



Title of Report:	Agreement of final draft Digital Strategy
Committee Report Submitted To:	The Leisure and Development Committee
Date of Meeting:	15th December 2020
For Decision or For Information	For Decision

Linkage to Council Strategy (2019-23)	
Strategic Theme	Innovation & Transformation Accelerating our Economy and Contributing to Prosperity
Outcome	The Council will embrace new technologies and processes where they can bring about better experiences for citizens and visitors. Promoting the Borough as an attractive place to live, work, invest and visit
Lead Officer	Strategic Projects Manager

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	
Included in Current Year Estimates	To be agreed as part of budgeting process
Capital/Revenue	Revenue
Code	
Staffing Costs	Existing staff, with recommendation for expansion of team in 2021

Screening Requirements	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	No	To be completed after final consultation
	EQIA Required and Completed:	No	To be completed after final consultation
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	No	To be completed after final consultation
	RNA Required and Completed:	No	To be completed after final consultation
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	Yes	Date:
	DPIA Required and Completed:	Yes	Date:

1.0 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to inform and finalise the key priorities emerging from the new draft Digital Strategy (see Annex A for summary report).

If agreed, there will be a final 8-week period for equality and other screenings and consultations, whereupon the strategy will be returned to Council for final ratification.

2.0 Background

Following Committee approval in June 2020, Council has been working on the development of a borough wide Digital Strategy. In a rapidly evolving digital landscape e.g. superfast broadband and 4G/5G.. it is critical that CC&G develops and evolves its current digital infrastructure to ensure it meets the needs of the Borough.

Although existing digital infrastructure in the Borough is relatively weak compared to other areas of the UK, other strategic developments are about to deliver significant change. The Full Fibre Northern Ireland (FFNI) and Project Stratum have just started deployment within our Borough and will hopefully turn our area from one of the poorest connected areas in the UK, to one of the best connected in Europe.

Ensuring that people and businesses in Causeway Coast and Glens adapt to this change and make the most of the opportunity available to them is the critical challenge of the Digital Strategy.

The new draft Digital Strategy provides a clear vision within the digital sector to drive, accelerate and sustain economic and social development throughout the Borough. It will also help support any potential digital initiatives emerging as part of the Causeway Growth Deal.

The digital strategy was developed in parallel with, and is informed by, the new Economic Development Strategy for Causeway Coast and Glens and takes into account a range of digital strategies, initiatives and developments from the UK and beyond that establish the context for development in the Borough.

3.0 Consultation

The Digital Strategy has been developed with a range of external stakeholders, but obviously the level of engagement has been around electronic and distanced means rather than with one to one consultation, meetings or focus groups.

The process of developing a new Digital Strategy began with a set of emerging digital barriers identified by local stakeholders. Responses and input included 45 consultations with key stakeholders including local digital businesses; schools; Government Departments and stakeholders on the Economic Advisory Group i.e. enterprise agencies, further and higher education, local chamber, Invest NI, Council staff and so on.

Headline feedback from the stakeholder consultations is summarised below:

- *The digital sector in Causeway Coast and Glens is very small. Despite its small size, the digital sector is a key enabler of digital transformation in other sectors that make up the economy.*
- *Outside the main towns, broadband coverage is really poor in terms of speed and reliability. Mobile coverage is generally ok but there are gaps on some of the key transport routes (road and rail).*
- *The COVID-19 lockdown has highlighted the need for universal high-speed broadband. There were many instances of people having to drive to towns to be able to work or be educated.*

- *Wi-Fi is important to people as a general access to the Internet. This is particularly important for tourists from outside Europe who do not wish to incur roaming charges.*
- *The Council's own IT systems struggled to support home working during lockdown.*
- *The need for a wide base of basic digital skills was highlighted by the COVID-19 lockdown. There is a need to reach those outside education with little or no digital skills to increase their digital skills so they can participate in society.*
- *The COVID-19 pandemic has increased the appetite among small businesses for digital transformation.*
- *Digital hubs have widespread support as a support for digital professionals whether they work in the Borough or in Belfast (or in Derry/Londonderry).*
- *Tourism is a sector that needs a great deal of assistance to recover from 2020 and a coherent digital approach could help greatly with the delivering dispersal of visitors from the major attractions to less well known but plentiful other attractions.*

4.0 **Delivery**

The current economic and social background to the development of the Digital Strategy is incredibly challenging and uncertain. The combination of COVID-19 and Brexit impacts all aspects of the economy and society – with little clarity over how severe the impact may be, or how long it will last.

However, against this unprecedented background of uncertainty, recent events have demonstrated clearly the critical importance of reliable high-bandwidth digital communications and applications, how essential it is that they are integrated throughout the economy and society, and how important it is that everyone has the skills to use them effectively.

The Digital Strategy specifically focuses on three key areas:

- a) Digital Infrastructure** – To ensure current and emerging digital technologies are available and accessible to all. Key actions include:

Digital Infrastructure			
<i>Ubiquitous broadband</i>	<i>Support wireless infrastructure</i>	<i>Reduce barriers to roll-out</i>	<i>Digital Transformation in the Council</i>
Identify the premises not reached by Project Stratum and ensure connectivity	Ensure availability of Wi-Fi and LPWAN infrastructure and services	Adopt the 'barrier busting' recommendations from DCMS to ensure efficient network roll-out	Update Council IT systems and support to make them fit for purpose.

- b) Digital Sector (including businesses)** – To support digital transformation of key economic sectors to ensure their sustainability and growth. Key actions include:

Digital Sector			
<i>Create Digital Hubs</i>	<i>Networking Support</i>	<i>Support Start-ups</i>	<i>Support Key Sectors</i>
Develop innovation hub locations to support digital business development.	Develop a programme of events to encourage networking in the Borough and beyond.	Establish support programmes, focused on hub locations to encourage and support SMEs.	Develop platform, systems and content to maximise performance of key economic sectors.

- c) **Digital Skills** – To establish a digital skills ecosystem for the Borough – both directly within the Borough, and as a conduit for skills regionally and beyond. Key actions include:

Digital Skills		
Basic Skills	Professional Skills	Advanced Skills
Ensure effective focus on digital skills for all throughout education and post-education.	Support continuous professional development and apprenticeships programmes for digital companies.	Develop and maintain networking opportunities for digital sector throughout Northern Ireland and internationally.

5.0 Recommendations

It is recommended that Members agree the key priorities as presented in the work undertaken by GreySky Consulting in developing a new Digital Strategy for the Borough, and that:

- The strategy is released for final equality screening and consultation.
- The Strategy proceeds with development in line with budget procedures for the new financial year.

DRAFT



**Causeway
Coast & Glens
Borough Council**



Causeway Coast and Glens

Digital Strategy – Summary Report

**FINAL DRAFT FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION
30th November 2020**

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1. Background

1.1 Integrated Approach

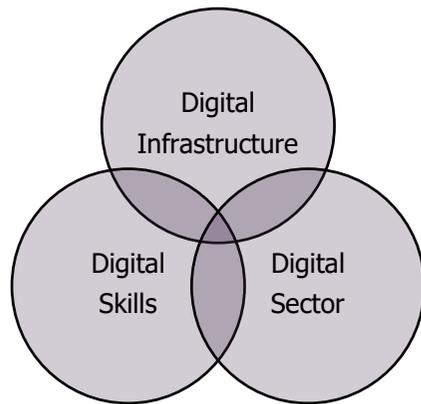


Figure 1. The three themes of the Digital Strategy

The **Causeway Coast and Glens – Digital Strategy** has been developed in support of a range of local and national social, economic and digital strategies. The digital strategy addresses the three inter-linked themes of sector, infrastructure and skills as illustrated in Figure 1. The digital strategy is also an input to the Growth Deal currently being defined for Causeway Coast and Glens.

1.2 Context

The digital strategy is developed in parallel with, and is informed by, the broader economic strategy for Causeway Coast and Glens and took into account a range of digital strategies, initiatives and developments from the UK and beyond that establish the context for development in the Borough.

The strategic context (in Figure 2 below) provides a background of requirements, targets, inputs and best practice that help shape and form the **Causeway Coast and Glens – Digital Strategy**.

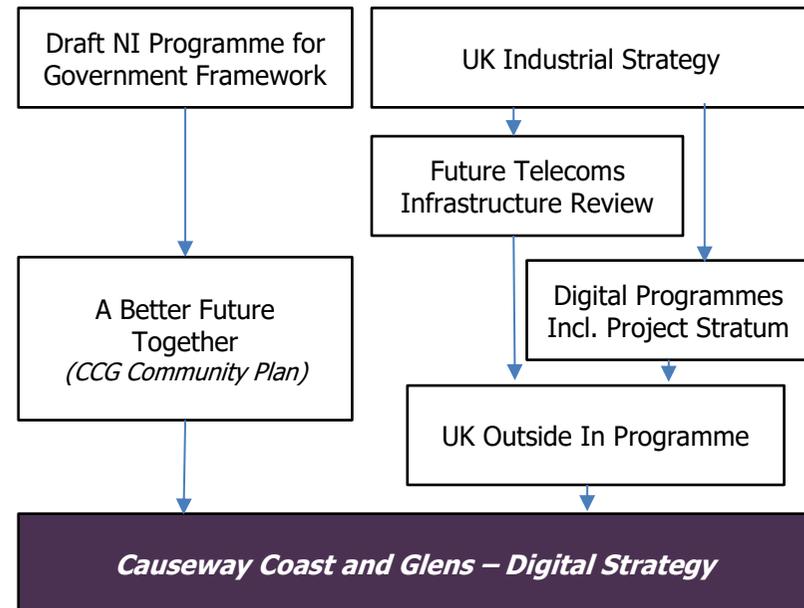


Figure 2. The context of the digital strategy

1.3 Uncertain Times

The current economic and social background to the development of the Digital Strategy is very challenging and uncertain. The combination of COVID-19 and Brexit impacts all aspects of the economy and society – with little clarity over how severe the impact may be, or how long it will last.

However, against this unprecedented background of uncertainty, recent events have demonstrated clearly the critical importance of reliable high-bandwidth digital communications and applications, how essential it is that they are integrated throughout the economy and society, and how important it is that everyone has the skills to use them effectively.

1.4 Existing Developments

Although existing digital infrastructure in the Borough is relatively weak compared to other areas of the UK, other strategic developments are about to deliver significant change. The Full Fibre Northern Ireland (FFNI) and Project Stratum will soon begin deployment – turning Northern Ireland from one of the poorest connected areas in the UK, to one of the best connected in Europe.

Ensuring that the people and businesses in Causeway Coast and Glens adapt to this change and make the most of the opportunity available to them is the critical challenge of the ***Causeway Coast and Glens – Digital Strategy***.

1.5 Key Requirements

The digital sector itself is a very small part of the economy in the Borough, and this is emphasised by the strong growth of the sector in Belfast. Attempting to grow the digital sector in competition with Belfast is unlikely to be successful, and counter-productive to the needs of the Borough.

However, the digital transformation of business and service delivery is essential to ensure long-term prosperity. The digital sector businesses and individuals in the Borough must be enabled to provide this support – either directly or by engaging with the digital sector in Belfast and elsewhere. This collaborative approach ensures the maximum wider economic development for the Borough, as well as providing a direct opportunity for the development of the digital sector.

The key requirements are to:

- Ensure current and emerging digital technologies are available and accessible to all.
- Support digital transformation of key economic sectors to ensure their sustainability and growth.
- Establish a digital skills ecosystem for the Borough – both directly within the Borough, and as a conduit for skills from Belfast and beyond.

2. Digital Infrastructure

2.1 Fixed broadband

Digital infrastructure provides the foundation for growth for all modern economies and communities.

2.1.1 Decent Broadband (USO)

'Decent Broadband' with a download speed of at least 10Mbps has been proposed as the minimum acceptable standard for all.

Figure 3 shows that the availability of decent broadband is reasonable along the coast, around the main towns and in the middle of the Borough. However, the Glens and the south of the Borough have a large proportion of premises without access to decent broadband. There are many areas where more than 50% of properties cannot access this minimum acceptable standard.

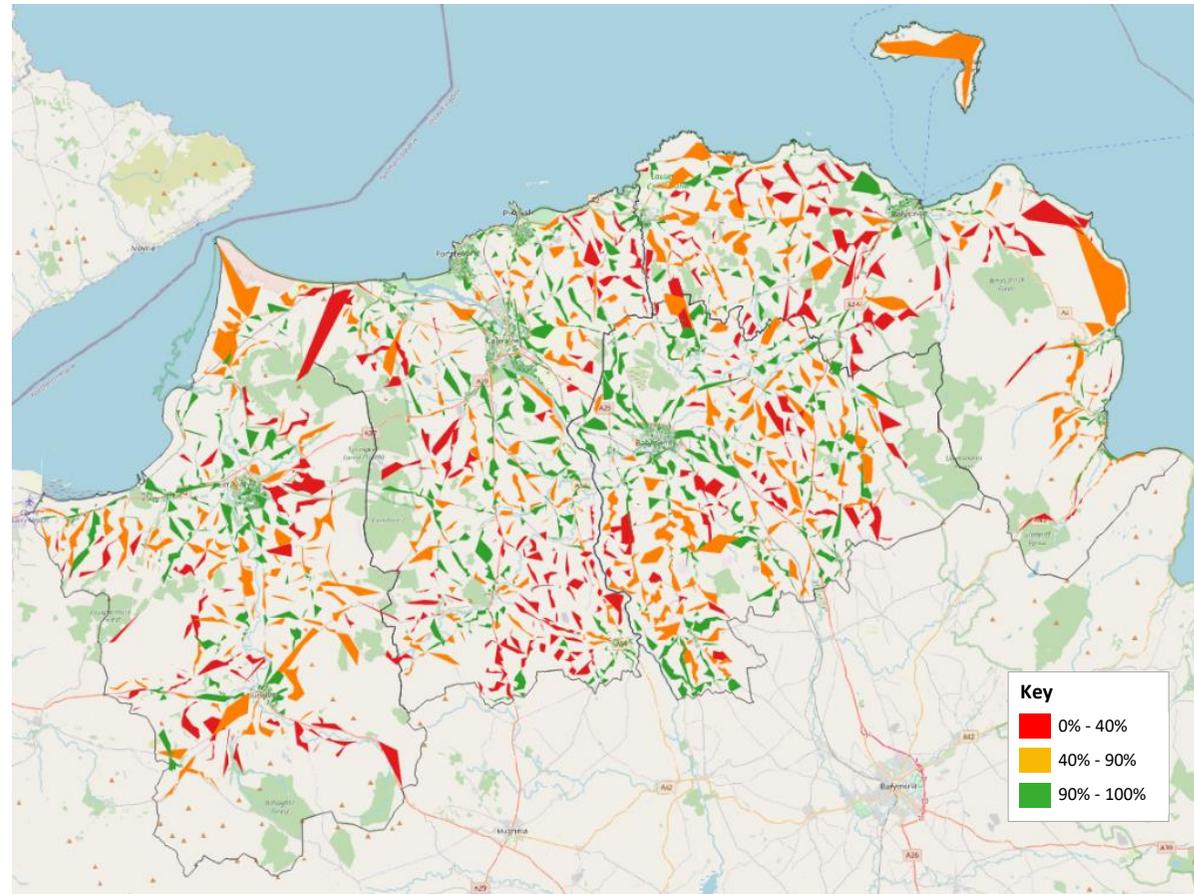


Figure 3: Availability of decent broadband and above in Causeway Coast and Glens

[Source: Ofcom data]

2.1.2 Full Fibre

Although superfast broadband provides an important step-change improvement compared to basic broadband, full fibre broadband is now widely accepted as the key strategic digital infrastructure for the future.

Mapping the availability of full fibre broadband in Figure 4 shows that there is very little availability outside of the main urban centres of Limavady and Coleraine.

This position will be changed dramatically by Project Stratum. The project is expected to expand enormously the availability of fibre to serve the large proportion of properties in rural areas currently unable to receive superfast or decent broadband.

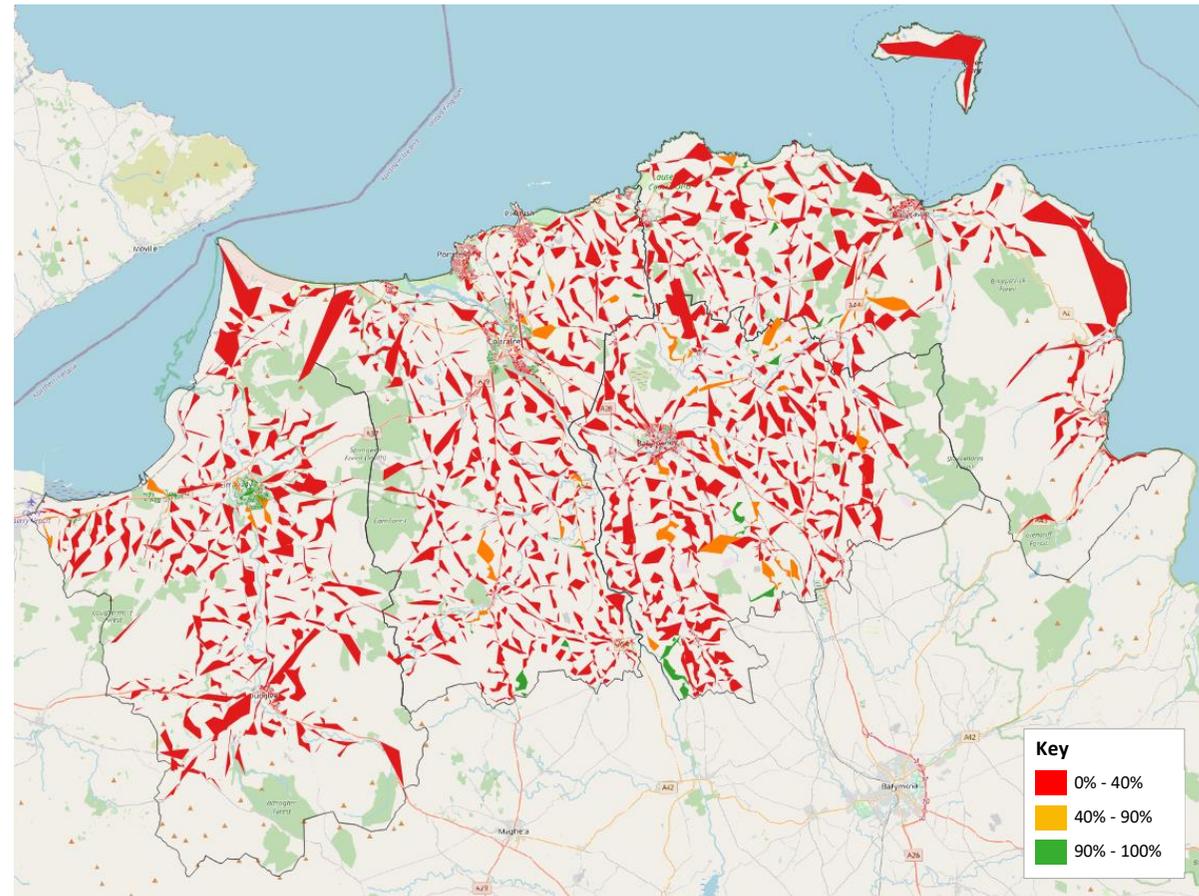


Figure 4: Availability of full fibre broadband in Causeway Coast and Glens [Source: Ofcom data]

2.2 Mobile Coverage

Mobile technologies are evolving with time and will continue to do so. In parallel with the mobile network developments, mobile devices evolve and access different networks for different requirements. The two major use cases for mobile communications are voice calls and access to data. Both are now delivered predominantly over 4G networks, and Wi-Fi connections are also critically important.

2.2.1 4G Coverage

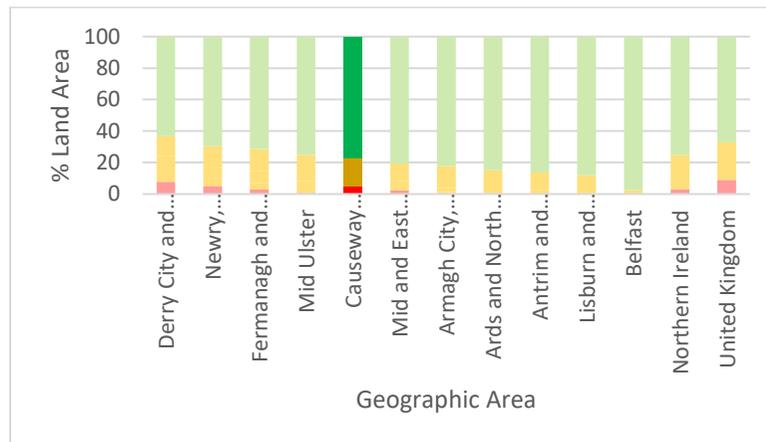


Figure 5: 4G outdoor coverage of Northern Ireland Boroughs
[Source: Ofcom Data]

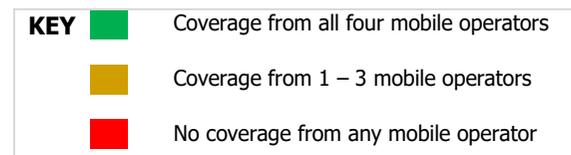


Figure 5 shows how that roll out has covered Northern Ireland. 77% of the land area of Causeway Coast and Glens is covered by all four operators sufficient for outdoor coverage. Worryingly, nearly 5% of the land area has no 4G coverage at all – the third worst of all the boroughs in Northern Ireland.

2.2.2 Wi-Fi

Wi-Fi is a vital complement to mobile communications and, where provided, is the users' preferred means to access the internet. As voice over Wi-Fi develops, we expect that it will become very important also for the delivery of voice communications between mobile devices.

Until March 2020, Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council provided public realm Wi-Fi service in the five major towns in the Borough: Coleraine, Limavady, Portrush, Ballycastle and Ballymoney. In March 2020, the service was switched off to save money.

The model whereby the council provided the Wi-Fi service was probably not ideal. Establishing an appropriate partnership operation with a suitable commercial operator may provide a more sustainable long-term solution.

2.3 Developing Technologies

In addition to fixed broadband and current mobile coverage, there are emerging technologies which are expected to play an important future role in supporting tourism, healthcare and other services.

2.3.1 LPWAN

Low Power Wide Area Networks (LPWAN) provide long range networks that allow exchange of data at relatively slow speeds over large areas. LPWAN is seen as a key enabler of the Internet of Things (IoT), particularly in less populated areas which are less likely to have high capacity 5G or Wi-Fi networks to support IoT data communication.

There are nine LoRaWAN gateways which offer coverage in Causeway Coast and Glens and provide significant coverage throughout the Borough. Much of the east and some of the west of the Borough has no coverage. Extending this coverage to cover the whole of the Borough would be a relatively straightforward and inexpensive task.

2.3.2 5G

The greatly anticipated 5G developments bring the potential for significantly improved mobile data connectivity through a range of frequencies. 5G brings the potential for a wide range of completely new applications, and the UK Government has an ambition to develop a world-leading position in the development.

In mid-2019, both Vodafone and EE launched 5G services in major cities (including Belfast in the case of EE and Vodafone) with an ongoing deployment programme. This urban roll-out is continuing and has expanded to include larger towns in Britain. In Northern Ireland, we expect 5G roll-out to be confined to the vicinity of Belfast for some time.

2.4 Digital Infrastructure Key Priorities

The communications infrastructure in Causeway Coast and Glens is poor relative to that in many other parts of Northern Ireland, with very poor coverage outside of the main towns. Project Stratum will change this, and provides an important context to infrastructure developments.

Four key priorities are identified:

- **Ubiquitous broadband** – extending the deployment of full fibre broadband to those premises not covered by Project Stratum.
- **Support wireless infrastructure** – LPWAN, 5G and Wi-Fi networks present important new economic opportunities.
- **Reduce barriers to deployment** – encouraging commercial deployment and supporting public sector initiatives to maximise benefit.
- **Digital Transformation** to adequately support remote working and digital transformation.

3. Digital Skills

3.1 Importance of Digital Skills

More and more products and services are becoming 'digital'. Whether that relates to the online retail of day-to-day products, or to online interaction with banks, the public sector and other service providers. Digital technologies are also increasingly central to the way we communicate as a society.

Because of the increasing demand for online delivery of services, and the increasing efficiency savings possible through digital transformation, it is increasingly difficult for businesses, organisations or individuals to not participate.

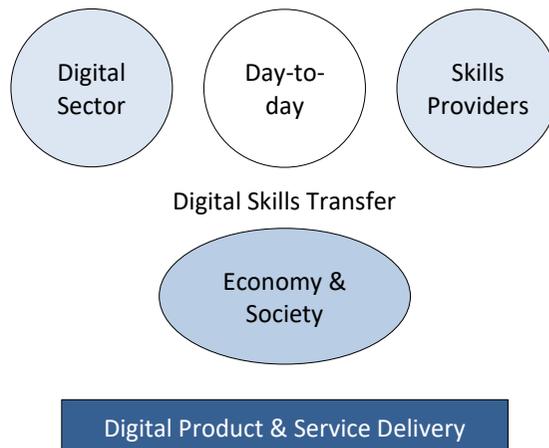


Figure 6: Digital Skills Transfer

The requirement for a widespread coverage of digital skills across the whole population has been driven home by the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown. The need to be able to work from home, learn from home and communicate with family remotely all depend on a basic level of digital fluency.

3.2 Developing Digital Skills

Digital Skills development is required to address four key skills areas:

- **Basic digital skills** – needed by everyone to allow them to participate in an increasingly digital economy and society.
- **Professional digital skills** – needed by businesses and organisations to allow them to operate their standard digital processes and systems.
- **Sector-specific digital skills** – as most sectors become more reliant on digital technologies, there is an increasing need to support the availability of these skills.
- **Advanced digital skills** – needed to develop the new generation of advanced digital products and services.

3.2.1 Basic Digital Skills

The OECD Skills Strategy Northern Ireland equates digital literacy with basic literacy and numeracy as a foundational skill, essential to participate in society. The importance of digital literacy has been highlighted by experience of the COVID-19 pandemic where

participation in employment and education has relied on a basic level of digital literacy.

The Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Education and Assessment (CCEA) has created a framework to integrate digital skills across the different stages of the Northern Ireland education system, building thinking skills into the process of learning about digital devices and creating qualifications that are unique to Northern Ireland.

However, discussions with teachers have indicated that the implementation of the curriculum is patchy and highly dependent on the availability of enthusiastic teachers on the ground to make a real impact. A complement to the curriculum is the Digital Schools of Distinction programme which provides a highly supportive environment for staff to develop digital skills in schools.

Of course, current digital skills training in schools will miss the many hundreds of thousands of people who have passed through the education system and emerged with little or no digital skills. Reaching these people can be more of a challenge.

Ulster University has the Widening Access Fund designed to raise skill levels in the general population to make higher education more accessible. Targeting digital skills training at companies with a high proportion of manual workers may be a fruitful route to reach those with low levels of digital skills who are outside the education system.

3.2.2 Professional Digital Skills

The CCGBC *Digital Causeway* initiative supports around 100 businesses each year to embrace digital technology and incorporate digital platforms into their business operations and procedures. It operates at a basic level helping businesses to cross the digital threshold and giving them basic skills and routes to advancement.

Further education is served in Causeway Coast and Glens by the Northern Regional College (NRC) with sites in Coleraine and Ballymoney and the North Western Regional College (NWRC) which has a site in Limavady. They offer a wide range of computing and engineering courses at FE and HE level.

3.2.3 Sector Specific Digital Skills

The application of digital skills is becoming increasingly important to all economic sectors. For example, as the tourism sector becomes more sophisticated in its online presence, there will emerge a strong need for a significant number of professionals capable of generating and maintaining digital content regarding tourist attractions around the whole of the Borough. The FE colleges in the Borough should be made aware of the need for courses that help professionals identify, record, post and maintain high-quality engaging digital content. The Digital Causeway programme should also provide basic training in content generation and maintenance.

3.2.4 Advanced Digital Skills

The development of advanced digital skills requires action beyond standard technical education programmes. Continuous professional development, digital sector networking and targeted research programmes are required to build these more advanced skills.

Professional associations are very important to maintaining and updating skills and knowledge. The digital space is largely covered by two associations, both of which are active in Northern Ireland:

- The **Institution of Engineering and Technology** (IET) has an annual programme of around 20 events in Northern Ireland covering tours, lectures, young professional skills building, competitions and awards and social events. Most of these events are in Belfast with a smattering in Derry, Craigavon and Antrim.
- The **British Computer Society** (BCS) has a Dedicated Northern Ireland branch which runs a programme of between 10 and 15 events per annum, mainly in Belfast.

It is clear that proximity to the strong digital cluster in Belfast is a significant benefit in developing advanced digital skills within the digital sector in Causeway Coast and Glens – the levels of opportunity afforded to the digital cluster in Belfast would simply not be available in Causeway Coast and Glens in isolation.

Extending the strengths of the digital cluster into Causeway Coast and Glens presents a further strategic goal. Focusing on key economic sector requirements in the Borough (such as the visitor

economy) will allow Causeway Coast and Glens to extend elements of the Belfast digital cluster into the Borough and establish strength through a depth of advanced digital skills.

3.3 Digital Skills Key Priorities

Digital skills are important to everyone as society becomes more digital. There is a hierarchy of needs which goes from basic skills (needed to function generally) through professional skills (needed to function in the modern digital professional environment) to advanced skills (needed to develop the software and systems which keep expanding the digital capabilities of society).

The importance of digital skills is embedded in the education system in the Borough. There remains a need for additional training for those already out of education who did not benefit from such a background and suffer some level of digital exclusion.

Targeting specific skills needed for digital transformation of key economic sectors in Causeway Coast and Glens provides an opportunity to ensure maximum economic benefit of more advanced digital skills training.

4. Digital Sector

4.1 Importance of the Digital Sector

There is often some uncertainty regarding the actual *identity* of the digital sector, and there is a range of definitions of the sector. One important factor is the importance of digital professionals in all sectors throughout a modern economy. For this reason, we have adopted the definition to guide the development of the digital strategy:

Organisations and individuals involved in the design, development, manufacture, support, maintenance and application of digital products, components, networks, systems and platforms – including, hardware, firmware and software.

In terms of economic data however, we view the sector as the standard Information and Communications sector. Economic data shows the sector is only a small part of the economy in Causeway Coast and Glens and growing more slowly than the economy as a whole for the Borough. In total, there are just over 200 companies in the Borough in the Information and Communications sector, employing just over 1,000 people. The size of the sector in the Borough does not, however, mean that it does not have a critical

part in the ongoing economic development. Indeed, one of the four strands of activity for the Causeway Coast and Glens Growth Deal is Innovation and Digital.

The digital sector in Causeway Coast and Glens has three critical roles:

- The digital sector in CCG is a part of the wider digital sector (in particular Belfast) that is driving economic growth.
- The sector must support growth of the visitor economy and other key sectors through digital transformation.
- With increasing pressure on public services, the sector must support the digital transformation of key service delivery.

A series of online video interviews with key businesses and stakeholders in the digital sector informed the development of the digital strategy. A number of key recurring issues were identified:

- **Access to skills** – the ability to attract and retain skilled employees was identified as a significant barrier to development.
- **Belfast migration** – the Borough does have the skilled workforce needed in the sector, but they are attracted to larger companies (and higher salaries) in Belfast.
- **Need for networking** – the ability to meet with other companies in the sector is important and lacks focus at present.

These key themes are considered in the context of the wider economic issue, and in particular the three critical roles for the sector identified above.

4.2 Developing the Digital Sector

It is clear that the importance of the digital sector extends far beyond the direct economic impact of the sector itself. The development of the digital sector in Causeway Coast and Glens must reflect this importance throughout the economy, and beyond the geographic boundaries of the Borough.

Four key opportunities to support the digital sector in Causeway Coast and Glens are identified:

- **Collaboration Hubs** – buildings and facilities to provide a local focus for the sector development in the Borough.
- **Networking programme** – a programme of events to encourage networking as a part of the wider digital cluster in Belfast and beyond.
- **Incubator support** – providing cost effective opportunity for new business start-ups within the wider Northern Ireland digital cluster.
- **Targeted support for economic growth** – the visitor economy is central to the Borough. Current developments are using digital technologies to transform service delivery. This provides a key market opportunity to develop the digital sector – and a model for engagement and support between sectors.

4.2.1 Collaboration Hubs

Physical hub locations would be highly beneficial for the development of the digital sector in Causeway Coast and Glens. They can also complement and extend the collaborative hub infrastructure for the sector in Belfast – providing greater capacity and choice.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, large numbers of people in the Borough who normally commute to Belfast are working from home. This may become a permanent change in working habits. Hubs can help remote workers operate more effectively.

Hubs need to provide physical space closely linked to sources of appropriate support. Locations need to offer:

- Excellent communications infrastructure
- Incubator space
- Communal space to support networking (café, etc)
- Meeting rooms
- Event spaces
- Hot desking facilities

Appropriate locations were considered and discussed with existing digital companies and sector stakeholders. The Data Centre on the Enterprise Zone just outside Coleraine could be a suitable location for such a hub. A smaller hub is being developed in Ballycastle. Other locations such as Limavady may also benefit.

4.2.2 Networking Programme

Networking helps to support effective collaboration between companies and is an essential element in maintaining sector development awareness and skills.

Maintaining links and encouraging networking with other digital sector businesses throughout Northern Ireland and the Belfast digital cluster presents an opportunity for ongoing collaboration.

Developing and delivering an effective programme of networking events is a perfect opportunity to continue and develop this sector collaboration across Northern Ireland.

Careful attention should be paid to the 'wrap-around' services offered in successful hubs such as the Ormeau Baths in Belfast. Any networking programme should be modelled on successful programmes elsewhere.

4.2.3 Incubator Support

The strength and growth of the digital sector in Belfast provides a clear opportunity for Causeway Coast and Glens to provide a 'feeder' incubator capability for the wider Northern Ireland cluster. Causeway Coast and Glens can offer a supportive environment (and lower cost structure) for new digital businesses to form, with the growth opportunity in Belfast nearby or in Derry in the west of the Borough.

Collaboration hubs will provide much of the infrastructure required to support new business start-ups; they also provide a focus and

environment for other support activities – for example generic entrepreneurial business skills training and advice programmes.

4.2.4 Supporting Key Business Sectors

Although the digital sector in Causeway Coast and Glens is small, it has a vital role to play in supporting the other major sectors of the economy of the Borough. It will support other sectors such as tourism, manufacturing, agriculture and the delivery of public services.

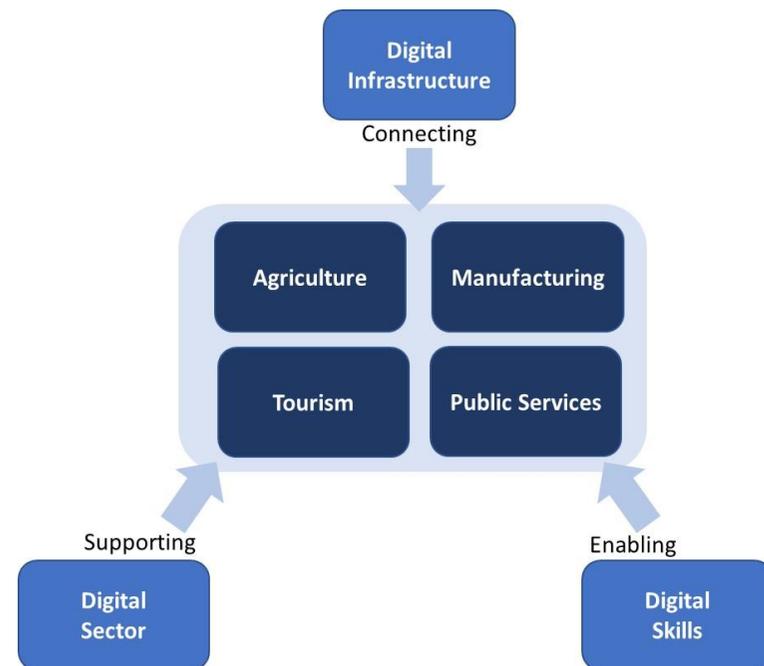


Figure 7: The effect of the Digital Strategy on key sectors

Tourism is an important example. The sector is vitally important to the economy of the Borough and one which has been devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Visitors are usually attracted initially to a small number of major attraction sites; the majority of visitors rarely stray far from these major attractions. The aim of Digital Tourism developments is to encourage visitors to extend the scope (and economic impact) of their stay.

A Digital Tourism strategy for Causeway Coast and Glens requires coordinated development on three levels:

- **Platform** – to provide core advanced functionality to engage visitors and maximise economic impact.
- **Content** – to give substance and sustainability to technical developments across multiple platforms, websites and Apps.
- **Infrastructure** – incorporating LPWAN to gather IoT data and Wi-Fi to deliver rich content to end users.

The impact of this work will be greatly enhanced if the Borough works with other tourism-intensive local authorities, and in particular with Belfast City Council.

The National Trust is currently developing a Digital Tourism capability, including rich Augmented Reality content for the Giant's Causeway based on a platform developed in Belfast. This platform presents an ideal basis for development that complements the Simpleview content and platform that is currently being rolled by

Tourism NI (discovernorthernireland.com) and CCGBC (visitcausewaycoastandglens.com).

4.3 Digital Sector Key Priorities

The digital sector in Causeway Coast and Glens has a critical role to play in supporting the digital transformation of businesses and service delivery in the Borough.

Four key actions are identified to support the digital sector development in the Borough:

- **Create Digital Sector Hubs** – buildings in suitable locations in the Borough to provide a physical focus for development activities in the sector.
- **Networking programme** – establishing a collaborative networking programme with Belfast and other local authorities to support sector and skills development.
- **Incubator support** – providing cost effective opportunity for new business start-ups within the wider Northern Ireland digital cluster.
- **Support for other key sectors of the economy** – the digital sector has a key role to play in supporting tourism, manufacturing, agriculture and the delivery of public services as the community and economy recovers from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

5. Delivery

Digital Infrastructure

Ubiquitous broadband

Identify the premises not reached by Project Stratum and ensure connectivity

Support wireless infrastructure

Ensure availability of Wi-Fi and LPWAN infrastructure and services

Reduce barriers to roll-out

Adopt the 'barrier busting' recommendations from DCMS to ensure efficient network roll-out

Digital Transformation in the Council

Update Council IT systems and support to make them fit for purpose.

Digital Skills

Basic Skills

Ensure effective focus on in digital skills for all throughout education and post-education.

Professional Skills

Support continuous professional development and apprenticeships programmes for digital companies.

Advanced Skills

Develop and maintain networking opportunities for digital sector throughout Northern Ireland and internationally.

Digital Sector

Create Digital Hubs

Develop innovation hub locations to support digital business development.

Networking Support

Develop a programme of events to encourage networking in the Borough and beyond.

Support Start-ups

Establish support programmes, focused at hub locations to encourage and support SMEs.

Support Key Sectors

Develop platform, systems and content to maximise performance of key economic sectors.

DRAFT



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