

Smart Waterford Local Digital Strategy

Strategic Issues Paper

December 2020

Waterford City & County Council is preparing a Digital Strategy to encourage and support communities and businesses to reap the full rewards of a digitally enabled society.



As part of this process the Council wishes to hear your views on the key issues to be explored and addressed in the Digital Strategy. This Issues Paper has been developed to support consultation and stakeholder engagement. It presents an overview of the strategy framework, sets out questions and encourages discussion that should be considered in the Strategy review. This phase will be followed by the preparation and publication of a Digital Strategy.

In planning for Local digital strategies, The Department of Rural and Community Development have developed a thematic framework, built around 7 core pillars. These pillars are closely aligned to the Local Economic and Community Plans (LECPs) of local authorities and reflect best international practice in respect of digital strategies.

The strategic pillars identified are:

- **Digital Economy** - *Making Waterford the best place to start and foster your business.*
- **Citizens & Community** - *Engaging Internal and External Voice of Customer to Improve Local Government Service Excellence. Digital skills*
- **Digital Infrastructure & Data** - *Building digital infrastructure for Waterford.*
- **Digital Council** - *Planning for the future.*
- **Smart City**- *Promote innovative solutions, Better manage public realm using better data*

Waterford's Digital Strategy will be built around this framework with the aim of ensuring maximum digital optimization and transformation for citizens, businesses and government. This Issues Paper will set out specific objectives and potential issues associated with each pillar.

The purpose of this Issues Paper is to ask members of the public for their comments, submissions or suggestions relating to the Digital Strategy pillars (and specific objectives) as set out in the information below.

1 The Purpose of this Issues Paper

This Public Consultation will run from Tuesday 22nd December to Friday 23rd January 2021.

Get involved.

Local input is considered vital to the entire Digital Strategy process and we value what you have to say. We hope that this Issues Paper will stimulate interest and initiate debate resulting in constructive, positive and helpful feedback.

Make a submission on the Issues Paper.

You can submit by email to digital@waterfordcouncil.ie.

Alternatively, send your submission by post to Broadband Officer, IT Department, Waterford City & County Council, Civic Offices, Dungarvan . Co Waterford .

Only submissions that are named, addressed and received by Friday 23rd January 2021. can be accepted. Submissions should not be made in more than one format.

Data protection

All submissions will be published during the consultation period.

All submissions should include your name and a contact address, and where relevant, details of any organisation, community group or company etc., which you represent.

To assist Waterford City & County Council in complying with data protection legislation, you are asked to provide this information on a separate sheet. Details, including the names of those making submissions may be shared with relevant Council departments or their agents involved in the making of the Digital Strategy and may form part of reports linked to the Digital Strategy.

All submissions or observations with respect to the Digital Strategy for Waterford City & County Council, made to the Digital Strategy team within the stated period, will be taken into consideration before the creation of the Digital Strategy.

2 Digital Strategy Context

What is a digital strategy?

A digital strategy is a plan that sets out what the Council wants to achieve and outlines strategic goals and objectives to make the most of digital opportunities for Waterford. It is a living document that will change overtime and adapt with an ever-evolving digital society. The Strategy will set out an overall vision for the County outlining several core objectives that will include a clear path for implementation.

Why are we creating a digital strategy?

Waterford is made up of a mix of rural and urban areas. The importance of access to high speed broadband services in both urban and rural Ireland has been well documented. The [National Broadband Plan \(NBP\)](#) is a government initiative to deliver high speed broadband services to all businesses and households in Ireland. Waterford City & County Council is committed to facilitating the rollout of the NBP and recognises the vital role broadband will play in Waterford 's urban and rural economic and social development. In line with the NBP deliverables Waterford City & County Council is developing a digital strategy to maximize the opportunities of digital transformation for the benefit of our society and economy, ensuring that Waterford is an even better place for people to live, work, visit and do business in.

Waterford focus

Waterford has a population of 116,000. Waterford City population is projected to grow by 60%by 2040, driving a 33% increase in the South-East region population, which will reach>800,000 by 2040.. In order to create an inclusive digital strategy for all who live, work and visit Waterford we are engaging with community, industry and government stakeholders for feedback and collaboration.

Digital landscape

As digital infrastructure in Ireland continues to grow, it empowers communities and citizens through the provision of and access to information, resources, and services offered by local authorities (data, grants, forms, etc.), state agencies (taxes, passports, etc.) and the charitable/non-for-profit sector (data, research, etc.).

According to the European Commission, Ireland currently has one of the lowest levels of basic digital skills in the EU. With 9 out of 10 jobs requiring digital skills in the future it is crucial that local government plays its part by encouraging and facilitating citizens to upskill and grow their careers. By focusing our efforts, we hope to reduce the skills gap and encourage more young people into this sector.

3 Digital Waterford

Vision Statement

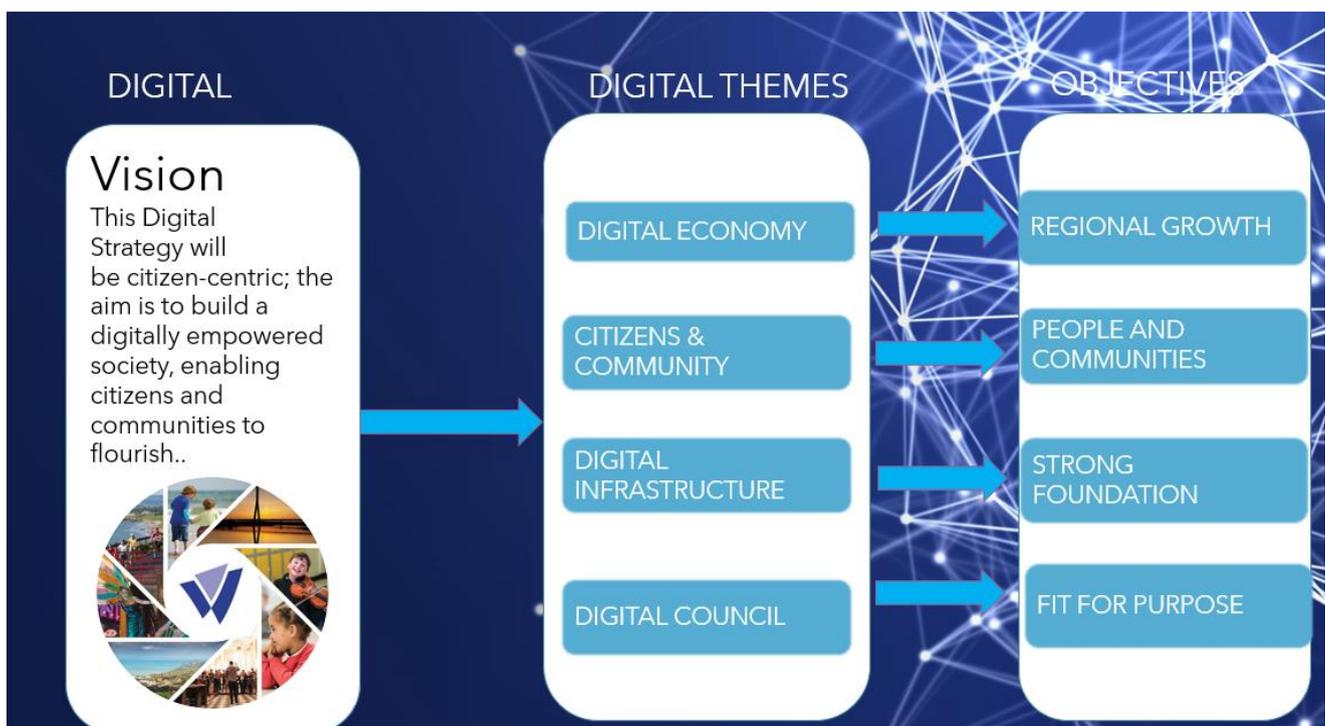
Waterford 's Digital Strategy will be closely aligned to the [Waterford City & County Council Corporate Plan](#),

Waterford, as the Capital of the South East will be a vibrant and sustainable place for all its people who live, work, visit or invest here.

Core Objectives

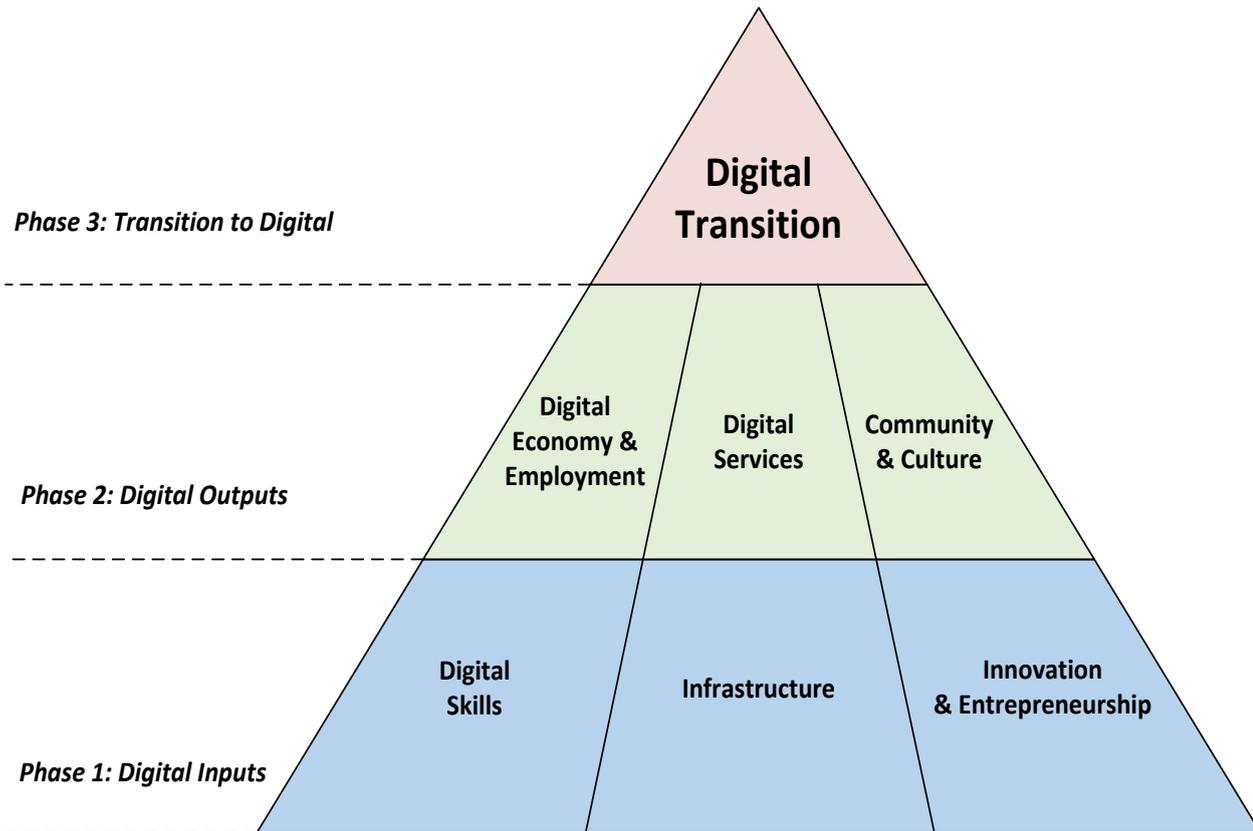
Waterford's Digital Strategy aims to:

- **Transform key public services, focusing on driving efficiencies and accessibility for all, designing digital public services that are inclusive by default.**
- **Promote digital skills and services through Libraries, PPN, LEO and Community Centres across Waterford.**
- **Make Waterford the best place to start and grow a business.**
- **Develop digital services and infrastructure across Waterford.**
- **Increase collaboration and engagement with public sector, private sector and community stakeholders.**
- **Smart city Enhance data-sharing capabilities, open data portal and data driven**



4 Digital Strategy Pillars

The Waterford Digital Strategy will be built around a thematic framework consisting of five core pillars – Digital economy, citizen & community , digital infrastructure , digital council and smart city .We want to hearyourviews on the issues raised in these pillars.



Digital Economy – *Making Waterford the best place to start and grow your business*

Supporting and encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship is vital for the future of Waterford and increases the overall attractiveness of the county for international investment.

When you are making your submission you may wish to consider the following questions as part of your response:

- **What facilities would encourage you to grow a business in Waterford?**
- **What supports should be in place to help grow business in rural Waterford?**
- **How can we support SMEs through dedicated digital programmes?**
- **How can we seek to attract international investment into Waterford?**
- **How can we use smart technologies to improve liveability and competitiveness?**
- **How can we encourage and develop entrepreneurship amongst young people?**
- **How can we improve our digital tourism offering?**

6 Citizen and community

Citizen and community

The Council aims to adopt a community-first approach to digital, engaging with citizens by digital and non-digital means. It is important that the digital strategy is inclusive and caters for all citizens.

When you are making your submission you may wish to consider the following questions as part of your response:

- **How can we encourage and develop community led digital initiatives?**
- **As a member of the Waterford community how would you like the Council to engage with you?**
- **Is there any vital digital infrastructure the Council should develop for communities?**
- **What are the most important areas the digital strategy should focus on for the community?**
- **How can collaborative technologies help bring communities together?**
- **How can we help older people live independently for longer?**
- **How can we encourage uptake of digital skills workshops for community groups?**
- **How can we improve citizen well being?**



7 Citizen and community

Digital Skills – *Promoting digital skills services across the County*

Digital skills are a key factor for socioeconomic development and employability. It is important to enable and promote digital inclusion, digital literacy and digital skills training.

When you are making your submission you may wish to consider the following questions as part of your response:

- **What should we do to help address the digital skills gap?**
- **Should we carry out digital skills gap analysis of Waterford?**
- **What digital services/tools would you like to see in your local library, community centre or public buildings?**
- **What additional services would you like to see from the mobile library service?**
- **What can we do to help senior citizens to learn basic digital skills?**
- **Are there any specific supports that we should include in the strategy to help people in minority groups utilise technology?**
- **How can we bridge the digital divide in Waterford?**

8 Infrastructure

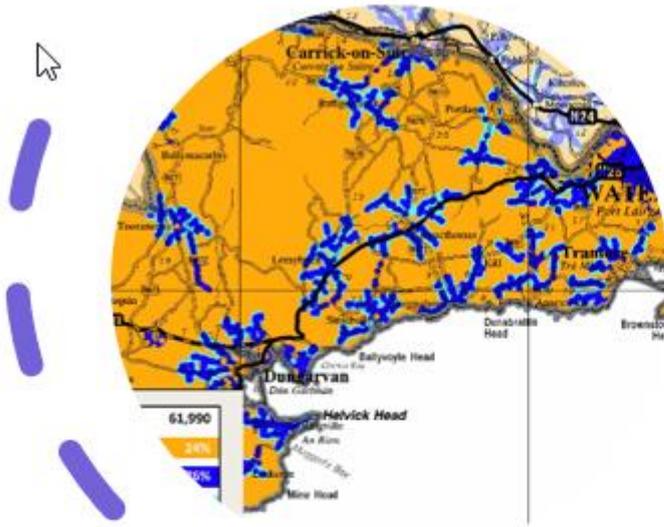
Infrastructure - *Building a digital infrastructure for Waterford*

In order to put Waterford on the map as the leader in digital innovation and advancement and to attract international investment we need to improve and develop our digital infrastructure in urban and rural Waterford, ultimately helping to dissolve the urban/rural divide and improve social and economic development.

When you are making your submission you may wish to consider the following

questions as part of your response:

- **What infrastructure would you like to see developed in Waterford?**
- **How can we redevelop or reuse underutilised infrastructure? What improvements can be made to the facilities in Waterford?**
- |
- :



Digital Services – *Building better public services for all*

The core aim of the digital strategy is to continue to develop and transform public services which are better, easier, more efficient and accessible for citizens.

When you are making your submission you may wish to consider the following questions as part of your response:

- **How can we become an inclusive digital Council?**
- **What improvements would you like to see made to our services?**
- **In what way could the Council support people to use online services?**
- **What do you see as the main benefits to using online public services?**
- **What do you see as the main barriers to using online public services?**
- **How can we seek to use digital technologies to drive innovative services?**
- **How should we incorporate collaborative inclusive design of our services?**
- **Can you identify areas that technology can foster innovation in public services?**



10 Smart City

Waterford is a participant of the all Ireland smart cities forum. This is a community of practise focused on the advancement of cities in both Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland through the development of and value creation generated by smart city programmes.

When you are making your submission you may wish to consider the following questions as part of your response:

- **What Smart infrastructure would you like to see developed in Waterford?**
- **What smart city themes do you think are most important for Waterford?** Sustainable transport Smart gov/council
Smart mobility Connected communities
Smart buildings Other
Energy, water & waste
- **How can we increase awareness around the topics of data ethics, data rights, data protection and cybersecurity?**
- **How can we deliver relevant information to citizens in real time?**
- **What type of data would you most like to see made available by the Council and other public bodies?**
-

Transport
Environment
Business
Housing

Health
Arts, cultures & Heritage
Population

10 Transitioning to Digital

Transitioning to Digital – *Planning for the future*

In order to reap the full rewards of a digitally enabled society this pillar focuses on establishing good governance, research, analysis and evaluation. Together we want to create a long term vision that includes a clear path for implementation.

When you are making your submission you may wish to consider the following questions as part of your response:

- **What is your digital vision for Waterford?**
- **Are there any underpinning principles that should be included in the Digital Strategy?**
- **How would you like to be informed and have your say on the Digital Strategy?**
- **Is there anything stopping you as a citizen from using more digital technology in any aspect of your life?**



The consultation process

You can make a submission on the Issues paper up until Friday 23rd January 2021. Your input will inform the development of the Digital Strategy. Drafting of the Digital Strategy will commence once the consultation feedback has been analysed. The Strategy will set out an overall vision for the County outlining a number of strategic goals and objectives to make the most of digital opportunities for Waterford.

Your views matters

We are seeking your help as we draft the Digital Strategy. We would like to know what is important to you; what your concerns are; let us have your feedback on the issues raised; as well as your digital vision for Waterford and how we can get there together. Your input on the issues; as well as an understanding of shared and diverse views and values are essential for mapping a common way forward. We welcome your engagement and we want to hear what you have to say.

**So have your say and help us develop a Digital Strategy for Waterford .
Comment on Waterford Digital Strategy Strategic Issues Paper.
Closing Date: Friday 23rd January 2021**