There is a Learn My Way desktop shortcut on every public library computer to make it easier for customers to get started.
	Develop the Heritage Search platform (launched in May 2023) to enhance access to, and understanding of, Oxfordshire's past and the wide range of heritage resources that the Council manages for future generations.	Heritage	The Heritage Search platform has proved hugely popular – in the first year, we received >20% increase in orders for copies of digital images from the site; we also registered 525k interactions in the period Oct 2022 – Aug 2023. With the addition of two new datasets (Peculiar Wills and Building Plans!) we hit the 1,000,000 figure for online catalogue records sooner than expected in November 2023. We are producing more digital content to go onto the site all the time (often with the help of volunteers) and are prioritising elements of the collection where there is the most demand. We have produced an introductory video guide to the site and done various engagement events focused on the platform. We carried out a wholesale update of the Oxfordshire School History website.

Section Three – Digitally Inclusive Workforce

Long-Term Ambition	Action	Directorate and Lead Officer Timescale	Updates
Technology that supports agile ways of working will facilitate communication and the ability to work well anywhere, any place, and at any time.	Embed digital inclusion in our facilities provision and ensure that new buildings are designed and built with the appropriate infrastructure in place for digitally inclusive service delivery and workplaces.	Property	This action is being reviewed to see if the ownership is correct and if it is appropriate to carry this over into the 24-25 action plan.
	All team leaders and business development officers to work alongside IT Business Partner when delivering, designing, on-boarding, or improving processes and services. Details should be included in the project scope document and the benefits realisation plans.	Customer Services	This action has been completed, as the programme has been running for 6 months since the end of 2022 to bring services into the contact centre.
Our staff, managers, and volunteers have the learning and	Ensure training and support for operational Facilities Management (FM) team on new IT systems rolled out within Property including frontline engineers	Property	This action is being reviewed to see if the ownership is correct and if it is appropriate to carry this over into the 24-25 action plan.

development opportunities to develop digital skills.	Work alongside Organisational Development colleagues to identify or procure relevant digital training for all Customer Service Centre staff. This should be delivered by the end of March 2024 to existing staff and included in induction for new staff.	Customer Services	This action has been completed and integrated into business as usual, as new colleagues are given digital training as part of induction.
	Investigate digital skills training for social care and frontline staff including social prescribers.	Adult Social Care	Work is in progress for this action, and will be reviewed for next year's action plan.