Digital Strategy Consultation Feedback – consolidated report.

Cllrs and Officers Direct to CN

Section/Page	Comment	Action	Status
Demographics p14 etc	When I have written on this subject, I have been very careful to not assume any specific demographic so as not to alienate customers. I settled on the term 'the connected customer' (borrowed from Brian Solis) arguing that connected customers defy classifications of age, income, or geography. Grandmothers can be as tech savvy as teens. Consider defining a term such as 'the connected or tech-savvy resident' in the introduction and remove references such as 'young families' or 'modern' throughout so you don't alienate tech-savvy oldies (like me !).	Don't necessarily disagree but could sound too jargony, wouldn't use 'savvy' as slang, maybe connected resident?	Connected residents added where appropriate
Smart Homes p17	Consider not leading on internet connected fridges, the idea became devalued some time ago (see https://fuckyeahinternetfridge.tumblr.com) It has recently regained currency but actually home security (Ring doorbells etc) and Nest became surprisingly practical examples of IoT and smart homes that would be more recognisable to our residents. Fridges, weigh scales, and chop sticks soon though !	Good point Ring and Nest good examples	Fridge deleted following sentence updated
Dark Stores and Kitchens p21.	You might want to explain what these are. It's possible we will need to accommodate a mix of fully dark and hybrid and the borough will need to find a way to minimise the challenges and maximises the opportunities though I am stating the obvious here.	Could add a footnote explaining these?	Footnote changed pagination so added a short explanation in brackets
Where are we now p12	The first para references a 'radically better' experience but it's not clear what it's better than? Do you mean improved?	Possibly agree,	Changed to significantly improved

		improved is ok?	
Where are we now p12.	Generally, it might be worth explaining what is meant by 'better' experiences as it relates to online versus in-person services. Working with businesses like Sky, their ambitions relating to providing a better experience are about moving low-value (to the customer) high-cost (to the business) interactions online because their customers prefer it. Customers (and I suspect residents) want to do things themselves when it is easy, efficient, and always available. Of course, in the private sector, customers don't care about cost to the business in the way that residents care about costs/value for money. Also, I often have to remind private sector businesses that when it comes to digital, they are not competing in their sector anymore. Amazon, Uber, Airbnb et al set all our expectations for digital now. Likewise, the borough is no longer responding to expectations set in the public sector, the borough digital experience is being compared to what ever else is available to our residents on their devices.	Maybe, not sure this is implied and understood, need to discuss?	Added in a short reference to commercial digital interaction and how Council needs to be as good.
General	Finally, we need to include a reference to agile approaches. The public sector is much more regulated and, quite rightly, is very structured but digital projects tend to be agile and iterative. If nothing else, this will be seen in delivery to our residents. Digital projects may be trialled, withdrawn, partially delivered and iterated, none of which is failure as it might have been seen in traditional IT (or engineering) projects.	Could be too jargony, would average WBC resident understand what 'agile' is?	As agreed have left this.
Where are we now	we need to advertise a lot more of the stuff we are already providing. We are already Digital First in a number of service areas with customer directed to our website for all communications apart from the most vulnerable who get One to One help in completing on-line forms, etc… On the Council's current website we already provide a Customer Self Service portal:	I think we make enough references to the current website, we could add in some	Added a little extra narrative on P13 but only just a nudge.

	https://selfservice.woking.gov.uk/publicaccesslive/selfservice/dashboard.htm This allows residents & Businesses to have on-line access to their Council Tax account, Housing Benefit/Council Tax Support claim, Business Rates account, Council House Rent account, Bid of Properties on the Housing list and certain other Council Services.	narrative as this (what David says) is the current baseline?	
	Via the on-line Council Tax account, Housing Benefit/Council Tax Support claim, Business Rates account – customers can sign up for e-billing and e-notifications so that paper correspondence in no longer used.		
	On the Council website "Home" page on the right hand side there is links to : **Pay for it, Apply for it, Report It** The "Pay for it" link allows customers to pay on-line , set up Direct Debits, bank transfers, etc… for Council service.		
	The "Apply for it" link takes customers to numbers of service areas on-line forms but includes a library of Council Tax , Housing Benefit/Council Tax Support & Business Rates on-line forms which all customer are already directed to in relation to these services for new or changes of circumstances. These cover every type of circumstance a customer would need to report or apply for. We haven't provided paper forms now for years. There is also an on-line Benefit calculator to allow customers to check if they qualify before applying.		
	The " Report it" link takes customers to a variety of issues that can be reported on-line from Missed bins to Highway problems.		
	Thanks for forwarding. No further comments from me other than you might like to cite the Government's Net Zero Strategy which was published on 19 October and references how digitalisation can help towards achieving climate	Picked up in residents	Added to appendix A

	/ environment goals. Available here: <u>Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener - October 2021 (publishing.service.gov.uk)</u>	comments as well	

	Thanks for this consultation. We have taken a quick look and have no substantive comments to feedback, noting the document is more high level and aspirational than when we commented previously.
	
	I noted the following minor points as I read through:
	· P9 – it may be clearer to reorder the wording under the Planet Woking logo to:
	    o Planet Woking
	    o Climate Change Strategy
	    o Woking 2050
	    o Natural Woking
	· P13 – is 'report a pothole' a good example as we're not the highway authority. Perhaps 'report a problem in one of our parks'. (The street lamp example on p14 works as SCC already has such an online map and Michelle is working on similar for WBC's managed lights).
	· P20 – you could hyperlink to a copy of the Economic Development Action Plan mentioned. Also the same for the other strategies referenced earlier on.
	
	I'm copying this message to Lara to see specifically p22 Climate & the environment and p45 for info (and any comments you may have Lara).
	
	Is an action plan intended to guide delivery of this Strategy? I'd be interested for relevant members of our team to input into this if so.
		Nothing that can't be amended in copy	P9 done
			
			P20 is a hyperlink.

	On page 20 of the Digital Strategy I sent round, Cllr Davis would like you to check this statement I have made: Air quality monitoring of nitrous oxide and particulate levels to inform residents of danger zones.	Thoughts on this?	Added this as a precursor to the whole list.

| | Should we say more on air quality monitoring or is that OK as is? My understanding is that the technology is not yet quite there to use a sensor to reliably inform on air quality pollution levels. Sensors exist, but reports say they can't detect low levels of pollutants and results have been effected by weather conditions etc – so it is not something I'd want to promise now. I think best to remove, or caveat with, 'as technology progresses we could….' Thanks, | | |

From the Community Forum - All Anonymous Users

Section/Page	Comment	Action	Status
Is there anything you feel we have missed as part of our proposals in Theme 1?	These are words - you haven't said how you'll do this? The idea that you'll help people is positive - everyone needs help. Connecting people looking for work with those offering it could be one example of that.	Strategy is not an action plan.	Noted
	Environmental angle can be smart too	Good point maybe to pick up in relation to COP26 legacy etc?	Covered in P22 Smart Place have added 'sustainable Borough' to the wording.
	You could be helping not only residents but voluntary groups to make the most of digital technology. This seems to be missing from your strategy. Many of Woking's voluntary groups are not making the most of digital opportunities at all, and some needed to close down operations during lockdown purely because they could not manage their operations digitally (eg traditional good neighbour schemes such as Knaphill Care and Horsell Care). What help and support can you give them as they are important to Woking's communities? (Horsell Care is now digital as I helped them set this up, but can we look at expanding the approaches of Horsell Prepared (my group) and Woking Mutual Aid (Sonal Sher's group) to other voluntary organisations just like Horsell Care are doing? Having many voluntary groups using the same digital approach would pay dividends and allow them to support each other.	Very specific, request could be encompassed in references to 'the wider community' .	Added in 'wider community'
	it's too broad to be able to pick out any issues i.e. enrich lives covers nearly everything so needs clarity on what.		Noted
	As both a resident but also the CEO of a business I would hope to see some reference to helping business	There are lots?	Business is mentioned on

			numerous occasions
	Improving Living Standard. In Smart Cities people, and the non-digital infrastructure and facilities, are, as if not, more important to digital effectiveness than technology itself: the strategy forgets that and places people as passive recipients of and servants to technology.		
	My experience in working with Woking planners is that they lack the ability to execute on this and I have no confidence that they know how to execute		
	You mention a community app. To get the widest engagement across the borough you would be better served building this functionality into a new website, hiring a large social media team and going to where people already are and helping them there instead. People are already engaged all over the internet, reaching out to them proactively will grant far more success than building an app, hiding it away amongst the millions of other apps in the App Store and telling people they should go and download it if they want to participate. Help them to participate where they are already engaged on the internet instead.		Have replaced App with Platform where possible some change to narrative was needed.
	This only works if your residents are capable of using digital platforms	Agreed but we say about raising digital skills	Mentioned a lot under skills, have added some extra narrative
	A Woking Digital Cloud A digital payment for local economy to promote and working with local businesses		included
	Ensure there is easy and free access to the digital world for everyone.		
	Fails to take into account the difficulties that the elderly may have in engaging with IT. e.g. weak short term memory, poor sight, poor	I think this was picked up in access for all but maybe	Mentioned in theme 1 measures

	manual dexterity, difficulty in learning new skills and concepts, low income. It seems as if the elderly are being disenfranchised.	a more specific reference is needed?	cites both older and low income
	More specific examples required, too aspirational without conveying expected measurable benefits	Can discuss?	Strategy not an action plan
	You definitely should help, but I disagree that you will help.		
Is there anything you feel we have missed as part of our proposals in Theme 2?	Advanced connectivity is the only benefit I'm taking from this statement. I do know that Canalside will have superfast broadband. That infrastructure will help those residents greatly - especially those who might want to work from home. I think that's a great start but given that Woking Borough is a lot bigger than that area, there's a long way to go. That said, much of it is covered by very fast broadband so there's probably not a great issue - 'though the supply of those services wasn't the initiative of WBC. If you're talking about something other than broadband when you talk about 'smart technologies' then you need to unpack that.	The Action plan will cover this.	
	Actions/inaction need to be underpinned to benefit and not harm the eco-environment immediately or indirectly (eg by pushing that problem elsewhere or into the future) sustainable is a dangerous word that should be defined and not a convenient way to "sweep up" without substance. Given the advancing global crisis the environmental impact needs to be prism through which all projects are assessed smart included.	Environmental angle again	Now Referenced Gov't Net Zero strategy.
	There is too much emphasis on physical connectivity infrastructure where Woking is already ahead of the game. There is a massive opportunity for Woking to become one of the best places in the country to work from home. Encouraging home working by residents would grow the local economy and keep our money here where we live. Woking could be more homeworker friendly by a) having more casual office/desk space that is affordable when people need it, including in the villages as well as in the town	Good point	Conflict between home working and need to fill office space. Covered within the Economic Development Action Plan.

	centre, and b) building social networks for homeworkers so they can feel supported locally, e.g. lunch hour networking for home workers.		
	All fine but basic, reads like it was written 3 years ago, no mention of critical tech like blockchain / crypto	Again balance between readability for residents vs. IT professionals.	Noted
	Safe digital place		Noted
	Digital infrastructure must be intimately integrated with other infrastructure to succeed: for example decent walkable streets facilitate local mobility and 'remote' working, coffee shops and local micro-offices facilitate actual and pleasant use of technology etc.		Noted
	These are very generic? This is complete so what? Everybody says this. But what does it actually mean		Noted
	A smart town where there are no barriers to connectivity	Hence the digital strategy	Noted
	Ensure digital environment is safe and secure.	Noted	Noted
	What sort of 'competitive edge" do you perceive residents need? What competitive edge would businesses get, and is there a cost/benefit to the council/taxpayers for this?	Covered in Theme 2	Noted
	You should but will not until residents and businesses can be connected. Connectivity in Woking is poor.		Noted – speed/ availability statistics double checked.
Is there anything you feel we have missed as part of our proposals in Theme 3?	Again - How? What's your vision. In essence, anything you can do to digitise and CONNECT with residents and businesses is great but without the substance, I'm not seeing the vision. Enabling tenants, for example, to communicate using a secure platform - that would be one example that would put meat on the bones of your plans. What other ideas would you have that would enable your vision?	Very specific – the strategy mentions (as part of the community platform) a section that covers tenants.	Noted

	All change projects and need to be scrutinised for carbon impact across the honest lifecycle including scrapping hardware and other decommissioning.	Fair point	Agreed and Noted
	Working smarter as a council is not just about making it easier for council employees. If you enable residents to track their queries or something they've reported, just like you can track the progress of a parcel delivery, they will need to contact you less and you will be more efficient. For instance I recently had to send an email reporting an environmental health problem. I heard nothing back (not even an automated email response) so will need to contact again. Not only is this frustrating, but it's wasteful of your time and my time. It should not be that hard to automate the addition of my email into a system, and email me a link so I can track the progress of my report, for instance seeing if it has been read, and seeing if there was any action taken.	Good point	Added a para in 9.2 to cover this off within processes etc.
	Does not nearly go far enough	Strategy not an action plan	Noted
	to adapt and make informed decisions QUICKLY		Added P8
	Adequate monitoring of actual use of technology and its effectiveness for citizens is vital, as is proper training for council staff at all levels.		Noted
	This council will be to be different people. Based on my direct experience , you have no clue what you are doing in digital		Noted
	I have concerns that the Council will not have the IT skill profile in-house to build these services. I understand the desire for Woking "to lead" but there may be good reasons to contribute to a standard portfolio of services across the county (or even the country) so that residents have the same service expectations no matter where they live. Woking could then customise their portfolio to make sure that they exceed the expectation in delivery.	Good idea but unlikely to happen.	Noted

	Preserve traditional methods of communication to work alongside new technologies.	OK	Noted
	Expected measurable benefits must be quantified before investing and assessed after	OK	Noted
	I think you will optimise in a way you think is optimal but inadvertently will exclude people from your services and your decision making.	Noted	Noted
	It is the Council's intention to sign up to the Local Digital Declaration, a public pledge to deliver digital services in accordance with the methods set out in the Government Service Manual and to ensure all new and updated services going forwards meet the high quality standards set out in the Government Service Standard.		Added P12

This is column 4 page 35 – Council ICT Strategy and specifically:	I think we should look to include the following principles in this list. Adam might have a view.
	
	· Cloud-first (SaaS, PaaS, Iaas)
	
	· Evergreen policy for software
	
	· Flexible working strategy
	
	    o VoIP
	
	    o BYOD
	
	· Secure data priority over device security (data is not stored on devices or can be wiped remotely)
			Added P38

	· Applications should be device and platform agnostic
	
	· Tech Refresh
	
	     o Laptops for all
	
	     o Cloud-based device management
	
	     o Citrix maintained for transformation purposes
	
	     o Decommission datacentres and Citrix
	
	Implementing much of this provides us with a disaster recovery solution by default. Getting everything into the Cloud, providing all colleagues with devices that are portable and with a modern VoIP solution will allow colleagues to work from anywhere, which might be handy if we were to be hit with the extremely unlikely scenario of say, a pandemic.		

Fintan	<u>In regard to the published Draft,</u> I have lots of thoughts but trying to keep it to what I think you can change based on our conversation, below is what I would like to see, I know you have the incubator, however it's too narrow and does little to support the existing tech businesses in the area. **Setup Digital woking** The establishment of a community of Woking tech businesses, digital professionals, volunteers and tech startup entrepreneurs that work to actively enhance the digital capabilities and presence of Woking to generate new jobs, attract tech businesses and key digital skills into the area.	Good idea and very welcomed.	Added where appropriate P22 and P21 (as part of Digital Centre of Excellence)

	How		
	1)Establish Technology streams for all key next generation technologies in conjunction with local tech businesses or interested groups. E.g. - Green tech - Crypto / Blockchain / Web3 - AI / ML - Transport - drones / car / ebikes - Health tech. 2)Set Up an online presence and establish regular tech meetups and growth hacking events. 3) Setup a specific group to support marketing activities promoting Woking digital. 4) Actively look to encourage the use of next generation technologies in the council and across the businesses in the borough so that we have use cases to promote. 5) Establish an incubator for new tech start-ups across all the streams. This should look to provide : - Investment in start-ups (from a council view, this could be as simple as free office space in return for a % shareholdings) - Mentoring - Actively connecting start-ups with mentors who have the expertise they need. - Networking - Expert help from other members. -- This would need some coordination to ensure quality, but it's relatively easy to handle if we make sure things are done in an open		

	community way. - Engage with key cloud players to gain support for next generation initiatives (AWS / Google etc. are really open to this.) Hope this helps, feel free to ignore, if you do go ahead, this is something Invotra Group would be happy to support in a number of ways including providing the online platform and some funding.		