

MTCBC Digital Strategy



2025-2028



Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.

This document is also available in Welsh.

Executive Summary

The Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council (MTCBC) Digital Strategy is a forward-looking blueprint designed to modernise Council services, enhance operational efficiency, and deliver a seamless digital experience to residents. Informed by best practices recommended by Audit Wales, this strategy aligns with both local priorities and the Welsh Government’s Digital Strategy, which emphasises digital inclusion, infrastructure, data-driven decision-making and skill development.

Through structured initiatives like process automation, enhanced data integration, and robust cybersecurity, MTCBC aims to become a digitally mature council that meets the evolving needs of its community while actively supporting Wales’ national digital transformation goals.

This digital strategy has been developed at a time when digital technology is increasingly important to service delivery. This strategy sets the strategic direction for the Council over the next three years.


The strategy is underpinned by key principles:

**Innovation**
adopting modern technologies and exploring new ways of working.

**Data-driven**
basing decisions on robust evidence and analysis.

**User-centric**
prioritising the needs of users in every aspect of our work.

**Inclusivity**
providing services that cater to diverse individual needs.

**Collaboration**
fostering strong partnerships within and beyond the organisation.

**Security**
ensuring systems and data are safeguarded.

**Sustainability**
utilizing digital technology to support the Council’s net-zero objectives.

The Digital Vision

Our aim:

“To build a digitally connected Merthyr Tydfil, where Council services are accessible, efficient, and designed around the needs of our residents.”

The Council's Vision

This supports the Council's vision, “Acting today for a better tomorrow.”

To strengthen Merthyr Tydfil's position as the regional centre for the Heads of the Valleys, and be a place to be proud of where:

- People learn and develop skills to fulfil their ambitions.
- People live, work, and have a safe, healthy, and fulfilled life.
- People visit, enjoy and return.

Our Corporate Priorities

For further information on the Council's Corporate Wellbeing Plan, please read here:

[Corporate Wellbeing Plan 2023-2028](#)

Wales National Well-being Goals

Throughout the delivery of this strategy, we will ensure the decisions that we make consider five ways of working: **Long term, Integration, Involvement, Collaboration and Prevention.**

We will also ensure that the impacts of our decisions consider the socio-economic impacts on Merthyr Tydfil's communities, citizens, members, and staff that work for Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council.

Digital Strategy for Wales

Our digital strategy will play an important role in supporting the Welsh Government's Digital Strategy by aligning with its core priorities and delivering locally focused outcomes that contribute to national goals. By embracing innovation and leveraging digital technologies, as a Council we can improve public service delivery, enhance citizen engagement, and promote inclusivity—key requirements of the Welsh Government's vision.

Our strategy will support the digital inclusion agenda by addressing barriers to access and skills development, ensuring that everyone in our community benefits equally from digital advancements.

Additionally, as a Council we will collaborate with the Welsh Government and other public sector bodies to share best practices, foster interoperability, and drive efficiencies through shared platforms. By integrating sustainability into our digital approach, we can also contribute to the Welsh Government's commitment to achieving net-zero carbon emissions, ensuring digital transformation aligns with broader environmental objectives.

Other Strategies

We will align our digital projects and the delivery of this strategy with the School's Digital Strategy and the Town Centre Digital Strategy, ensuring a cohesive and integrated approach to digital transformation across the Council.

Themes

The strategy is based on six themes. Each theme will be supported by detailed action plans highlighting various activities that will support their delivery. These will be primarily focussed on the next three years, but the themes of the strategy will drive future work.



Progress against these themes will be managed and published both through service area updates, and an annual report to both Scrutiny and Cabinet.



Governance Structure

To ensure effective management and alignment of the Digital Strategy, MTCBC will establish a robust governance framework to guide the delivery of digital initiatives:

Digital Transformation Board

Objective: Oversee all digital projects, ensuring they align with strategic priorities, meet defined objectives, and follow best practices.

Responsibilities: Project oversight, stakeholder communication, resource allocation, and addressing challenges promptly.

Digital Leadership Team

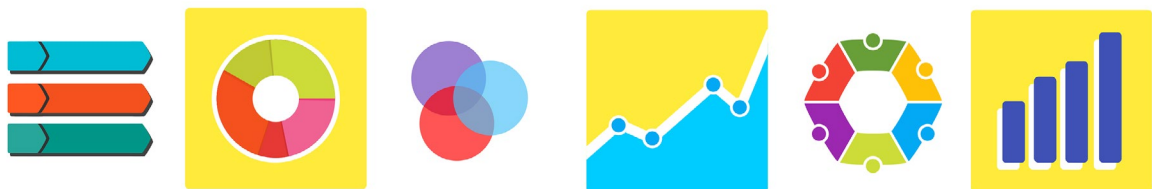
Objective: Facilitate cross-departmental collaboration, bringing together key representatives from IT, HR, Finance, and other departments.

Responsibilities: Regularly review project progress, coordinate resources, and ensure alignment with the Council's broader objectives.

Regular Reporting and Review Cycles

Objective: Track the progress of digital projects, assess KPI achievements, and adapt initiatives based on findings and Audit Wales recommendations.

Responsibilities: Establish quarterly reporting to monitor outcomes, manage risks, and ensure continued alignment with Council strategies.



Digital Transformation



Aim: Revolutionise services through the innovative application of digital technology that is efficient, user-friendly, and tailored to meet the needs of our users.

To achieve this, we will:

- Ensure services have a “Digital First” approach to drive transformation and are delivered digitally by design.
- Consult with citizens, staff, and members throughout the digital transformation lifecycle.
- Develop a culture of collaboration and innovation within the Council, embracing, evaluating, and implementing new technology.
- Development of effective self-service facilities for citizens.
- Develop digital standards for major IT systems working with Procurement and customers/citizens.
- Improve the Welsh Language facilities of Council IT systems.
- Support the Council's Transformation programme embracing digital technologies as a key enabler.
- Review service delivery considering new and existing digital technologies.
- Review major IT systems, their suitability, customer experience and self-service facilities on an ongoing basis.
- Increase the number of digital solutions delivered via cloud services to improve accessibility, availability, resilience, and sustainability with a “Cloud First” approach.
- Provide technology solutions that reduce the need for citizens and staff to travel including collaboration, hybrid meeting facilities and self-service facilities.
- Embed reduce, reuse, recycle principles in digital policies and practices.
- Ensure information is service user accurate, up to date and consistent across delivery channels.
- Extend the use of digital communication platforms such as social media to engage with citizens and businesses.
- Actively promote and signpost residents to online services at every opportunity.
- Employees and members have access to the appropriate technology to fulfil and perform their roles effectively.
- Implement and develop Microsoft 365 solution to realise its potential.

Process Improvement and Efficiency



Aim: Automate manual tasks to improve efficiency, reduce costs, and free staff for higher-value work.

To achieve this, we will:

- Investigate and develop the use of automation including opportunities for Robotic Process Automation (RPA) and Artificial Intelligence (AI).
- We will embrace new technology where appropriate and develop a culture of innovation to improve services for our citizens and businesses.
- Modernise the customer access experience, embracing self-service and digital opportunities to provide a seamless experience, resulting in staff spending less time dealing with routine queries.
- Review existing and design new digital services, focusing on poor areas of service user and business experience, high-volume services, highly manual processes and map the current customer journey across the Council.
- Aim to deliver services that can be completed entirely online with digital assistance if needed. Identify which processes have high potential for automation and prioritise them based on impact and feasibility.
- Investigate a single, coherent digital platform that gives residents and businesses a personalised digital front door to Council services.
- Improved satisfaction for citizens, staff and members through better experience and use of digital technology and data. We want our customers to be able to give direct feedback on our digital services and be confident that we will monitor and improve as a result of their feedback.
- Collaborate and learn from other public and private sector organisations to further develop our own digital offering and look for partnership opportunities to share digital services and provide service improvements and/or efficiencies.
- Continue working to remove barriers to digital inclusion, furthering our collaboration with organisations such as the Welsh Government, Cardiff Capital Region and any other bodies that will support digital inclusion both in Merthyr Tydfil and across the wider region.



Data & Analytics



Aim: To Enable data-driven decision-making.

To achieve this, we will:

- Understand and strengthen the data architecture, implement Business Intelligence tools for performance tracking, and explore creating a centralised data integration platform across departments.
- Undertake an assessment of digital/data skills across the Council for both staff and Councillors to identify priorities for support to strengthen these where relevant.
- Develop a training programme which will support improvement in the understanding of key council expectations; and data handling skills to support more efficient effective use of this key resource.
- Consider establishing a Digital and Data Community of Practice to share experiences, lessons learned and provide advice, guidance, and support.
- Develop a Data Policy & Strategy to make clear the Council's approach to digital and data and explicitly outline the corporate expectations in relation to: Data governance, Data architecture, Data architecture, Data intelligence and analytic tools.
- Review opportunities to better co-ordinate the findings of data captured through Business as Usual, consultation and engagement activities and through the work of Councillors, making this available to support a deeper understanding of multiple aspects of an issue before progressing to the stage where leaders make a decision.

Technology and Infrastructure

Aim: To Enable data-driven decision-making.

To achieve this, we will:

- Adopt a 'cloud-first' approach where applicable.
- Continuously review digital infrastructure in buildings.
- Enhance customer interaction through Unified Communications, including online face-to-face services and instant chat.
- Explore the integration of AI-powered chatbots and advisor presence on the website for immediate service responses.
- Improve connectivity in hard-to-reach areas to reduce digital exclusion, including seeking funding opportunities for enhanced town-wide connectivity.
- Ensure that suppliers and partners provide cloud services in a secure and efficient manner.
- Assess the implementation of a new Contact Centre Service with Microsoft Teams integration.
- Support and collaborate on borough-wide infrastructure developments, including the rollout of Fibre to the Premises (FTTP).
- Explore the provision of public Wi-Fi in public buildings and town centres.

Cybersecurity and Compliance



Aim: To protect data and ensure regulatory compliance.

To achieve this, we will:

- Maintain accreditation to information security standards including ISO 27001, Cyber Assessment Framework (CAF), Public Services Network (PSN), and Payment Card Industry Data Security Standards (PCI DSS).
- Comply with Data Protection Laws, Freedom of Information Act, and other information legislation.
- Conduct Data Protection Impact Assessments and Information Security Assessments where appropriate.
- Manage information risks by appropriate governance structures and activities.
- Maintain cyber resilience collaboration with partners and groups such as Warning and Reporting Point (WARP), National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), and Welsh Government Cyber Resilience Team.
- Continue to enhance the Council's threat intelligence.
- Develop and rehearse advanced incident response plans that address evolving threats.
- Maintain regular updates to cybersecurity training programs to reflect the latest threats and best practices.
- Maintain regular updates to policies to reflect changes in the threat landscape and legal requirements.
- Maintain implementation of CymruSOC within the Council.
- Implement a management system for incident and problem management, change management, asset and configuration management.
- Include cybersecurity considerations in all digital projects from inception to implementation.
- Cybersecurity controls supporting broader digital transformation goals, such as enabling secure innovation and customer trust.



Workforce Development and Culture



Aim: Build a digitally skilled workforce, as well as developing the digital skills of our members and citizens.

To achieve this, we will:

- Conduct a Council-wide skills audit to identify current digital capabilities and gaps.
- Use findings to tailor training programs to address specific needs.
- Establish a network of 'Digital champions' across departments to encourage adoption and provide peer-to-peer support.
- Empower champions to advocate for digital transformation and share best practice.
- Promote a digital culture – encourage a mindset of innovation and continuous improvement and recognise and celebrate achievements in adopting digital solutions.
- Facilitate cross-departmental collaboration to share digital knowledge and experiences.
- Regularly review the impact of workforce development initiatives on digital adoption and adjust strategies as needed.
- Partner with external organisations, educational institutions, and professional bodies to access additional training resources and expertise.
- Signpost citizens and businesses to training opportunities available to them.
- Collaborate with partners to undertake community profile mapping of which communities and areas are digitally excluded.
- Review key demographic data to target support for digital inclusion.



Development of the Plan



The Digital Themes have been developed through internal engagement with Senior Managers and wider officer groups and following the Audit Wales digital strategy review across Wales.

Detailed action plans will be developed through enabling a better understanding of services and policy development. Whilst consulting with staff and members, we will also consult with citizens – involving citizens in developing the delivery of the strategic approach means we can draw on a broader evidence base to inform a long term, citizen-centred approach to digital.

The strategy will be reviewed periodically to ensure we take account of new intelligence and any changes to the external environment that may have an impact.

We will understand the short and longer-term financial implications of the strategy by identifying full costs of digital projects, as well as the intended benefits, including financial savings. This information will be set out in business cases, action plans, and other relevant documents that underpin the strategy. We will ensure we understand the digital capacity and capability across the organisation to support effective and timely delivery of digital projects.

Intended benefits of each digital project will be identified from the outset, examples could include improvements to services, financial savings, impact on different groups, and carbon reduction.

The impact and value for money of the digital projects will be continually evaluated with appropriate oversight and accountability for delivering strategic ambitions.

Each digital project will be different, and we need to learn from each of them to support our future improvements with routine post-implementation reviews. This could include lessons learned about the effectiveness of collaboration, arrangements for securing value for money, user-centred design, promoting digital inclusion, effective data use and environmental impact.

