Report of Chief Digital and Information Officer

Report to Scrutiny Board (Infrastructure, Investment and Inclusive Growth)

Date: 07 April 2021

Subject: Digital Inclusion – update report

Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s):	☐ Yes	☒ No
Has consultation been carried out?	☐ Yes	☒ No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	☒ Yes	☐ No
Will the decision be open for call-in?	☒ Yes	☐ No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:	☐ Yes	☒ No

Summary

1. Main issues

- Since 2015 the Infrastructure, Investment and Inclusive Growth Scrutiny Board has led an inquiry into digital inclusion. Annual reports to the Board have successfully raised the importance of digital inclusion as an issue affecting communities across the city. The Board has overseen the creation of the 100% Digital Leeds programme as part of the Smart Leeds portfolio and provided strategic leadership and direction for this work.

- The Board received a report in July 2020 that examined the Council's and the city's digital response to the COVID-19 pandemic in Leeds. That report made three Recommendations which were resolved and endorsed by the Board and noted in the minutes of the meeting:

  1) As part of the Council's ongoing digital response to the sustainability of the City post COVID, the Council's Digital and Information Service (DIS) continues to set priorities, direct the work and provide overall governance for Smart Leeds and 100% Digital Leeds, with the DIS also continuing to report progress to this Board.

  2) The central coordination, convening, connecting and enabling role, across public sector partners and the third sector, of DIS, with the 100% Digital Leeds Team as an integral part of that approach, has been essential during the crisis. The 100% Digital Leeds team currently sit on the Library Service structure, it is recommended that this integrated approach to digital engagement is sustained and strengthened based on the return on public value and outcomes exemplified in this report and previous reports to this Board.

  3) If external funding comes to an end, (which is unlikely for the next 18 months) it is recommended that this work and teams are considered a priority as part of the budget setting process based on the returns on investment to the community, Council and NHS.

- Since the last report to Scrutiny Board, the 100% Digital Leeds team has accelerated its Systems Leadership role to increase digital inclusion across sectors and across the city.

- Discussions are ongoing to move the 100% Digital Leeds team from the Library Service to the DIS so that the strategic priorities, leadership and governance of the city's coordinated response to digital inclusion are formally managed by DIS.

2. **Best Council Plan Implications** (click here for the latest version of the Best Council Plan)

- All of the work outlined in the report plays a key role in achieving the Council's ambition to build a compassionate city, tackling poverty and reducing inequalities. Work discussed is aligned closely with the Best Council plan, the Leeds Economic Recovery Framework, the Health and Wellbeing and Inclusive Growth Strategies and the need to address the impact of the climate emergency on those living in poverty, in poor health and facing inequality.

3. **Resource Implications**

- Section 3 of this report includes more information on the circa £1million additional funding that the 100% Digital Leeds team has helped organisations to secure over the last six months. This investment into digital inclusion projects and interventions has increased capacity and capability across sectors.

- The success of the original 100% Digital Leeds tablet lending scheme has led to more Council departments buying devices through that contract. There are now over 800 iPads across different strands of the scheme with annual running costs of over £150,000. There is no long-term or core funding in place to pay for these running costs. The library service is examining these costs as part of their wider review of the tablet lending scheme. Libraries will be taking over the ownership and management of the scheme when the 100% Digital Leeds team moves to DIS. More information on equipment, infrastructure and connectivity is in Section 5 of this report.

- As outlined in Section 7 of this report, work is ongoing to relocate the 100% Digital Leeds team from the Library Service to the Digital and Information Service. Funding for this move includes some budget transfer from the Library Service plus external 'pump priming' funding from a range of sources including the City Digital Partnerships Team and Clinical Commissioning Group health budgets. This will enable the team to increase their focus on the health and care elements of the 100% Digital Leeds remit as well as achieving the wider outcomes of the digital inclusion programme. The team will be supported by DIS to look for additional funding to ensure the 100% Digital Leeds programme continues to be as self-sufficient as possible.

4. **Recommendations**

a) Endorse the strategic priorities of the 100% Digital Leeds programme to make Leeds the most digitally inclusive city for everyone.

b) Recognise the significant achievements to date of the 100% Digital Leeds team and their work with partners from all sectors to increase digital inclusion across the city.

c) Agree that the 100% Digital Leeds team continues its systems leadership role for digital inclusion on behalf of the Council and the city, with the strategic priorities, leadership and governance for 100% Digital Leeds being formally managed by DIS.

d) Continue to provide oversight of the 100% Digital Leeds programme by receiving progress reports to this Board.

Purpose of this report

1.1 This report provides an update to Scrutiny Board on the Council's and the City's progress towards making Leeds the most digitally inclusive city for everyone. It highlights the Systems Leadership role of the 100% Digital Leeds team working with colleagues from the NHS, health and care, the third sector and the wider Council.

1.2 The report highlights the following areas with particular reference to Scrutiny Board's original Recommendations and in the context of the Council's priorities for Health and Wellbeing, the Economic Recovery Framework and Inclusive Growth:

- Return on investment across sectors (Main Issue 3)
- Reducing health inequalities through digital inclusion (Main Issue 4)
- Equipment, infrastructure and connectivity (Main Issue 5)
- 100% Digital Leeds working regionally and nationally (Main Issue 6)
- Relocating the 100% Digital Leeds team from the library service to DIS (Main Issue 7)

2. Background information

2.1 Since the start of the COVID-19 crisis, the 100% Digital Leeds team's Systems Leadership role in relation to digital inclusion has developed and accelerated. This role builds on and is closely aligned to the 100% Digital Leeds approach that has been defined and approved in previous Scrutiny Board reports.

2.2 This article on the World Economic Forum website notes that Systems Leadership "*combines collaborative leadership, coalition-building and systems insight to mobilise innovation and action across a large, decentralised network*". The authors also note five key elements of the process which they term the CLEAR framework:

- **Convene and commit.** Key stakeholders engage in moderated dialogue to address a complex issue of mutual concern. They define shared interests and goals, and commit to working together in new ways to create systemic change.
- **Look and learn.** Through system mapping, stakeholders jointly build a shared understanding of the components, actors, dynamics, and influences that create the system and its current outcomes, generating new insights and ideas.
- **Engage and energise.** Strong stakeholder engagement is built through continuous communication to build trust, commitment, innovation and collaboration.
- **Act with accountability.** Shared goals and principles set the direction of the initiative, while measurement frameworks help track progress.
- **Review and revise.** Stakeholders review progress regularly and adapt their strategy accordingly. Adopting an agile, flexible, innovative and learning-centred approach allows for evolution and experimentation.

2.3 More locally, there is an ambition to create a Systems Leadership culture across the health and social care system in Leeds. The 100% Digital Leeds team is working with leaders from across those sectors to increase digital inclusion in support of the City's Health and Wellbeing Strategy. In this context, a workshop by the Local Care Partnerships team in September 2020 noted the definition of Systems Leadership outlined by National Voices, the coalition of charities that stands for people being in control of their health and care: "*Systems Leadership is about how you lead across boundaries – departmental, organisational or sector. It's how you lead when you're not in charge, and you need to influence others rather than pull a management lever. It describes the way you need to work when you face large, complex, difficult and seemingly intractable problems; where you need to juggle multiple uncertainties; where no one person or organisation can find or organise the solution on their own; where everyone is grappling with how to make resources meet demand which is outstripping them; and where the way forward therefore lies in involving as many people's energies, ideas, talents and expertise as possible.*"

2.4   The key things to note when this definition is applied in practice are:

- Service users/citizens must be the centre of the work.
- It's about relationships and trust, not structures and hierarchies.
- You can start small, and from where you are.
- Use narratives and framing to change the way people perceive issues.
- Work with coalitions of the willing.
- Make connections, form networks and use offline conversations to build support.
- Look to make progress rather than solving an issue in one fell swoop.

2.5   Those principles set out by National Voices, alongside the CLEAR framework outlined by the World Economic Forum, support and build on the 100% Digital Leeds approach that was described in the report to Scrutiny Board in July 2020.

2.6   This sees the 100% Digital Leeds team:

- Develop business cases for investment into digital inclusion.
- Convene and host workshops for people from across sectors.
- Inspire organisations to play an active role in the 100% Digital Leeds programme.
- Administer and monitor community grant schemes.
- Write bids for additional funding, advise and support third sector organisations with their bid writing, combine money and other resources to coordinate the delivery of digital inclusion projects.
- Share learning and best practice with colleagues from Councils and other sectors across the country.
- Monitor, evaluate and report on all aspects of the 100% Digital Leeds programme.

2.7   The 100% Digital Leeds team have used their leadership role to increase digital inclusion at all levels, across sectors and across the city. Evidence in this report outlines some of the team's key priorities and initiatives during the previous nine months (since the last update to this Board). This report also sets out the strategic priorities of the 100% Digital Leeds team for the next 12 months.

3.   Main Issues – Return on investment across sectors

3.1   Previous reports to this Board set out the 100% Digital Leeds evaluation framework, including their model for measuring and reporting Return on Investment (RoI). The visual representation of this framework is included at **Appendix 1**.

3.2   Results from User Progression Surveys enabled the team to produce an estimate of the value of channel shift as a result of Leeds residents gaining digital skills. As people moved to online transactions to replace phone calls and visits, cost savings could be applied to those behavioural changes. In February 2020, annualised savings as a result of individual behaviour changes and channel shift due to the 100% Digital Leeds programme were:

Service	Savings
A&E	£310,426
GP	£230,427
Leeds City Council	£98,686
Other government offices	£72,703
Jobcentre Plus	£69,370
Total:	**£781,612**

3.3   That evaluation and return on investment framework was designed before the COVID-19 crisis. As people chose to use more efficient digital tools and online solutions in preference to more expensive face-to-face services, those savings could be recorded and reported. During the pandemic, where behaviour change was mandated and face-to-face services closed, it became more difficult to measure RoI as a positive result of increased digital inclusion. As a result, the team have not produced RoI figures for the last year.

3.4 In a recent evaluation of the NHS Widening Digital Participation Programme, of those who received support: 59% were better able to access/use health information; 65% felt more informed about their health; 51% used the internet to improve mental health and wellbeing; 21% made fewer GP appointments as a result of accessing online information. The 100% Digital Leeds dementia pathfinder project was included in this evaluation. Overall, digital inclusion interventions showed a return on investment of £6.40 for every £1 spent.

3.5 The 100% Digital Leeds team are working with the Local Government Association and the Good Things Foundation to revise their RoI model. These discussions are intended to develop a model that could be used by other Councils as well as Leeds.

3.6 Until the new evaluation and RoI model is in place, the 100% Digital Leeds team is using the principles of the Council's Economic Recovery Framework to align their approach to increasing digital inclusion with the need to:

- **Respond**. Where required, continue to take immediate action to support communities across the city and organisations across sectors.
- **Reset and Renew**. Understand the challenges and opportunities of the move towards recovery, with a clear focus and direction on the projects and partnerships that will address the challenges and maximise the opportunities.
- **Build Resilience**. Maintain a long-term view of the aspiration to deliver 100% Digital Leeds. Ensure the 100% Digital Leeds programme supports the city and Council priorities for Inclusive Growth, the Smart Leeds foundations and the city's developing Digital Strategy, and the ambitions of the Health and Wellbeing strategy to ensure Leeds is a healthy and caring city for all ages, where people who are the poorest improve their health the fastest.

3.7 100% Digital Leeds have focused on increasing investment into digital inclusion to build resilience across organisations and sectors.

3.8 In July 2020 the digital inclusion report to this Board set out the 'Response' phase of investment, with over £100,000 in grants and equipment given to community organisations. That emergency response helped organisations to use digital solutions to work more effectively in lockdown or to directly support their service users by providing data packages or equipment.

3.9 Over the last six months, the 100% Digital Leeds team have focused on the 'Reset and Renew' phase for investment. Organisations across Leeds have received over £1million investment into digital inclusion projects and initiatives during that time. Much of the funding has been secured with support, advice and leadership from the 100% Digital Leeds team.

3.10 The 100% Digital Leeds team have written business cases and supported organisations to bid for funding to buy equipment and/or appoint additional staff to focus on digital inclusion. Many of the funding bids included evidence of impact from the organisations' work with 100% Digital Leeds over the last two years. Many of the staff who have been appointed are being guided and supported by the 100% Digital Leeds team. Those staff and those organisations are developing and delivering new digital inclusion activities and interventions across Leeds. This work is increasing the resilience of the city's third sector and 100% Digital Leeds is continuing to build the digital inclusion capacity of organisations across the city.

3.11 Examples include:

- Age UK Leeds: Digital Wellbeing project to support older people in Leeds to access and manage their healthcare online.
- Barca Leeds: Men's Health Unlocked project provided equipment and connectivity for 100 men referred to them by 35 organisations across the city. The men were socially isolated and digitally excluded.
- Carers Leeds: A member of staff to coordinate a digital inclusion project to mitigate carer loneliness and isolation. To supply digital devices and training to help at least

180 carers get online and to coordinate a network of digital champions/volunteers to provide training and support in partnership with other organisations in Leeds.

- Health for All (Leeds): A member of staff and a laptop loan scheme for the Care Connected project to connect care experienced young people; plus equipment to provide access to the internet in six Community and Family centres in south Leeds.

- Leeds Older People's Forum COVID 19 Fund: 21 organisations received funding for digital inclusion projects.

- People in Action: Devices and data plus a training team of digital facilitators to run online sessions. The project has expanded to include support for more people who need help to get online but may not be members of People in Action.

- Women's Lives Leeds: Funding spread across the eleven organisations within Women's Lives Leeds to buy devices/equipment and to upskill staff to support digitally excluded women and girls.

- Funding for new projects focussing on increasing digital inclusion for people with learning disabilities, autism or both; people living in care homes; patients accessing Leeds Community Healthcare rehabilitation pathways. Plus new digital inclusion workers at Aireborough Voluntary Services to the Elderly, Leeds Irish Health and Homes, Moor Allerton Elderly Care.

3.12 This funding has been crucial to help organisations move from immediate response to reset and renewal. However, moving to the next phase of 'Building Resilience' requires more than funding. It needs commitment from organisations and sectors to focus on digital inclusion as one of their priorities and to include it as a key component of their longer-term planning. The 100% Digital Leeds team are advising organisations and helping them to embed digital inclusion as a positive part of their recovery planning. The 100% Digital Leeds team are also building resilience by working with partners to create digital inclusion networks of specialist organisations across the city.

3.13 The 100% Digital team have helped to build networks of organisations that are working together within and across sectors to increase digital inclusion for the people they support. These developments have raised the priority of digital inclusion for those organisations and the wider city. Digital inclusion is embedded as part of their collective resilience planning and the issue is being tackled in a more coordinated and sustainable way.

3.14 The Autism and Learning Disability Digital Inclusion Network (ALaDDIN) includes around 20 organisations that support people in Leeds who have autism, learning disabilities or both. The network was created in response to the changes and challenges that those organisations faced in adapting their delivery of services as a result of COVID-19.

3.15 100% Digital Leeds are working with partners and people with learning disabilities and autism to build a citywide infrastructure to create an inclusive, person-centred model of digital activity and participation. This includes developing training for individuals, family members, carers, support workers, and staff or volunteers at organisations. ALaDDIN is also a forum for sharing best practice, common challenges, opportunities for funding and partnership working, and a means of promoting the Network as a unified and coordinated entity that has a greater combined influence.

3.16 **Quote from Jez Coram, Development Worker (Learning Disabilities), Forum Central:**
"As Day Services and Opportunities for people with learning disabilities and autistic people have been restricted or closed due to Covid-19, it is critical that there is a digital day service offer until face to face services can resume in full again. The challenge is addressing the digital divide that was present for people with learning disabilities and autistic people before COVID-19. There is brilliant digital inclusion work happening across third sector organisations in Leeds, helping to maintain the physical and mental wellbeing of the people they support. ALaDDIN is crucial in addressing the digital divide and co-ordinating the third sector's digital inclusion response."

3.17   The 100% Digital Leeds team helped to secure longer-term funding from the NHS Leeds Clinical Commissioning Group to increase digital inclusion for people with learning disabilities or autism. To build the business case for investment, 100% Digital Leeds worked with the City Digital Partnerships Team, Forum Central, Pyramid of Arts and the Commissioning Manager for Learning Disability and Autism at NHS Leeds CCG. This funding will see an Autism and Learning Disability Digital Inclusion Coordinator appointed for two years. The post will work with and across multiple teams and will be line managed by Pyramid, working closely with the 100% Digital Leeds team and reporting regularly on progress to 100% Digital Leeds, ALaDDIN and the CCG.

3.18   100% Digital Leeds are also working with third sector partners across the city to improve digital inclusion and participation for older people. COVID-19 has brought long periods of lockdown and isolation for older people, and now more than ever supporting older people to overcome barriers to digital inclusion is vital. 100% Digital Leeds continues to work with organisations supporting older people to adapt their services to the pandemic: Developing virtual sessions of activities to combat social isolation, developing device lending schemes to support people who have access barriers with no connectivity or equipment, providing training, tools and resources to enable organisations to better support their service users in taking their first steps online and building skills and confidence across service users and staff teams.

3.19   Throughout the pandemic 100% Digital Leeds has supported many of the Neighbourhood Networks in Leeds to develop digital inclusion activities and embed digital inclusion within their services. To build resilience, 100% Digital Leeds has worked with Leeds Older People's Forum to move that support from an individual organisation level to a sector level.

3.20   November 2020 saw the launch of the Neighbourhood Network Digital Inclusion Group. The group was designed to create a dedicated space to develop resources and share best practice and learning on the theme of digital inclusion across the Neighbourhood Networks. The group is user-centred and evolves according to need, embedding the citywide ambition of supporting older people to be digitally included, and developing a network of localised digital offers across our communities.

3.21   The Digital Inclusion Group reflects the needs of Neighbourhood Networks and older people in light of the growing digitisation of the health and wellbeing agenda across the city. It supports organisations to develop the skills, confidence and tools they need to better support their service users to become digitally included. Group members share their experiences of embedding digital inclusion into their activities and developing a digital offer within their services.

3.22   The group is building a citywide network of organisations supporting older people, with around 30 organisations represented including Neighbourhood Networks, Age UK Leeds, Leeds Hearing and Sight Loss Service and more. The group is providing solutions to digital inclusion barriers for older people and creating an inclusive, person-centred model of digital activity and participation. The group meets monthly and has developed a dedicated Slack channel of digital inclusion discussions, tools and resources for organisations supporting older people in Leeds.

3.23   To celebrate the success of the group and to share progress to date, in February 2021 100% Digital Leeds and Leeds Older People's Forum facilitated a webinar on 'Digital Inclusion for Older People'. The webinar featured contributions from Cross Gates and District Good Neighbours Scheme, Aireborough Voluntary Services to the Elderly, Seacroft Friends and Neighbours, Older People's Action in the Locality, YourBackyard and Older Wiser Local Seniors. The webinar was attended by representatives from more than 70 organisations from Leeds and across the country.

3.24   **Quote from Ali Kaye, Third Sector Development Manager, Leeds Older People's Forum:** "The impact of COVID has driven the digital inclusion agenda for organisations working with older people. Leeds Older People's Forum has been working with 100% Digital Leeds for under one year and during that time the relationship between us has grown to become a city-wide partnership positively impacting on the growth of digital

inclusion for older people. The Neighbourhood Network Digital Inclusion Group is growing month on month. Organisations come together to share resources and learning, hear from experts and develop solutions to the rapid growth they are all experiencing in the development of their digital service offer to older people. Since its inception the group has supported the development of new partnerships and increased the number of members accessing digital funding. The group recently hosted an oversubscribed national webinar sharing digital the digital learning in Leeds, including the impact our partnership has had in providing a key focal point for the growth of digital services for older people in the third sector. Organisations benefit from the partnership as it provides accessible digital inclusion expertise from 100% Digital Leeds, and the wide range of organisations involved, developing a sustainable and successful peer-support network across organisations supporting older people in the city."

3.25 Taken together, these interventions are increasing capacity across the city and contributing to a more coordinated and connected digital inclusion ecosystem in Leeds. The 100% Digital Leeds team continues to work with partners from all sectors to build relationships, develop new networks and strengthen referral pathways.

4. Main issues – Reducing health inequalities through digital inclusion

4.1 COVID-19 continues to highlight the link between digital exclusion and health inequalities. Healthwatch Leeds People's Voices Group (PVG) has published two reports on this topic since the start of lockdown. The aim of the PVG is to put people's voices at the centre of health and care decision making in Leeds, and in particular the voice of people living with the greatest health inequalities. 100% Digital Leeds sits on the PVG digital inclusion sub-group.

4.2 The Digitising Leeds report published in July 2020 highlighted how residents experienced the move to digitised health and care services in Leeds and identified some of the key barriers people in Leeds face to getting online. This was followed by an 'Autumn Check-in' report on Digital Inclusion: How does it feel for me published in October 2020. This most recent briefing focusses in large part on the experiences of people facing the greatest health inequalities. Its insight comes from the Communities of Interest network, which seeks to hear the voices of people facing multiple health inequalities.

4.3 There are examples throughout the report of the ways in which 100% Digital Leeds has worked with and supported organisations including: Basis Yorkshire, Leeds Women's Aid, Leeds City Council Migration Team, Turning Lives Around and Leeds Gypsy and Traveller Exchange. 100% Digital Leeds are also named as one of the teams that will be responsible for developing and delivering interventions in response to the report's Recommendations.

4.4 **Quote from Leeds City Council, Adults & Health, in the Autumn Check-in report:** "Leeds Adult Social Care is committed to the fundamental principles of the 100% Digital Leeds approach, and are currently partners in a number of initiatives mentioned throughout this report, such as the Beeston and Middleton Digital Inclusion project. Since the time of the last Healthwatch report Adult Social Care have embarked on a journey to upskill our workforce in the use of digital technology, including participation in an Action Learning Set programme developed by Health Education England. This programme both identifies innovative ways for frontline workers to utilise technology in the delivery of their role, as well as enhancing their knowledge base of the range of devices that can be used to support people and their families to maximise their independence (such as Google Nest Hub, Amazon Show). As a result of the programme 'digital champions' will be able to cascade their learning to colleagues. Further digital solutions are also being explored with our Digital Inclusion team to identify different ways to undertake conversations and assessments where we can't currently do these face-to-face."

4.5 The Beeston and Middleton Digital Inclusion project mentioned above, sees the 100% Digital Leeds team working with the Local Care Partnerships in south Leeds. The project was initiated in response to the Healthwatch Leeds report to develop and test a place

based approach to identify and remove barriers to delivery and subsequent inclusion in digitised health and care services.

4.6 The 100% Digital Leeds team are supporting health and care providers as well as third sector organisations in the area with the aim of reducing health inequalities. The team are working closely with and strengthening partnerships between local healthcare providers and public and third sector organisations (including Leeds City Council departments) to increase the provision of digital access, skills, and support available locally. They are also improving awareness of and support to access digital health and care services.

4.7 The project is already making a difference to communities of interest and patient cohorts in the area. In addition to the work that is happening on the ground in Beeston and Middleton, the 100% Digital Leeds team are using their learning from the pilot to develop a Structure and Intervention Model to enable the work to be scaled-up and rolled out to other Local Care Partnership areas. This model will be presented for approval at the Personalised Care Steering Group - Digital Sub Group.

4.8 Digital inclusion interventions can be complicated and can take a long time. There is no single intervention that will bring quick results with a direct line from increasing digital inclusion to improving health outcomes and reducing health inequalities. People are more than patients and they are more than their health condition. A digital health tool might not be the thing that motivates someone to become digitally included. But that might be the only digital thing that the 'system' wants them to do. 100% Digital Leeds takes a holistic view of digital inclusion, they take a 'furthest first' approach with an understanding that the people most likely to be digitally excluded are those who have other challenges that make it more difficult for them to engage.

4.9 This holistic approach to digital inclusion is exemplified by the Digital Health Hub model. The 100% Digital Leeds team partnered with Cross Gates & District Good Neighbours Scheme (CGDGNS) to launch the first Digital Health Hub in Leeds in 2019. This enabled CGDGNS to embed digital support and resources into their already successful programme of activities. Their 1,200 members received support on topics such as ordering repeat prescriptions online, making a GP appointment online or using the NHS app to self–manage their long-term health conditions. The Digital Health Hub model creates strong links with local GP practices and Social Prescribing teams. There is now an established referral pathway for health professionals and staff to refer patients to the Digital Health Hub for support in accessing online NHS services and this continued throughout COVID-19.

4.10 The key principles of a Digital Health Hub include:

- **Build Trust and Relationships:** Utilising places where people feel welcome and comfortable, people they already know, where they feel safe. Inclusivity. Reaching and engaging people who might not feel comfortable in other settings.

- **Build local partnerships and bridges between health, care and community organisations:** Greater understanding of service offers, referrals and signposting, shared resources and goals. Finding new ways to work together and collaborating on approaches.

- **Open up new possibilities and opportunities that support people's health and wellbeing:** Greater understanding of tools and resources available for people to support their health and wellbeing, enhancing and expanding current service offer.

- **Take a person-centred holistic approach to digital:** "Whatever is important to you is important to us". Introduce digital in ways that respond to people's interests before moving onto health and wellbeing. Where access to digital feels incidental and not prescribed. Responding to immediate need.

4.11 In the face of COVID-19 the CGDGNS Digital Health Hub showed the key benefits of this model in providing digital health support throughout the pandemic. CGDGNS is delivering their service by communicating to their members through welfare calls and virtual sessions,

and established partnerships and collaborative working with local healthcare providers has continued.

4.12   The main factors which contributed to this success are:

- The 100% Digital Leeds team working closely with Primary Care by delivering Digital Champion training to local GP Practice staff and volunteers to increase access to NHS services online and self-management apps such as the MyCOPD app. This has strengthened the links between the community provision at the Digital Health Hub and primary care networks, enabling continued referrals for digital support and improving health outcomes for their members/patients.

- Increased communication around NHS information and Coronavirus updates to CGDGNS members throughout the pandemic. Encouraging members to still access Primary Care when necessary and increasing awareness of access to cancer screenings and other key services.

- An established cohort of staff and volunteers within CGDGNS who have continued to provide digital support and training with members via telephone calls.

- Key stakeholders across Third Sector, NHS, Leeds Community Healthcare and Voluntary Action Leeds.

4.13   Cross Gates & District Good Neighbours Scheme have now taken on a capacity builder role to support other organisations locally and nationally. They are sharing their learning, skills, expertise and resources from their work with 100% Digital Leeds and their role as a Digital Health Hub. This is helping organisations across the city and the country to create better digital inclusion outcomes for their service users and creating a wider national network of organisations working together collaboratively to tackle the barriers to digital inclusion for older people.

4.14   As part of the Beeston and Middleton project the 100% Digital Leeds team will work to develop more Digital Health Hubs in community organisations in the area. The library service is also working on a programme to develop Digital Health Hubs within libraries and community hubs.

4.15   **Quote from Linking Leeds Social Prescribing Service:** "Many clients have felt isolated during the pandemic, not being able to access face to face support. Using technology can frighten people, often putting them off applying for support. During the last month one of our Wellbeing Coordinators liaised with the 100% Digital Leeds team to support digitally excluded clients. As a result of receiving digital champion training from 100% Digital Leeds, we have been able to refer two male clients with severe mental health to BARCA and Men's Health Unlocked, with one client now able to video call family abroad. BARCA are now working with the client to look at online men's social groups to attend during lockdown. We have also referred a client with learning disabilities to Leep1, a group which supports those with learning disabilities to have a voice and also hosts many groups and activities to help develop social, health and educational skills. We collected a tablet device from their café (currently closed due to lockdown) and dropped this off with a client. In the client's words "I love it, it's changed my life; thank you for everything you've done". We have also been able to refer two single mums to Carers Leeds to support them in searching for employment, and also to join online art workshops run by Stitch-Up and Inkwell Arts."

4.16   During the COVID-19 crisis, the 100% Digital Leeds team have increased their focus on digital inclusion as a means of improving health outcomes and reducing health inequalities. This includes interventions that focus on personalised care, self-management and increasing access to, and uptake of, digital health and care services. 100% Digital Leeds has worked closely with teams across primary care, social prescribing, Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust, Leeds Community Healthcare and Leeds and York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust. They are also working with West Yorkshire and Harrogate Health and Care Partnership Integrated Care System (ICS). Working alongside the Respiratory Lead within the city, 100% Digital Leeds take a leading role for myCOPD within the self-management steering group in the ICS. They developed the training which is now used by

all areas of the ICS implementing myCOPD, they are developing the myCOPD framework and are leading the implementation of myCOPD across Primary Care in the ICS.

4.17   The 100% Digital team will continue to develop their evaluation models for measuring impact, recording and reporting case studies for individuals, organisations, sectors and the city. They will work more closely with colleagues in DIS, Public Health, NHS and elsewhere to use Population Health Management, health and care systems data and other indicators to evidence the positive impact of digital inclusion in this area.

5.   Main Issues – Equipment, infrastructure and connectivity

5.1   As noted in the recent Inclusive Growth report to this Board in February 2021, access to digital devices and connectivity has become even more important during the current crisis. The 100% Digital Leeds tablet lending scheme was designed for a pre-COVID situation. The iPads on that scheme were lent to organisations to enable them to try different digital activities and interventions with their service users at no cost and no risk. The tablets were always part of a wider offer and the start of a relationship where the 100% Digital team would work with the organisation to collect evidence of impact for funding applications so that the organisation could buy their own equipment. The tablets would then be lent to another organisation and the cycle would continue. This model changed over the last 12 months.

5.2   As organisations closed their doors during the COVID crisis, more people needed access to devices and connectivity at home. Tablets from the 100% Digital Leeds scheme have been in people's homes rather than in the hands of organisations. However, the level of need is much greater at an individual level and the number of tablets on the scheme could never satisfy all of that demand. Increasing the number of tablets on the scheme also increases the running costs for the monthly data SIM cards. These financial challenges are being discussed in preparation for the library service taking overall responsibility for the tablet lending scheme after the 100% Digital Leeds team moves to DIS.

5.3   As noted in Section 3, the 100% Digital Leeds team have helped many organisations to set up their own equipment lending schemes to support their service users or patients. However, there is a growing issue of data poverty for individuals who cannot afford to pay ongoing connectivity costs. As with many other areas of financial exclusion, those who can least afford to pay will often end up paying more through Pay As You Go data plans rather than monthly contracts. This is a national rather than a local issue.

5.4   A cross-party group of parliamentarians are working with industry and campaign partners to eradicate data poverty in the U.K. The Data Poverty All Party Parliamentary Group is chaired by Darren Jones MP and after the recent budget they noted that: "The pandemic has shown how important internet access and digital skills are to children learning from home, parents working remotely and citizens needing to access public services. It's disappointing that the Chancellor failed to address these issues at all in the 2021 Budget."

5.5   The 100% Digital Leeds team have worked with Council colleagues and internet service providers to address the issue of data poverty at a local level. The charity Hubbub, in partnership with O2, launched the 'Community Calling' smartphone recycling scheme in Leeds and West Yorkshire. Phones are gifted to vulnerable people across the region through third sector partner organisations and each phone comes with 12 months of free calls, texts and data (6GB per month). The first batch of 200 smartphones have been sent to community partners to distribute to their service users, including: Damasq, Unleashing Refugee Potential, Holbeck Together, Richmond Hill Elderly Action, Leeds Gypsy and Traveller Exchange, Basis Yorkshire.

5.6   Conversations are ongoing with BT to define the 'social value' aspects of their Full Fibre contract with the Council. Hyperoptic offered a free broadband service to families who currently do not have a reliable broadband connection. The offer was available for local authority tenants in homes covered by Hyperoptic's network to enable children with no

access to adequate connectivity to more easily access virtual education resources and learn from home.

5.7 Most children and young people have been educated from home during the pandemic. Families without adequate access to devices and data were at risk of seeing their children fall further behind with their education. As with the issue of individual data poverty, the huge number of children who needed laptops for home education required a response at a national level. In total, as of 19 March the number of devices (laptops or tablets) delivered or dispatched to schools since the start of the pandemic is 1,267,451.

5.8 11,407 devices have been delivered or dispatched to Leeds City Council-maintained schools since the start of the government scheme. This figure does not include devices delivered to academy trusts or directly to schools within a trust, which are recorded separately by government. Some trusts operate across local authority boundaries so it is more difficult to apply these figures directly to Leeds, but they include 4,303 devices to the Co-operative Academies Trust, 1,696 devices to the Gorse Academy Trust and 1,087 devices to the White Rose Academies Trust. All data [available at the GOV.UK website](#).

5.9 In addition to the government scheme, the local response has seen a growth in community device donation and recycling schemes across Leeds. Chief among these is Digital Access West Yorkshire. DAWY supports citizen-led, asset based approaches towards digital equity with a strong belief in the circular approach to sustain efforts for the longer term. Their work was featured in the Digital report to this Board in July 2020. Since then, DAWY have gone on to recycle and distribute hundreds more laptops and devices to families in need, with donations from individuals and local businesses.

5.10 To sustain the work and scalability of DAWY in reducing the digital divide, they have supported and connected with other digital access initiatives regionally to repurpose and redistribute tech in greater volumes. Nationally, DAWY have also shaped the start of the Digital Access National Network to facilitate the sharing of practical advice, resources and advocacy. DAWY also advise and support hyper-local schemes in specific areas of the city. They are well-placed to connect regional and national initiatives with local interventions using their insights from schools and communities on the areas of need.

5.11 Many of the hyper-local schemes have been championed by local Councillors. Although this is not an exhaustive list, those interventions include:

- [South Leeds device donation scheme](#)
- [£7,000 to schools in Crossgates and Whinmoor](#)
- [Hunslet and Riverside ward device donation scheme](#)
- [Partnership with Pudsey Computers](#)
- Discussions with [Laptops for Kids](#), a charitable organisation based in Sheffield that facilitates the donation, secure erasure and distribution of digital devices at scale. Laptops for Kids are continuing these initial discussions with colleagues at West Yorkshire Combined Authority.

5.12 The Council's Inclusive Growth and 100% Digital Leeds priorities are closely aligned with the ethos of these local schemes and initiatives. By providing technology the schemes are also contributing to improving educational attainment and closing achievement gaps. Discussions are ongoing with the local schemes to identify how the Council and other Anchor Institutions can best support them. DIS have held preliminary discussions about the equipment recycled by the Council and NHS organisations. There are potential risks and cost implications associated with any changes to existing processes governing data security, cyber security and physical disposal of assets. However, there is a desire to do more to help and to offer more support to the schemes in Leeds.

5.13 A recent survey completed by 98 Leeds schools showed that they needed another 3,700+ laptops to meet the needs of their pupils. However, this survey was completed in January and early February and more than half of the devices from the government have been

delivered or dispatched since 4 January 2021. DAWY are speaking to schools in Leeds to establish a more accurate picture of their outstanding need for devices.

5.14 **Appendix 2** provides an overview of national broadband infrastructure programmes and the current activity that the Council is involved in to support investment in connectivity across the district. This includes:

- The Government's National infrastructure Strategy

- Leeds Full Fibre Programme, including 5G

- Commercial investment programmes

6. Main Issues – 100% Digital Leeds working regionally and nationally

6.1 As noted in previous reports to this Board, 100% Digital Leeds has a national reputation as one of the leading digital inclusion programmes in the country. Since the most recent Digital Inclusion report to this Board in July 2020, the team have spoken to more than 30 Councils, health and care and third sector organisations from across the country. These contacts include an increasing number of NHS bodies including Clinical Commissioning Groups, Community Healthcare teams, individual GP practices and Integrated Care Systems. This is due to the work of the 100% Digital Leeds team in developing digital inclusion initiatives and transformations across health and care in Leeds. CCG and ICS representatives from around the country have asked for advice, guidance and support with their own digital transformation strategies, including embedding digital inclusion across care homes, implementing self-management tools for people living with long term conditions and addressing digital inclusion in relation to accessing digital health and care services.

6.2 There is also a recognition that 100% Digital Leeds is leading the way in digital inclusion for older people. In addition to the work with Neighbourhood Networks and other older people's organisations noted earlier in this report, 100% Digital Leeds were invited to speak at the Ageing Better conference in August 2020, "The Road to Recovery: Bridging the digital divide". This appearance prompted a number of Age UK services to contact the team for more information after the event. The team's work with care homes and recovery hubs was featured in the most recent report to this Board. Since then, additional funding has been secured to work even more closely and intensively to increase digital inclusion for residents of care homes. This work will start in earnest when the 100% Digital Leeds team moves to DIS.

6.3 100% Digital Leeds were also invited to speak at the "Dementia Care Conference 2021: Working towards Integrated Care". This reflects the impact of the team's Dementia Pathfinder project which was featured in the previous report to this Board and also features in the recently launched "Living with Dementia in Leeds – Our strategy 2020-25". 100% Digital Leeds is a key partner in the Dementia Friendly Leeds steering group, ensuring dementia care and services have digital inclusion embedded in their processes. The team works with a variety of organisations supporting the most clinically extremely vulnerable people living with dementia and their carers. Leeds has been chosen as one of four local authorities to take part in a two-year research project looking at the use of ICT by carers of people living with dementia. This work is led by the Care Policy and Evaluation Centre at the London School of Economics and Political Science and the ongoing legacy from the Dementia Pathfinder project will be included in the research.

6.4 Regionally, West Yorkshire Combined Authority recently launched their Local Digital Skills Partnership. There is an overarching ambition that the LDSP will improve digital capability across the whole skills spectrum, from the essential skills that help reduce digital exclusion and allow all to engage in the modern digital society, to the skills workers need in an increasingly digital economy, and through to the advanced skills required for specialist roles. There is also the aspiration to grow a digital capable workforce for the future by inspiring the students of today to grow their digital capability. If successful the LDSP will provide a local society that is fully inclusive and one where digital skills support both employment and economic growth.

6.5   The Council's Employment and Skills service has received funding from WYCA to deliver a new project focusing on Targeted Digital Skills for Employment. This includes the appointment of a Digital Skills Manager. That post will liaise with multiple digital skills stakeholders such as the LDSP, the 100% Digital Leeds team, Leeds businesses, public sector, Leeds anchors and training providers. They will analyse the city's current digital training ecosystem alongside identifying employer training needs and current gaps, from initial digital literacy through to academic Level 7. Many of the people who could most benefit from the initial digital literacy courses on this project will be known to some of the community organisations that are working closely with the 100% Digital Leeds team.

6.6   **Quote from Mark Temple, Local Digital Skills Partnership Manager, West Yorkshire Combined Authority:** "100% Digital Leeds is acknowledged as one of the leading digital inclusion programmes in the country and 100% Digital Leeds is represented on the LDSP Board to contribute to the developing priorities of the LDSP. Through the embryonic months of the LDSP, 100% Digital Leeds have been fundamental in supporting the evolution of the digital inclusion strategy to support skills growth across West Yorkshire, and it is hoped that with their knowledge, expertise and network of partners they will be the key drivers to building a better and more inclusive society in West Yorkshire and provide opportunities for all through skills provision."

6.7   In July 2020 the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government launched the Local Digital C-19 Challenge. The aim of this funding was to find Digital, Data and Technology projects to help local authorities in England with their COVID-19 recovery and renewal efforts. Eleven local government projects were awarded a share of £800,000 to combat some of the challenges they faced as a direct result of COVID-19.

6.8   Leeds City Council, through the 100% Digital Leeds team, was successful in its bid to develop a Digital Inclusion Toolkit. Leeds was the lead council working in partnership with Croydon Council, Age UK Croydon and TechResort CIC based in Eastbourne. The toolkit went live at: www.digitalinclusionkit.org in December 2020 and almost 200 people from across the country dialled in to the launch webinar. The toolkit draws on the combined experience and learning of 100% Digital Leeds and project partners to produce a comprehensive guide on strategies that can be used when tackling digital exclusion in communities.

6.9   The toolkit is:

- An online resource for anyone interested in finding out more about any aspect of designing and delivering digital inclusion projects and programmes.

- A summary of the digital inclusion experiences of the project partners, including successes and challenges.

- For staff and volunteers from councils and organisations of all sizes across all sectors.

- A collaborative space where users of the site can add comments and questions directly to every post on the toolkit. They can also use the contact form to get in touch with the project team 'behind the scenes'.

6.10   The project team led by 100% Digital Leeds have already received dozens of questions and comments since the launch. Some of these will be posted directly to the toolkit with answers. In other cases the team are talking to the people who commented and working with them to turn their comments into longer articles for the toolkit.

6.11   The digital inclusion toolkit is a platform where people can engage with others who are working on digital inclusion initiatives. Wherever those people are in terms of geography, sector, specialism, scale, scope or maturity of their digital inclusion programme, the toolkit should be relevant to their work. The toolkit can also be used as a means to contact 100% Digital Leeds or the wider project team. 100% Digital Leeds will facilitate conversations outside of the toolkit and bring people together around common themes or to collaborate on joint articles.

6.12 **Quote from Matt Wood-Hill, Collaboration Manager, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government:** "The 100% Digital Leeds team successfully applied for funding from our Local Digital C-19 Challenge last summer. Due to the dramatic changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, combatting digital exclusion is more important than ever before. Through their funded project work, the Leeds team are sharing guidance and lessons from their own experiences with local authorities across the country, the majority of which are less advanced in their work on digital inclusion. The Digital Inclusion Toolkit was developed in around three months. It is a national knowledge sharing platform that welcomes contributions and commentary for other organisations and professionals working in this sector, so that they can learn and discover the most appropriate approaches to use in their contexts. The platform is an impressive resource, and it is already seeing positive engagement from other councils and third sector organisations. We are delighted to provide further funding for Leeds to continue to share their sector-leading work with the rest of the UK in 2021."

7.   Main issues – Relocating the 100% Digital Leeds team from the library service to DIS

7.1   The 100% Digital Leeds team is currently based within the Library Service. However, the team's role in developing and delivering the 100% Digital Leeds programme has always been more than the digital skills training elements that Libraries provide. The team has a wider remit set by Scrutiny Board's initial inquiry and recommendations. The 100% Digital Leeds team has a Systems Leadership role in digital inclusion, working in partnership with teams in the DIS, Economic Development, Adults and Health, NHS, Third Sector and elsewhere.

7.2   Based on the fact that the majority of the leadership work that is done by the 100% Digital Leeds team has the strongest synergies with the DIS, discussions are ongoing to move the 100% Digital Leeds team from the Library Service to the DIS. To continue to deliver an effective digital response to the City's recovery phase post-COVID, it is even more crucial that the Council uses its convening power to maximum effect. It is essential to work beyond silos and bring people together from across sectors to coproduce solutions from the bottom-up.

7.3   This approach is well established across DIS, which already plays the central and strategic coordination, convening and connecting role across the Council, public sector partners and the third sector. Moving the 100% Digital Leeds team from the library service to DIS will facilitate easier and more effective coordination, direction and strategic support for their work.

7.4   The library service will continue to play a key role in the delivery of digital inclusion activities. During lockdown, Libraries have been offering a digital 1-1 telephone support service to residents across Leeds as well as supporting older and isolated library members with digital help through their Keep in Touch calls. They have also trained around 300 frontline staff to be Digital Champions.

7.5   The 100% Digital Leeds team will continue to expand their leadership and coordination role for digital inclusion as part of DIS. They will drive the agenda, develop the vision and deliver the shared priorities of the Council and the wider city. They will build on their strategic partnerships with organisations from across the city, the region and the country. Strengthening their work with colleagues across the health and care system the 100% Digital Leeds team will work with DIS to intensify their focus on increasing digital inclusion to improve health outcomes and reduce health inequalities.

8.   Corporate considerations

8.1   Consultation and engagement

8.1.1 As outlined throughout this report, consultation and engagement with partner organisations and their service users is a constant activity of the work and one of the fundamental principles of the 100% Digital Leeds approach.

8.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

8.2.1 The report focuses on actions to reduce and mitigate the impacts of poverty, exclusion and inequalities. By working with community partners this work will strengthen cohesion and integration in Leeds.

8.3 Council policies and the Best Council Plan

8.3.1 All of the work outlined in the report plays a key role in achieving the Council's ambition to build a compassionate city, tackling poverty and reducing inequalities. Work discussed is aligned closely with the Best Council plan, the Leeds Economic Recovery Framework, the Health and Wellbeing and Inclusive Growth Strategies.

Climate Emergency

8.3.2 Improving digital inclusion across all communities has the potential to make a major contribution towards overall efforts to tackle climate change. Significant focus across government and the public sector in particular has been given to transforming the way citizens interact with services, moving information and applications online while delivering services in fewer physical locations. For those who are digitally excluded this has created difficult practical challenges and they are also excluded from securing the environmental benefits of these changes. For example, if someone is not able to complete a form online they may have to travel to a physical location, with the nearest one now being a greater distance away than it was previously and requiring a longer, more polluting, journey.

8.3.3 At its core, work to provide people with more digital skills and access equips them with greater choice and flexibility about how they live their lives. As well as having the ability to present more opportunities in social and economic terms, it can also inform and enable people to make more environmentally positive choices in a realistic and practical way.

8.4 Resources, procurement and value for money

8.4.1 As noted above, there are resource implications and budget pressures on the tablet lending scheme. A review of the scheme is underway with input from Officers in the library service, DIS, Procurement and 100% Digital Leeds.

8.5 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in

8.5.1 There are no specific legal implications or access to information issues with this report.

8.6 Risk management

8.6.1 Programme risks are managed, and programme governance is in place, with regular reporting to Smart Leeds Portfolio Board and regular reports to Scrutiny Board (Infrastructure, Investment and Inclusive Growth).

8.6.2 In the context of 'Reset and Renewal' and 'Building Resilience', digital inclusion is social inclusion and is one way of tackling poverty, improving health and wellbeing and reducing inequalities. The risks of failing to deliver the 100% Digital Leeds programme and not achieving the ambition of 100% Digital Leeds would have a significant impact on partners and communities across the city. Relocating the 100% Digital Leeds team to DIS will enhance and expand their Systems Leadership role in digital inclusion.

9. Conclusions

9.1 The update report to this Board in July 2020 outlined the Council's and the City's ongoing digital response to the COVID-19 crisis. The Conclusions in that report noted the following ambition statement as a foundation of recovery plans:

9.2   *"The Council cannot meet the demands of the future without change. We want to move to a whole system approach across places that enables people to independently look after themselves and improve their lives, to connect them to their communities and a wider circle of care and* support. *We can use some of the latest technologies to make this happen, but if we do not tackle digital exclusion then tens of thousands of our most vulnerable residents will be left behind as other areas of the city move on without them. We are working with and within those communities to ensure that everyone benefits from a truly 100% Digital Leeds."*

9.3   Relocating the 100% Digital Leeds team to the DIS will ensure they can continue to work beyond silos to achieve that ambition, bringing people together from across sectors. They will expand their leadership and coordination roles, driving the digital inclusion agenda with systems leadership from the top while co-producing solutions from the bottom-up. As part of the DIS, the team will have the strategic support to continue to develop the Council's and the City's vision, and deliver our shared priorities for 100% Digital Leeds.

10.   Recommendations

10.1   Endorse the strategic priorities of the 100% Digital Leeds programme to make Leeds the most digitally inclusive city for everyone.

10.2   Recognise the significant achievements to date of the 100% Digital Leeds team and their work with partners from all sectors to increase digital inclusion across the city.

10.3   Agree that the 100% Digital Leeds team continues its systems leadership role for digital inclusion on behalf of the Council and the city, with the strategic priorities, leadership and governance for 100% Digital Leeds being formally managed by DIS.

10.4   Continue to provide oversight of the 100% Digital Leeds programme by receiving progress reports to this Board.

11.   Background documents[1]

11.1   None.

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[1] The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.

Appendix 1: 100% Digital Leeds evaluation framework pre-COVID
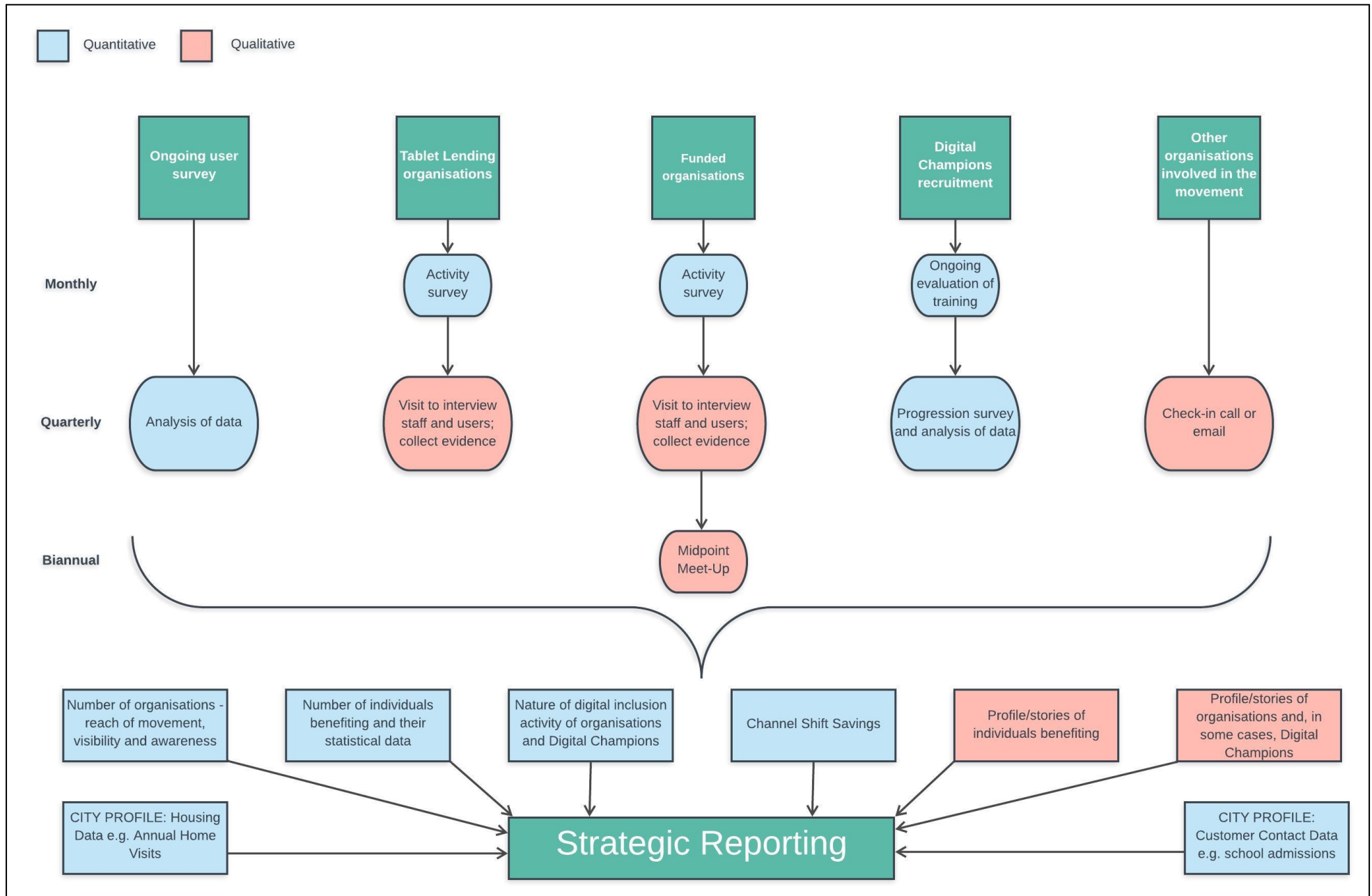
Appendix 2: Infrastructure update

National Infrastructure Strategy (NIS) The [Government published the NIS](#) in November 2020 and this sets out the policy ambition around broadband infrastructure "*The government is working with industry to target a minimum of 85% gigabit capable coverage by 2025, but will seek to accelerate roll-out further to get as close to 100% as possible. The government will continue to implement an ambitious programme of work to remove barriers to broadband deployment and maximise coverage in the hardest to reach areas of the country.*"

This target is a revision on both the previous target set out by Theresa May's Government of nationwide coverage of fibre to the premises (FTTP) by the end of 2033, which was considered by many to be viable but still challenging, and later targets set by Boris Johnson in his leadership campaign and the subsequent Conservative party manifesto of December 2019. The national policy position has moved away from delivery of FTTP networks to 'gigabit capable' networks. The shift to gigabit capable allows for the inclusion of a wider set of technologies (including DOCSIS 3.1 technology used in Virgin Media networks and other mobile and wireless solutions delivering gigabit speed services).

To support the delivery of 85% gigabit capable coverage by 2025 the Government has ear-marked £5bn for the Gigabit Broadband Programme of which £1.2bn has been allocated (from 2021/22 – 2024/25) to focus on identifying and tackling the final 20% (known as the F20) of hardest to reach locations – up to c.6 million premises across the UK – using an "*outside-in*" approach to deployment (i.e. build out from rural areas first, rather than leaving them until last).

There are some parts of the Leeds district that will fall into the F20 definition e.g. those areas that are not in scope to receive commercial investment by broadband infrastructure providers. By definition these are some of the less urban parts of Leeds in the north east and eastern parts of the district.

The Gigabit Broadband Programme will use public subsidy to create procurement 'lots' which will be offered out to market. The procurement process and contract management will be handled centrally by civil servants within Building Digital UK (BDUK – the delivery arm of Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport DCMS). In March 2021 the Government published the [Project Gigabit Phase One Delivery Plan](#) which sets out the broad approach for this new round of publicly funded investment in broadband infrastructure.

There has been some consultation on how the new procurements will work with West Yorkshire authorities through the West Yorkshire Combined Authority. Further detail is expected on this in the early part of the 2021/2022 financial year. Other West Yorkshire authorities have a greater number of premises potentially in scope for such procurement.

Current position in Leeds

Leeds is relatively well served by gigabit capable networks. Almost half of premises (47.85%) in the district can access a full fibre connection. Because Virgin Media has a very extensive coverage (78.4% of district on VM network), when you add fibre to the premises (FTTP) connections to the gigabit capable DOCSIS 3.1 connections provided by VM 86% of premises in the district can access a gigabit capable service[2]. This far outperforms the UK average of 38.93% of UK premises which are able to access gigabit speeds[3].

Leeds Full Fibre Programme (LFFP) In [February 2020 the Council signed a 10 year £20.3m contract](#) with BT and their delivery partner Openreach to deliver an extensive full fibre broadband network to public sector buildings across the district and to use that network to provide internet services to the Council. Despite some delays due to Covid-19 the first phase of the programme was completed in January 2021. 190 LCC buildings are now on the Openreach network. The remaining c.1,100 buildings in scope will have moved onto the new network by March 2024.

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[2] Access only, as it is customer choice as to whether to take-up a service

[3] See [Broadband Coverage and Speed Test Statistics for Leeds (thinkbroadband.com)](#) for more detail, including breakdown to parliamentary constituency level.

Whilst the LFFP will not directly improve the connectivity position for residential and commercial properties in Leeds the investment by Leeds City Council in a full fibre network will lead to a greater proliferation of fibre across the district. The network will encompass Council owned operational buildings, schools, GP surgeries and health and care sites across the whole district, including in areas which have not been viable for commercial investment programmes by market operators. The intention is that this increased fibre spine will then built out from by other broadband providers taking connectivity to other premises within the vicinity of LFFP sites. In this way the Council has sought to maximise the value of the investment made in meeting its own corporate connectivity requirements by using its spending power to uplift the overall infrastructure position of the city.

The LFFP also incorporates the delivery of a 5G network across the district. BT will build a so-called "carrier neutral" network which will be made available for multiple mobile network operators (MNO) to deliver services to customers. All 5G networks require fibre networks to sit behind them and provide backhaul.

To support the delivery of the wider 5G network LCC are working with BT to deliver a city centre pilot of a standalone 5G network which will separate out existing 5G equipment (currently co-located with 4G equipment) and use a number of LCC CCTV columns and street lighting as alternative sites for equipment. The pilot will also involve the construction of a number of large freestanding masts in 6-8 locations in the city centre.

The overall 5G ambition of the LFFP is that BT will develop an extensive 5G network which will provide coverage to around 70% of the district (by geography) and c.80% of homes within the LCC owned housing stock.

Commercial investment programmes Leeds is benefitting from significant investment in infrastructure by three broadband network operators – CityFibre, Openreach and Virgin Media. All three are investing in developing full fibre networks in the district and through the Connectivity Board chaired by Martin Farrington the Council is working with them to understand their deployment activity and to encourage them to go further faster.

Superfast West Yorkshire Leeds is part of the Superfast West Yorkshire partnership, along with the four other West Yorkshire authorities, City of York Council and the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA). Contract 1 & 2 of this programme were delivered by Openreach using a combination of fibre to the cabinet (FTTC) and fibre to the premises (FTTP) connections. End user connections delivered under these contracts had to be Superfast 30mbps+. As of March 2021 just under 98% of premises across West Yorkshire and York can access a superfast service.

In September 2020 Quickline were awarded a contract to deliver connectivity to the remaining premises in West Yorkshire and York. The target is to cover 5,571 premises by autumn 2022, of which roughly 20% will be within Leeds MD. The majority of premises covered by this deployment will be served by Fixed Wireless Access (FWA) which delivers broadband services over radio signals using masts. There will be some limited deployment of FTTP. Quickline will need to build some new masts both within Leeds MD and the wider intervention area, but the majority of the coverage required will be provided by existing masts.