



Report to:	Business, Economy and Innovation Committee
Date:	31 January 2024
Subject:	Digital Blueprint Draft
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Is this a key decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information or appendices?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, state paragraph number of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, Part 1:	
Are there implications for equality and diversity?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

1. Purpose of this Report

1.1. This report provides a draft of the new Digital Blueprint. Committee members' feedback and endorsement are sought.

1.2. The Committee is requested to consider the following:

- Is the content of the Digital Blueprint reflective of the strengths and challenges of businesses and organisations in the region?

- Are the outcomes, as they relate to businesses and organisations, ambitious enough? If not, how could they be bolder?

- Do you have any other feedback or advice on how the Digital Blueprint could be improved, ahead of going to design?

2. Information

Background

Digital Blueprint

- 2.1 An update of the Digital Blueprint and the approach to its development was brought to the last Business, Economy, Innovation Committee on 9 November 2023 (as well as the Employment and Skills Committee on 19 October 2023 and the Place Committee on 26 October 2023.)
- 2.4 The Committee's feedback, which was largely positive, has been incorporated alongside the previous input from the then LEP Board members, private and public sector digital experts, private sector employers, academics and Local Authority members.
- 2.5 All private sector members of the Employment and Skills Committee (alongside Place Committee, Business, Innovation and Economy Committee, and LEP Board) were invited to a September 2023 workshop to help shape the themes of the Digital Blueprint.
- 2.6 A public consultation was live for four weeks from late October until late November 2023. This received 121 responses, and the results are embedded in the draft Digital Blueprint.

A Reminder of the Digital Blueprint's Approach

- 2.7 The Digital Blueprint focuses on the 'horizontal' or 'levers' of 'Place', 'People and Education' and 'Businesses and Organisations'.
- 'Place' refers to smart city initiatives, infrastructure development, connectivity and connected places.
 - 'People and Education' refers to digital: skills; inclusion; workforce development; educational pathways.
 - 'Business and Organisations' refers to digital: transformation; investment; entrepreneurship; innovation and research; trade and export promotion.
- 2.8 Interwoven with the horizontal, are 7 'vertical' or 'cultural' themes, all of which affect/are affected by the 'horizontal'. The verticals are as follows, in the order prioritised by the private sector committee member consultation:
- Ensuring that we are benefitting from **advanced technologies**, such as AI, VR, quantum.
 - **Showcasing** all the digital opportunities that West Yorkshire has to offer.
 - Ensuring that digital technologies make **day-to-day life** easier for West Yorkshire residents and businesses.
 - Tackling **digital exclusion**.
 - **Collaborative working** of digital stakeholders in West Yorkshire.
 - Understanding and using **data** to make West Yorkshire a well-connected digital destination.
 - Establishing digital as a method to help West Yorkshire work towards tackling the **climate emergency**.
- 2.9 Pending the endorsement of BEIC, ESC and Place Committees, the Digital Blueprint will be considered by the Combined Authority Committee, ahead of approval and publication.

3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

- 3.1 The Digital Blueprint aims to tackle the climate emergency through inclusion of elements such as evolution of digital skills supporting sectors developing and innovating their sustainability, support of 'better jobs', skills training for retrofitters of fibre and copper (internet access) and smart homes.
- 3.2 The Blueprint will also cover elements of adoption of digital tech by businesses and organisations which will facilitate efficiency and reduce waste, and refer to the opportunities for remote working (which has implications on reducing travel and paper). Digital and smart infrastructure will contribute to reduced energy use, such as smart street lamps, electric vehicles etc. Data capture from smart infrastructure – and local area energy plans and grids - will help with efficient and sustainable planning. Asset mapping allows delivery alignment and strategic sequencing to ensure we 'dig once', which saves on carbon.

4. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 4.1. Recommendations outlined in the Digital Blueprint will have implications for West Yorkshire businesses and organisations, aimed at catalysing inclusive growth using digital.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 5.1 Inclusion will underpin the Digital Blueprint, and is one of the 7 'verticals', and will be interwoven throughout other 'verticals'. The Blueprint will include and make recommendations regarding demographic information about those who are digitally excluded and reasons why e.g. skills, cost, or infrastructure. Stakeholders in community organisations and central government will be consulted on and included in recommendations around support those who are digitally excluded.
- 5.2 The Blueprint will consider EDI element such as digital as an accessibility tool for those with disabilities, e.g. working remotely. Regarding Business and Organisations, the Blueprint will take into consideration in recommendations elements such as the lack of diversity that is prevalent in venture capital investments. The Blueprint will map out the rural and urban 'not-spots' (areas without any internet coverage) to ensure that geography is not a barrier to participating in an increasingly digital society.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1. There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

8. Staffing Implications



8.1. There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report.

9. External Consultees

9.1. No external consultations have been undertaken.

10. Recommendations

10.1. That the Committee endorses the Digital Blueprint, with current progress in mind.

10.2. In the case of outstanding feedback from members, that the Committee delegates endorsement to the Chair, ahead of the final design.

11. Background Documents

There are no background documents referenced in this report.

12. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Digital Blueprint Draft.