

SRS Strategic Board 16th July 2024

“... a proposal for the creation of a modern, vibrant digital agency that can better serve the scale of change required for our citizens and stakeholders together rather than alone.”

The logo for ONEWALES .digital. The word "ONEWALES" is in a large, bold, sans-serif font. Below it, the word ".digital" is in a smaller, lowercase, sans-serif font. The text is centered between two horizontal lines. In the background, there is a large, faint version of the cluster of overlapping circles seen in the header logo.

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1. **Executive Summary**

“Digital - applying the culture, practices, processes, business models and technology of the internet era to respond to peoples raised expectations.”

The criticality of “digital” to the organisation, in the wider sense of Tom Loosemore’s definition above, has already been recognised by SRS partners at the Strategic Board on July 16th 2024 where the Board were very clear about the need for pace, urgency and drive towards a shared DDaT model.

This is further reflected in the pathfinder Strategic Board Project Strands that the Board agreed and that the SRS has driven including Connecting Wales, Connecting Care, Shared Data Platform (Single View of Child), Cooperative Website and AI / Automation.

There is significant potential to have a greater impact on the wider four Authority services if our combined resources were organised differently. This paper will describe a potential model for how this can be achieved with benefits and opportunities.

The SRS Finance and Governance Board summed up the aspiration perfectly, that is that the SRS should be seen as the “platform for collaboration” and challenge given to any four Authority service opportunity that is not seeking a move into this model.

2. **Key Messages**

The evolution of the Shared Resource Service (SRS) has been marked by significant milestones and strategic initiatives aimed at enhancing public service delivery in South Wales. Initially established as a collaborative effort among several local authorities, the SRS has grown into a modern, vibrant shared service. This transformation has been driven by the need to adapt to the rapidly changing landscape and the increasing expectations of citizens and stakeholders. Key projects such as Vantage Data Centre, Connecting Wales, Connecting Care, the Shared Data Platform and many more have played a crucial role in this evolution, demonstrating the potential for greater impact through collective action and resource optimisation.

The SRS is now well placed to consider what more it can do for our partner organisations and this business case is step towards that new future. The SRS is seeking to use what it has learned and what it has done with partners collectively over the last year or so in the spaces outside of technology.

We are very aware that the strands of digital, data, information governance and information security are not in the current provision and that it would require some adapting to deliver but with these strengths existing in our partners, the SRS is confident and positive about a future which enables us to grow, to build and to deliver on our beliefs that our culture of collaboration and strong delivery would allow additional services to be successful across the partnership.

It is important to be clear that this work is about finding a solution that allows us to apply consistency and not uniformity. We are not seeking to deliver the exact same products or services to every partner as we recognise that you will all remain as sovereign bodies. We have learnt through our work in the technology space that there is significant value in a consistency of approach that becomes quicker the more frequently that it is delivered, irrespective of what the product or service is.

	It has become clear through this process that DDaT is a term that serves only to confuse. We have moved to use the longer phrase of digital, data, information governance and information security as the public service description.
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3.

Summary Position

The evaluation process has resulted in the below views from each of the partners in relation to each of the strands of work.

DIGITAL SERVICE
BGCBC VIEW - IN
MCC VIEW - IN
NCC VIEW - OUT
TCBC VIEW - IN

DATA SERVICE
BGCBC VIEW - IN
MCC VIEW - IN
NCC VIEW - OUT
TCBC VIEW - IN

INFORMATION GOVERNANCE SERVICE
BGCBC VIEW - IN
MCC VIEW - OUT
NCC VIEW - IN
TCBC VIEW - IN

4.	<p><u>Approvals Sought</u></p> <p>To agree to option six, that is to agree to an intent to share the services that have been evaluated and agreed by the partners and provide the SRS COO with absolute clarity of next steps.</p>
5.	<p><u>The ask of the SRS</u></p> <p>There is a significant opportunity to achieve four partner wide permanent innovation quicker and at lower cost through four Authority level collective action, rather than the tackling the same problems multiple times at an individual council level which is how it works today.</p> <p>Whether we look through the lens of Marmot, of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, of the Welsh Digital Standards, of individual Authority Digital Strategies, of individual Authority project lists or individual Authority roles and functions.</p> <p>To deliver on the request made of us by the Strategic Board on July 16th we will take the permission granted to us from each individual Local Authority and collectively from the four combined as the Strategic Board and progress a proposal which will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the identification and transfer of SRS identified digital, data, information governance and information security resources from existing teams or from within the business, into Torfaen as the host employer, to work in a OneWales Digital structure - the shift of organisational governance for the partners into a more effective model that allows for closer working - review of the need for intelligent client functions through a consistent approach to challenge, accountability and progress - flexibility over the procurement process, we will require some direct awards to take advantage of products that already exist in one partner to deliver value in the others - commitment to operating on a multi-disciplinary team model - the ability to progress with savings efforts across the partners

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- project strand awareness sessions either per SLT / CLT or with all senior leaders. It would be positive signal for the partners to get the wider group together and share the updates in one or two cross partner sessions.- to work with external organisations to build a set of trusted resources that we can rely upon for expert advice- to step away from different starting points language and step into shared language of “we will”- there needs to be a collaborative governance role that aligns all individual organisation funding requests and governance timelines to meet the expected timelines for each of the relevant projects.
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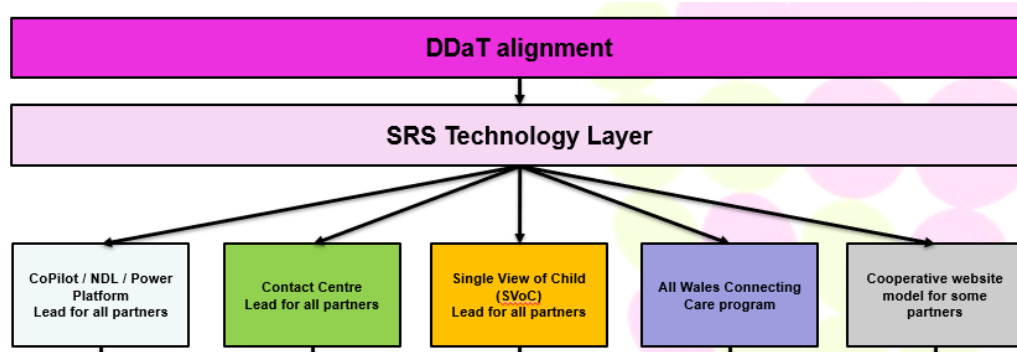
6. The Strategic Projects (Shadow Form)

7. Ambitions and Aspirations

The SRO model

The cross partner single digital lead is proving to be effective. In the contact centre project and the AI / Automation projects this single point of coordination has worked well and has driven the effort to achieve the right outputs and outcomes with less total resource requirement.

Improvement opportunity: this model could now to be scaled into a “shadow” digital service model across the interested partners.



Service users at the heart of the work

The most successful efforts have been defined by the service area users themselves, a number of examples are in our show and tell session at this Board meeting.

The cycle of the service area knowing the problems and the digital teams knowing the available toolsets yet ending in a standoff between the two can be broken. We have proven this on a smaller scale in a number of the strands.

	<p>Improvement opportunity: we need to progress this method of working and offer it as part of a shadow digital offering as part of our DDaT work.</p> <p><u>The minimum viable team principle</u></p> <p>Working with various members of the partner teams, we have started to shape the minimum viable digital team. We have also worked with external organisations such as Local Gov Digital, CDPS, WLGA and others to start this work.</p> <p>Simplifying this down to the bare minimum of what we see as forming the multi-disciplinary, minimum function would be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local knowledge (subject matter expert in the service area) - Decision maker for the service (Product Owner) - A skilled user researcher / service designer resource - Developer / Doer / Fixer type technology resource <p>This is just an initial start point that needs to be tested further as we work our way through the projects.</p> <p>Improvement opportunity: as we work our way into the options paper on digital as a service in the SRS we intend to work with external organisations to build a set of trusted resources that we can rely upon for expert advice in areas such as this.</p> <p><u>Decisions, governance and financial approvals</u></p> <p>In the Connecting Care and Contact Centre projects it has been clear that even with the service areas in the projects, there is still a need for someone to coordinate the funding and approval papers.</p> <p>Improvement opportunity: there needs to be a collaborative governance role that aligns all individual organisation funding requests and governance timelines to meet the expected timelines for each of the relevant projects.</p>
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Senior Leadership Teams awareness

The work is happening ground up directly with service area staff and team leads. This is an exciting and welcome change from the past but it requires a very different approach from those we have experienced before.

In the initial projects, we are seeing a point being reached where the knowledge and awareness of the work progresses to a point beyond

Improvement opportunity: the SRS would value running project strand awareness sessions either per SLT / CLT or with all senior leaders. It would be positive signal for the partners to get the wider group together and share the updates in one or two cross partner sessions.

8.	<u>Strategic Case</u>
9.	<u>Strategic Context: Shifting The Needle</u> <p>The future of public service delivery in South Wales is bright with OneWales Digital. By creating a unified digital culture of innovation, collaboration and user-centricity, we will empower our partners to work, share and build together as one team. Leveraging advanced technologies and agile methodologies, we will drive significant value for money, contribute to financial sustainability, and make a positive difference to the way we serve our communities. Together, we will set a new standard for public service excellence as we build the future of public services.</p>
10.	<u>Overview of the Current Position</u> <p>The current position is that the digital, data, information governance and information security functions all exist within each partner organisation. There may be an amount of informal collaboration but it would be fair to say that there are very few, all partner services delivered out of an authority function outside of the SRS.</p> <p>It has become clear during the discoveries that there are very few consistencies across those services, they are all structured differently and they are all managing different functions that they have changed and evolved over the years.</p>
11.	<u>Current Financial Position</u> <p>The current financial position is being reviewed and the SRS will update as that information is collated.</p>

12. The case for change: What has the Strategic Board requested

The Board are not just seeking to see a proposal about a digital, data, information governance and information security service capable of delivering the activities across the digital strategies, that could be done in any one of the four partners individually with varying levels of capabilities. The Board are seeking a widespread mobilising of action and delivery, at ground level, across all partner organisations that enables a shift in digital culture. A culture that embraces innovation, collaboration and user-centricity. A culture that empowers the partners to work together as one team, delivering social value and community benefit, in essence making a difference to and for their communities. A culture that leverages the latest approaches to create agile, responsive, and resilient solutions and a digital culture that drives value for money into partner medium term financial plans through efficiency and improvement.

The SRS Strategic Board are seeking the creation of a modern, vibrant digital agency that will change the way we serve our citizens and stakeholders. To break that down into its component parts this would include:

- a proposal for a partner wide service that aligns to a model for digital, data, information governance and information security principles showing how it will work with the business
- an organisation that delivers to agile principles and focuses on user need through a user centric delivery method
- applying the lessons learned from the Strategic Board projects to the new service proposal
- a clear and defined description of the benefits that show the social value, the organisation value and the difference this change will make. In essence, “why should we do this ... ?”
- a commitment from the new operating model that it will deliver savings into the medium term financial plans
- taking the opportunity to repurpose duplication and vacancies into new DDaT roles that would have been unaffordable in an individual position.

13.	<u>Marmot</u>
14.	<p><u>Gwent as a Marmot Region</u></p> <p>The Gwent region has formally agreed to adopt the Marmot principles and become a Marmot region to address health inequalities and improve well-being across the area.</p> <p>The key points relevant to this proposal of the agreement are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adoption of Marmot Principles: The Gwent Public Services Board (PSB) agreed to use the Marmot principles as a framework for action to reduce health inequalities. - Focus Areas: The initiative aims to address significant health inequalities identified in the Well-being Assessment, such as disparities in life expectancy and childhood obesity rates. - Evidence-Based Action: The approach is collaborative and evidence-based, aiming to undertake actions that effectively reduce inequalities in Gwent. - By adopting these principles and collaborating, Gwent aims to create a fairer and healthier region for all its residents.
15.	<p><u>The Marmot Principles</u></p> <p>The Marmot principles are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Give every child the best start in life. 2. Enable all children, young people, and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives. 3. Create fair employment and good work for all. 4. Ensure a healthy standard of living for all.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities. 6. Strengthen the role and impact of ill-health prevention. 7. Tackle discrimination and promote equality. 8. Pursue environmental sustainability and health equity.
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16.	<p><u>Contributing to the Marmot Principles</u></p> <p>This proposal outlines a comprehensive plan for creating a unified digital agency, OneWales Digital, aimed at enhancing public service delivery across four local authorities. This is how it aligns with the eight Marmot principles:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Give every child the best start in life: <p>The proposal emphasises the integration of digital services to provide seamless access to essential data at both an organisation and regional level for services such as healthcare and education. This will ensure that children receive timely and efficient support, contributing to better health and educational outcomes.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Enable all children, young people, and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives: <p>By promoting digital literacy and skills development, the proposal aims to empower citizens and staff of all ages. Training programs and digital inclusion efforts will help individuals gain the skills needed to participate fully in the digital economy and society and we will be able to better use regional data, regional skills and regional approaches to improve service provision.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Create fair employment and good work for all: <p>The implementation of OneWales Digital is expected to create job opportunities in the digital sector. By fostering a collaborative digital culture, the proposal supports economic growth and employment,</p>
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	<p>particularly in digital and data services. In addition, it was identified in the Cardiff Capital Region a number of years ago that provision of open data services can stimulate the economy as businesses have access to better data to make more informed decisions over.</p> <p>4. Ensure a healthy standard of living for all.</p> <p>The proposal's focus on integrating digital services can improve access to public services, reducing the time and effort required to access multiple services. This can enhance the overall quality of life and ensure that all citizens have access to the resources they need.</p> <p>5. Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities:</p> <p>By leveraging data and digital technologies, such as the internet of things, the proposal aims to create more resilient and vibrant communities. The integration of services and data driven decision making can lead to more effective and sustainable public service delivery especially when that is based on accurate data from within our places and communities.</p> <p>6. Strengthen the role and impact of ill health prevention:</p> <p>The proposal emphasises the use of data analytics and agile methodologies to proactively address challenges and improve service efficiency. This approach can help prevent issues from occurring or worsening, contributing to better health outcomes.</p> <p>7. Tackle discrimination and promote equality:</p> <p>The proposal's commitment to digital inclusion ensures that all citizens, regardless of their socio-economic status or geographical location, can access essential services. This inclusive approach helps bridge the digital divide and promotes equality.</p> <p>8. Pursue environmental sustainability and health equity:</p>
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	<p>The proposal highlights the importance of sustainability through scale, aiming to reduce the environmental footprint by optimising resources and reducing duplication. This aligns with the goal of promoting health equity and environmental sustainability.</p>
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17. **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**

18. **Sustainable Development Principle**

There are five principles that public bodies need to think about to show that they have applied the sustainable development principle. Following these ways of working will help us work together better, avoid repeating past mistakes and tackle some of the long-term challenges we are facing. By aligning with the five ways of working, the proposal in this paper demonstrates a commitment to the principles of the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

1. **Long-term:** The long-term planning aspect of this proposal is focused on creating a unified digital culture of innovation, collaboration and user-centricity with OneWales Digital. This approach is designed to empower partners to work together effectively, leveraging advanced technologies and agile methodologies. The proposal aims to drive significant value for money, contribute to financial sustainability and make a positive difference to the way communities are served. By setting a new standard for public service excellence, the proposal seeks to build the future of public services in South Wales that are resilient and adaptable to future needs and challenges.
2. **Integration:** The integration aspect of the proposal focuses on creating a more inclusive environment where citizens, regardless of their socio-economic status or geographical location can access essential services. By integrating digital services, the proposal aims to provide a seamless experience for citizens accessing public services such as healthcare, education, and transportation. This integration can reduce the time and effort required to access multiple services, thereby improving the overall citizen experience.

Additionally, digital and data services can provide local businesses with valuable insights and resources, such as market trends and customer preferences, fostering innovation and growth. OneWales

	<p>Digital can also reduce costs for businesses, making local economies more competitive. The implementation and ongoing management of OneWales Digital can create job opportunities in the sector, positioning it as one of the major employers of digital resources in Wales.</p> <p>The collaborative approach outlined in the proposal not only optimises resources but also empowers citizens, creating more resilient and vibrant communities. It supports the strategic goal of shifting the needle towards a unified digital culture of innovation, collaboration and user-centricity, which is essential for the integration of services across different sectors and regions</p> <p>3. Involvement: The involvement aspect is centred around engaging with stakeholders and communities to ensure that the digital services developed meet the needs and expectations of citizens. This involves a participatory approach where feedback and insights from users are integrated into the design and implementation of digital solutions.</p> <p>By involving citizens in the decision-making process, the proposal aims to create services that are not only user-centric but also foster a sense of ownership and community. This approach aligns with the Well-being of Future Generations Act's emphasis on involvement, ensuring that people of all ages and backgrounds have a voice in shaping the services that impact their lives.</p> <p>The proposal's focus on involvement also supports the development of digital literacy and skills, enabling citizens to actively participate in the digital economy. This inclusive approach contributes to a more equitable and connected society, where everyone has the opportunity to benefit from the advancements in digital technology .</p> <p>4. Collaboration: The collaboration aspect of the proposal is about creating a unified digital culture of innovation, collaboration, and user-centricity within OneWales Digital. This approach is designed</p>
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	<p>to empower partners to work together effectively, leveraging advanced technologies and agile methodologies. It aims to drive significant value for money, contribute to financial sustainability, and make a positive difference to the way communities are served. By setting a new standard for public service excellence, the proposal seeks to build the future of public services in South Wales that are resilient and adaptable to future needs and challenges</p> <p>5. Prevention: This proposal outlines a model for organising combined resources differently across the four Authority services to have a greater impact on services. This approach is expected to be more effective than the current model, where resources are organised individually at the council level. The proposal also aims to prevent issues from occurring or getting worse by using data driven decision making and agile methodologies to proactively address challenges and improve service efficiency and effectiveness.</p>
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19. CDPS Digital Standards

20. The Digital Standards

The twelve CDPS digital service standards for Wales are:

1. Focus on Wellbeing
2. Design Bilingual Services
3. Understand User Needs
4. Provide a Joined-Up Experience
5. Ensure Accessibility
6. Empower Service Owners
7. Create Multidisciplinary Teams
8. Iterate and Improve
9. Work in the Open
10. Use Scalable Technology
11. Consider Ethics, Privacy, and Security
12. Use Data to Make Decisions

21. Meeting the Digital Standards

How will sharing digital, data, information governance and information security functions make meeting the twelve CDPS digital service standards for Wales more effective than individually?

A shared DDAT service promotes a holistic and integrated approach to public service delivery, making it more efficient, innovative, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of users. This new way of thinking about public services leverages the collective strengths of multiple organisations to provide higher-quality, more effective, and sustainable services to the public and the CDPS have agreed to work with us on delivery of our approach to align to the standards.

22. **Partner Digital Strategies**

23. **Common Strategic Missions**

In reviewing the four digital strategies of Blaenau Gwent, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen there are common themes and activities identified from across the documents.

This journey will improve the overall experience for our citizens and stakeholders, delivering services that are efficient, effective, and responsive to their needs.

Mission One: Digital Skills Development

Mission Two: Customer-Centred Services

Mission Three: Collaboration and Innovation

Mission Four: Data and Evidence-Based Decision Making

Mission Five: Technology and Infrastructure

Mission Six: Automation and Efficiency

Mission Seven: Sustainability and Inclusivity

24. Mission One Benefits

25. Shared Aspirations Across Digital Strategies (Digital Skills)

- Train staff to enhance their digital skills to ensure they are equipped to deliver customer-centric services.
- Develop digital leadership among senior managers and elected members.
- Promote digital literacy within the community to support vulnerable groups and ensure inclusivity.

Uplifting of Digital Skills

Embracing a shared digital service to flood our Councils with essential digital skills at all levels is an initiative that promises to enhance our operational efficiency and service delivery. This process begins with the implementation of comprehensive digital training programs tailored to the diverse needs of our workforce. By providing continuous learning opportunities through accessible online platforms, regular workshops, and mentorship initiatives, we ensure that every employee, from entry-level to senior management, is equipped with the latest digital competencies. This systematic approach to skill development not only fosters a culture of innovation but also integrates digital practices into our daily operations, ensuring that new skills are immediately applied and reinforced.

The benefits of this initiative are manifold. A digitally proficient workforce will streamline processes, improve productivity and enhance our ability to deliver high-quality services to our constituents. Enhanced digital skills will enable our staff to utilise data analytics for informed decision making, implement robust cybersecurity measures and drive continuous improvement through innovative solutions. Additionally, investing in our employees' professional development will lead to greater job satisfaction and retention, creating a more stable and motivated workforce. By supporting this initiative, we position our Council as a leader in digital

<p>governance, capable of meeting the evolving needs of our community with agility and excellence.</p> <p><u>Lesson learned from Strategic Project strand</u></p> <p>The work is happening ground up directly with service area staff and team leads.</p> <p><u>Consistency of Digital Leadership and Awareness</u></p> <p>In our rapidly evolving digital age, strong digital leadership and awareness is crucial for guiding our communities and partner organisations towards a prosperous future. Currently, our digital initiatives, while effective, have been proven to operate in silos. This fragmented approach limits our ability to leverage technology to its fullest potential and hampers our capacity to respond swiftly to emerging challenges and opportunities.</p> <p><u>Lesson learned from Strategic Project strand “SRO model”</u></p> <p>The cross partner single digital lead is proving to be effective. In the contact centre project and the AI / Automation projects this single point of coordination has worked well and has driven the effort to achieve the right outputs and outcomes with less total resource requirement.</p> <p><u>Benefits of Collaboration on Digital Services</u></p> <p>By collaborating on digital services, we can strengthen our strategic vision. A unified collaboration strategy that underpins our individual digital strategies will align with our broader goals of economic prosperity, social equity, inclusion and environmental sustainability, ensuring that our digital initiatives are coherent and mutually reinforcing. Moreover, a collaborative framework positions us as leaders in digital innovation. Pooling our resources and expertise enables us to pilot cutting-edge technologies and implement best practices more effectively than if we were working in isolation.</p>

Efficiency and resilience

In terms of efficiency and resilience, sharing digital services allows us to optimise our resources, reducing duplication and maximising the impact of our investments. This efficiency means we can redirect savings towards other critical areas, enhancing overall service delivery. Additionally, a collaborative approach ensures that we build a robust, scalable, and secure digital infrastructure capable of adapting to future needs, which is crucial for maintaining service continuity during crises or unexpected events.

Inclusivity and equity

Fostering inclusivity and equity is another significant benefit. By working together, we can ensure that all communities have equitable access to high-quality digital services whilst learning from each other, helping to bridge the digital divide and ensuring that no one is left behind. Shared digital services can be designed with inclusivity in mind, catering to the needs of diverse populations, including people with disabilities and speakers of the Welsh language

Empowerment

Empowering our communities and employees is a vital aspect of this collaboration. Digital collaboration facilitates better engagement and we can enhance communication, gather feedback, and respond more effectively to the needs and concerns at scale. By fostering a collaborative digital environment, we promote stronger connections between public bodies and the communities we serve, which is essential for building trust and ensuring that our services reflect the priorities of our citizens and partners.

Responsible development

This paper supports sustainable and responsible development. We have proven that shared technology services reduce the need for multiple data centres and hardware, lowering our environmental footprint and

contributing to our sustainability goals and we can take this a step further by collaborating at the data and digital levels. By adopting a collaborative approach, we position ourselves as leaders in sustainable development, showcasing our commitment to responsible and forward-thinking governance on a global stage.

In conclusion, enhancing our digital leadership through collaboration is not just a strategic imperative, it aligns with our values and legislative commitments, promising a brighter, more equitable future for all. Together, we can harness the power of digital technology to create a Wales that is prosperous, resilient, and inclusive.

This is in line with the position put forward by the SRS Finance and Governance Board that the SRS should be seen as the “platform for collaboration” and challenge given to any four Authority service opportunity that is not seeking a move into this model.

26.	<u>Mission Two Benefits</u>
27.	<p><u>Shared Aspirations Across Digital Strategies (Customer-Centred Services)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Design and implement services that prioritise the needs and experiences of customers. - Utilise user-centred design principles to ensure services are intuitive and accessible. - Offer digital solutions that are available 24/7 and can be accessed from any device or location. <p><u>Agility and user-centricity capabilities at scale</u></p> <p>As digital continues to shape the future of public services, OneWales Digital remains committed to delivering exceptional value and innovation across the public sector. One of the key strategies driving success needs to be an alignment of our job roles with Agile Principles and with the UK Government’s Digital, Data, and Technology (DDaT) framework.</p> <p>This alignment not only enhances our capabilities within the public sector but also positions us to seamlessly scale expertise into and out of OneWales as and when required. We may need to bring in organisations to help with our work in which case they will understand the role required of them and we may provide services to others where our offer will be crystal clear to all.</p> <p>The DDaT framework is designed to be adaptable, allowing OneWales Digital to scale services and easily extend the ability to provide our services from any provide without the need for significant restructuring or retraining. This will mean that accessing external resource and building a partnership network becomes simpler at a scale of four organisations that we could not do alone.</p>

Lesson learned from Strategic Project strand

The most successful efforts within our Strategic Board Project Strand work have been defined by the service area users themselves, a number of those examples have been shown at Strategic Board meetings in April and July 2024. The teams have used agile principles to progress the work.

The cycle of the service area knowing the problems and the digital teams knowing the available toolsets yet ending in a standoff between the two can be broken. We have proven this in several of the strands and we want to push further into the agile delivery methods.

User centric

User-centricity will be at the core of every decision we make. We are committed to engaging with our citizens and stakeholders throughout the development process to ensure that our services are intuitive, accessible, and impactful. By prioritising the user experience, we aim to improve the overall quality of public services, making them more efficient and responsive to community needs.

By placing our citizens and stakeholders at the heart of service design and delivery, we ensure that the services we develop are tailored to meet their specific needs and preferences. This approach leads to higher quality, more relevant solutions that resonate with our communities and partners, ultimately enhancing overall satisfaction and trust in our public services. By actively engaging with users throughout the development process, we can gather valuable insights, allowing us to create services that are not only intuitive and accessible but also more efficient and effective.

A user-centric approach also drives operational efficiency and cost savings across all partner organisations. By focusing on the actual needs of our users, we can identify and eliminate redundant processes and services, streamlining operations and reducing costs. Continuous user feedback enables us to proactively address issues before they escalate, ensuring smoother service delivery and preventing resource wastage.

This collaborative, user-focused strategy fosters a culture of innovation and responsiveness, positioning OneWales Digital as a leading example of modern public service excellence. Embracing this approach will not only improve the quality of services we provide but also demonstrate our commitment to serving our communities in the best possible way.

Agility and putting service users at the heart of the work

By embracing an agile approach, OneWales Digital can enhance its efficiency, responsiveness, and effectiveness. The direct engagement and accountability inherent in agile methodologies render the traditional internal intelligent client function unnecessary, enabling us to allocate resources more effectively and drive faster, more impactful outcomes for our partner and the communities we serve.

Adopting an agile approach within OneWales Digital offers a significant opportunity to streamline our operations and enhance efficiency by potentially removing the need for an internal intelligent client function. Traditionally, an intelligent client function acts as an intermediary between business units and external suppliers, ensuring that project requirements are clearly communicated and that solutions align with organisational needs. However, the agile methodology inherently incorporates many of these responsibilities, thus rendering the need for a separate function obsolete.

Agile emphasises direct engagement between cross-functional, multi-disciplinary teams and stakeholders throughout the project lifecycle. By fostering continuous collaboration and communication, agile teams are better equipped to understand and respond to user needs in real-time. This direct interaction reduces the dependency on an intermediary to translate requirements and feedback, as agile teams work closely with stakeholders to iteratively develop and refine solutions. The iterative nature of agile, with its regular feedback loops and sprints, ensures that project outcomes are continuously aligned with organisational goals and user expectations. Consequently, the role of an internal intelligent client, which traditionally bridges this gap, becomes redundant as agile teams integrate these responsibilities into their workflows.

Benefits of DDaT-Aligned Job Roles

By adopting the UK National DDaT format for job roles, we ensure a standardised approach to digital, data, and technology functions. This consistency ensures that team members across different projects, departments and organisations can easily collaborate and understand each other's roles and responsibilities. It will also maintain high standards of work across all projects by adhering to nationally recognised competencies and frameworks.

Development

Aligning with the DDaT framework supports ongoing professional development and skill enhancement and continuous learning. We can encourage a culture of continuous improvement and learning, with clear pathways for career progression and skill development as identified by the DDaT framework.

This will assist is in attracting top talent by offering roles that are recognised and respected across the digital, data, and technology sectors. We have seen this at a national level with CDPS and WLGA who have very little issues in sourcing roles, in part due to their DDaT standard role definition and role title that the market understands.

Enhanced Service Delivery

DDaT-aligned roles can contribute to more effective and efficient service delivery through user-Centric approaches. We will focus our entire service on delivering high-quality, user-centric services that meet the needs of citizens and customers rather than the current air gap and duplication that exists between services. This will promote the use of agile principles and practices, ensuring that projects are delivered on time, within budget, and to the highest standards.

Improved Collaboration with other Sectors

By standardising our roles according to the DDaT framework, we position ourselves as a bridge between public and private sectors using a shared Language. This facilitates better communication and collaboration with private sector partners who recognise and understand the DDaT framework. We will enable smoother integration and execution of joint projects, leveraging shared standards and best practices.

As we continue to build on our success in the public sector, our strategic vision includes expanding our services to other Public Sector organisations. We will be better prepared for diversification by leveraging our DDaT-aligned expertise to offer digital services to others, providing them with the same high standards of service delivery and innovation.

This approach ensures that we remain at the forefront of digital innovation, delivering exceptional value to our partners and driving impactful work across all partners.

28.	<u>Mission Three Benefits</u>
29.	<p data-bbox="284 465 1396 506"><u>Shared Aspirations Across Digital Strategies (Collaboration and Innovation)</u></p> <ul data-bbox="331 555 1396 824" style="list-style-type: none"> - Foster a culture of collaboration both within the council and with external partners. - Embrace new technologies and innovative solutions to improve service delivery. - Explore opportunities for regional, national, and local collaboration to enhance service efficiency. <p data-bbox="284 875 579 916"><u>Wider sector access</u></p> <p data-bbox="284 965 1380 1279">The scale and importance of OneWales Digital will attract significant attention and support from key organisations in the Welsh public sector, such as the Centre for Digital Public Services (CDPS) and the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA). These entities recognise the potential of a unified approach to drive digital culture across Wales, offering their expertise, resources, and advocacy to ensure the success of OneWales Digital.</p> <p data-bbox="284 1328 1380 1552">The involvement of such high-profile organisations not only brings credibility and authority but also facilitates broader adoption and integration of OneWales Digital. This collective effort ensures that the service remains aligned with national strategies, maximises public value, and enhances the overall digital maturity of the Welsh public sector.</p> <p data-bbox="284 1601 884 1641"><u>Collaboration into Product Management</u></p> <p data-bbox="284 1691 1380 2000">The OneWales Digital unified digital culture will align our efforts towards a singular purpose: delivering value and benefit for our communities and partners. However, collaboration goes beyond mere cooperation; it embodies a strategic partnership where all stakeholders, including partners, community partners and citizens work together with shared goals and mutual respect. True collaboration fosters a culture of innovation by bringing together diverse perspectives and expertise.</p>

When stakeholders collaborate openly, they generate creative solutions and address complex challenges more effectively. This collective approach enables us to leverage the strengths of each partner, leading to more innovative and effective public service delivery multiplied across multiple partners. True collaboration aligns all partners towards common objectives, ensuring that efforts are coordinated and focused. By working as a unified team, we can achieve shared goals more effectively and create sustainable, long-term impacts for our communities.

When collaboration is genuine, purposeful and inclusive, it enhances community engagement and builds trust. Involving citizens and partners in decision-making processes ensures that services are more closely aligned with needs and priorities. This participatory approach leads to higher satisfaction and greater support for public initiatives.

Consistency

One of the issues that the SRS has always been the inconsistency of advice, of delivery and of the approach then taken to progress business side effort. If we consider the base fact that all four Local Authority partners have the exact same data retention policies and operate in the exact same spaces but the application of these policies ends up being different then we can see that it would be of great to align these services to provide a single, risk based assessment into individual SIRO's to make decisions. This will give us a much stronger chance at greater sharing, at consistency of decision and of streamlining the work moving forward.

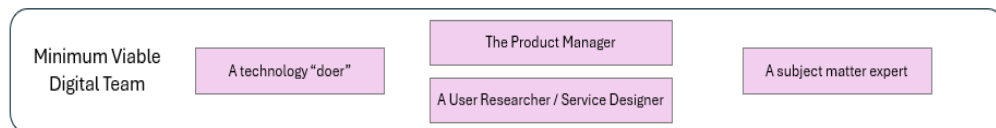
Lesson learned from Strategic Project strand The minimum viable team principle

Working with various members of the partner teams, we have started to shape the minimum viable digital team. We have also worked with external organisations such as Local Gov Digital, CDPS, WLGA and others to start this work.

Simplifying this down to the bare minimum of what we see as forming the multi-disciplinary, minimum function would be:

- Local knowledge (subject matter expert in the service area)
- Decision maker for the service (Product Owner)
- A skilled user researcher / service designer resource
- Developer / Doer / Fixer type technology resource

This is just an initial start point that needs to be tested further as we work our way through the projects.



The Minimum Viable digital Team will be a prototype in progress and we will adjust it continually to meet business needs. All roles, except for the subject matter expert role, will be rotated around the business and highly likely to be rotated around multiple partners. This is how we will maximise the effectiveness of resources, in the same way we have with our technology roles.

30.	<u>Mission Four Benefits</u>
31.	<p><u>Shared Aspirations Across Digital Strategies (Data and Evidence-Based Decision Making)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve data quality and use data analytics to make informed decisions. - Ensure data is protected and shared appropriately to enhance service delivery. - Utilise data to anticipate and proactively address customer needs. <p><u>Regional data driven decision making</u></p> <p>A unified data service represents a strategic advancement that will profoundly enhance our analytical capabilities, offering innovative benefits for our daily operational awareness through to policy making and strategic planning processes. By integrating and centralising data from various sources into a cohesive provision, we unlock a wealth of insights that drive more informed and effective decision making across our partners individually and as a region.</p> <p>The integration of data teams / functions into a unified data service promotes greater collaboration and transparency across all partner organisations. With access to shared data and analytical tools, these teams can work together to address key issues and solve problems jointly once for all. This open collaboration fosters accountability and builds trust among stakeholders, as decisions and strategies are based on transparent, evidence-based information.</p> <p>A unified data service is a powerful tool that will significantly enhance our analytical capabilities. By centralising data, improving accuracy, and providing advanced analytical tools, we can drive more informed policy making and strategic planning. This approach not only enhances our ability to address current challenges but also positions us to proactively manage future developments. Embracing a unified data service will</p>

enable us to make data driven decisions that effectively meet the needs of our communities and achieve our strategic objectives.

Regional data-driven decision-making offers significant advantages over local data-driven decision-making. By pooling data and resources at a regional level, authorities can gain a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of broader trends and patterns that impact the entire region. This holistic view allows for more informed and strategic decisions that address systemic issues rather than isolated local problems. For instance, regional data can highlight disparities in health outcomes, educational attainment, and economic opportunities across different areas, enabling targeted interventions that promote greater equity and cohesion. Regional collaboration enhances the ability to leverage advanced analytics and technologies that might be beyond the reach of individual authorities, thus improving the overall quality and impact of decision making.

Finally, regional data-driven decision-making fosters stronger collaboration and alignment among the partners, leading to more coherent and effective policy responses. When authorities work together using shared data, they can coordinate their efforts to tackle common challenges such as transportation, housing and environmental sustainability, which often transcend local boundaries. This collaborative approach not only maximises resource efficiency but also ensures that policies are consistent and mutually reinforcing across the region. Regional decision-making strengthens the collective bargaining power of the authorities, making it easier to secure funding and support from national and international bodies. Ultimately, by adopting a regional perspective, the partners in OneWales Digital can achieve better outcomes for their communities, driving economic growth, social well-being, and environmental sustainability on a broader scale.

32.	<u>Mission Five Benefits</u>
33.	<p><u>Shared Aspirations Across Digital Strategies (Technology and Infrastructure)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop and maintain a reliable, secure, and adaptable digital infrastructure. - Implement cloud-based solutions to improve accessibility, resilience, and sustainability. - Invest in digital infrastructure projects such as broadband, Wi-Fi, and 5G to support city-wide connectivity. <p><u>Innovation at scale</u></p> <p>Advanced technologies, including artificial intelligence, machine learning, data analytics, and cloud computing, will play a pivotal role in our future of permanent innovation. These technologies will enable us to create intelligent, data-driven solutions that spans more than individual partners and provide a single view of many complex social problems that enhance service delivery and operational efficiency. By staying at the forefront of technological advancements, we will keep our digital and data services relevant and effective.</p> <p>The growth into data, digital, information governance and information security will allow us to stay at the forefront of these services for our partners in service areas that are currently siloed, disjointed and duplicated.</p>

34. Mission Six Benefits

35. Shared Aspirations Across Digital Strategies (Automation and Efficiency)

- Automate routine tasks to free up staff for more value-added activities.
- Explore the use of Robotic Process Automation (RPA) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) to streamline operations.
- Continuously review and improve IT systems to enhance customer experience and operational efficiency.

Removal of duplicate, triplicate effort

In the analysis performed with the Futures Group, there are roles that are the same across all partners, performing the same functions and implementing the same projects.

Some examples include:

- Sharepoint Project Roles in two with two yet to start a project so maybe more to come
- My Council Services in all four partners developing forms in the same tool
- Service Designers across all four running very similar project lists

On the converse side of this, there are functions that the partners are seeking to move into but they do not have the roles available to them such as:

- Extending IoT provision
- User experience roles
- Shared content design roles

36.	<u>Mission Seven Benefits</u>
37.	<p><u>Shared Aspirations Across Digital Strategies (Sustainability and Inclusivity)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure digital solutions align with sustainability goals and reduce the carbon footprint. - Provide traditional service channels for those unable to access digital services, ensuring no one is left behind. - Develop digital services that meet accessibility standards and support the Welsh language. <p><u>Delivery social, economic and environmental value</u></p> <p>The social value of sharing digital and data services among the partners lies in fostering inclusive, efficient, and transparent service provision. By leveraging data across the region, we can enhance service delivery, engage citizens, boost economic growth, and promote social well-being.</p> <p>This collaborative approach will not only optimise resources but also empower citizens, creating more resilient and vibrant communities.</p> <p><u>Social Value</u></p> <p>OneWales Digital will help in creating a more inclusive environment where citizens, regardless of their socio-economic status or geographical location, can access essential services.</p> <p>By integrating digital services, we can provide a seamless experience for citizens accessing public services such as healthcare, education, and transportation. This integration can reduce the time and effort required to access multiple services.</p> <p>Digital and data services can provide local businesses with valuable insights and resources, such as market trends and customer preferences, fostering innovation and growth. OneWales Digital can also reduce costs for businesses, making local economies more competitive.</p>

The implementation and ongoing management of OneWales Digital can create job opportunities in the sector as we would become one of the major employers of digital resource in Wales. Additionally, training programs associated with these services can enhance the digital literacy and skills of the local workforce.

Closer joined up governance

Effective governance is crucial for the success of our shared digital service. We will establish a new governance structure and executive working forum comprising representatives from all partners. This forum will have the authority to make strategic decisions that benefit all partners, ensuring alignment and rapid progress and have early sight of all blockers and clear them out of the way.

We are also committed to measuring the impact of our digital initiatives, setting clear performance metrics, and regularly assessing progress to demonstrate the tangible benefits of our efforts. We will make a clear and measurable difference to citizens and to our partner organisations.

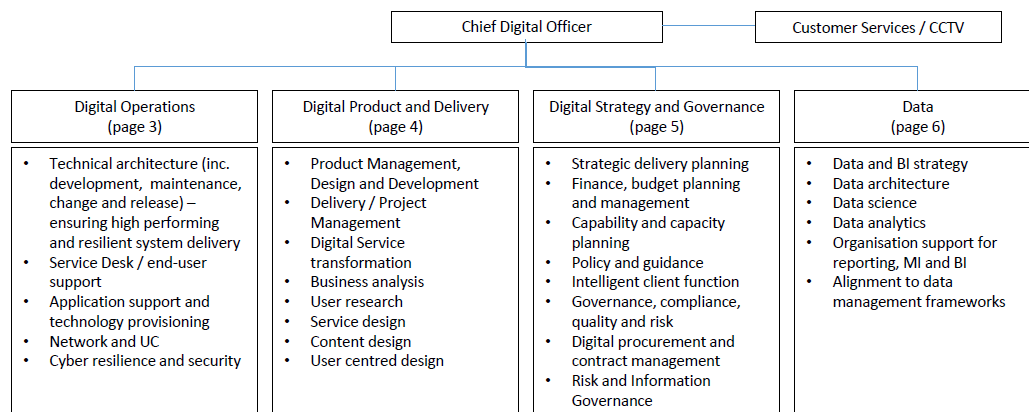
Lesson learned from Strategic Project strand Decisions, governance and financial approvals

In the Connecting Care and Contact Centre projects it has been clear that even with the service areas in the projects, there is still a need for someone to coordinate the funding and approval papers.

38. How are others across Local Government organising themselves to deliver their digital strategies?

The SRS has worked with a number of organisations to learn how they provide their services and a model that is common across many is shown below. What is interesting is that this very closely mirrors some of the services we currently provide that may have seemed out of place in a technology function but not in a digital function.

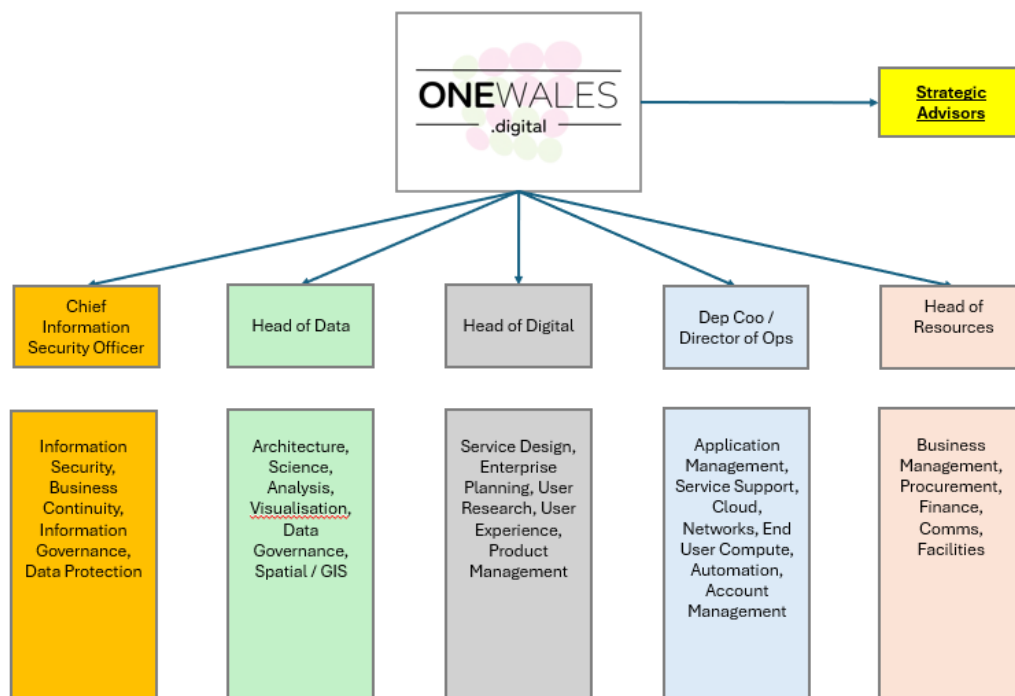
In essence many organise themselves around the ops, delivery, governance and data strands. Within that there are some examples of the organisation then organising around products and services rather than by discipline. The below is an example from Neath Port Talbot.



39. Proposed Digital Resource Sharing Model

The sharing model we were aiming for would have looked like the below. The way that the evaluations are presenting themselves means that we would need to take steps to achieve this rather than the original view that we could build this for all four from the start.

This remains the target model that we would be seeking to achieve, within this there would be a shift to operate to agile principles, to become more focused on the business and to have a greater focus on product rather than organisation.



40. The Evaluation Work

41. The process of evaluation

The COO and Deputy COO, working with the Futures group, agreed a set of discovery days and brought together service areas from each partner to agree the functions in each service and a set of key information that would be used for next steps.

The discovery days for digital, data and information governance ran in Sep / Oct 2024 and the information security discovery ran in January 2025. At the time of this Board, we have been unable to complete the Info Sec position.

We have worked with Local Partnerships to bring together the function information and define a set of criteria for the purpose of evaluation and to help shape the final in or out views of each organisation.

The Futures Group evaluated each strand function against the below criteria to produce a red, amber or green status for a BAU state, i.e continue as you are today compared to a collaborative state, i.e. a shared service in the SRS. In effect, a before and after assessment.

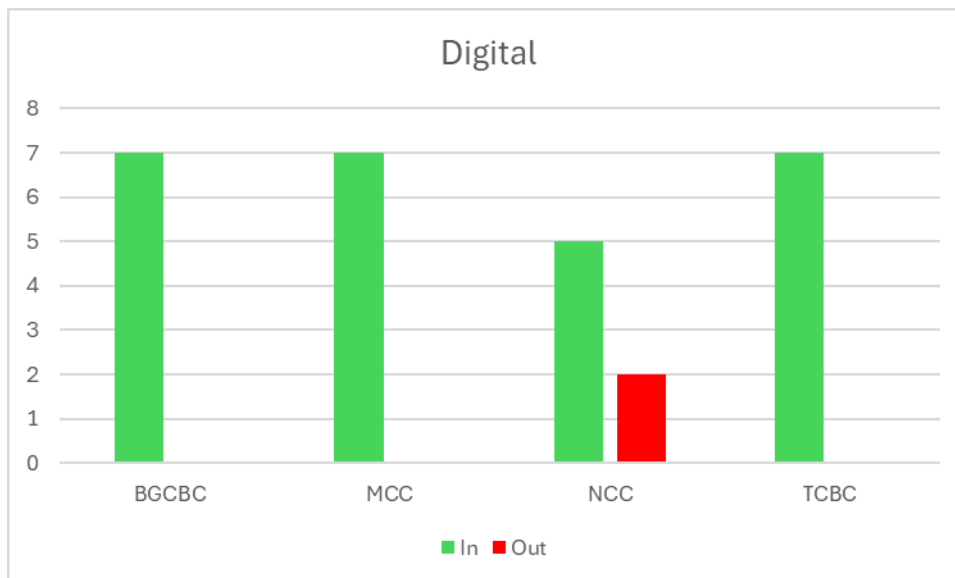
Criteria	Red	Amber	Green
Increases ability to prioritise resources to work at pace	No or decreased ability	Similar or slightly higher ability	High or significantly increased ability
Increases confidence, capability and capacity to innovate	No or decreased confidence, capability & capacity	Similar or slightly higher confidence, capability & capacity	High or significantly increased confidence, capability & capacity
Increases resilience	No or decreased resilience	Similar or slightly higher resilience	High or significantly increased resilience
Avoid duplication	High or significantly increased duplication	Similar or slightly less duplication	No or reduced duplication
Increased ability to crystallise and realise the benefits	No or decreased ability to crystallise and realise benefits	Similar or slightly higher ability to crystallise and realise benefits	High or significantly increased ability to crystallise and realise benefits
Delivery of cost savings	No or very limited savings	Moderate savings	High levels of savings
Upfront cost	High investment required	Moderate investment required	No cost
Service risk	High risk to service delivery	Moderate service delivery risk	No / low risk to service delivery

42. Digital

The evaluation of the digital strand has produced these outcomes:

DIGITAL SERVICE
BGCBC VIEW - IN
MCC VIEW - IN
NCC VIEW - OUT
TCBC VIEW - IN

The breakdown of the evaluation is:



43. Data

The evaluation of the data strand has produced these outcomes:

DATA SERVICE
BGCBC VIEW - IN
MCC VIEW - IN
NCC VIEW - OUT
TCBC VIEW - IN

The breakdown of the evaluation is:

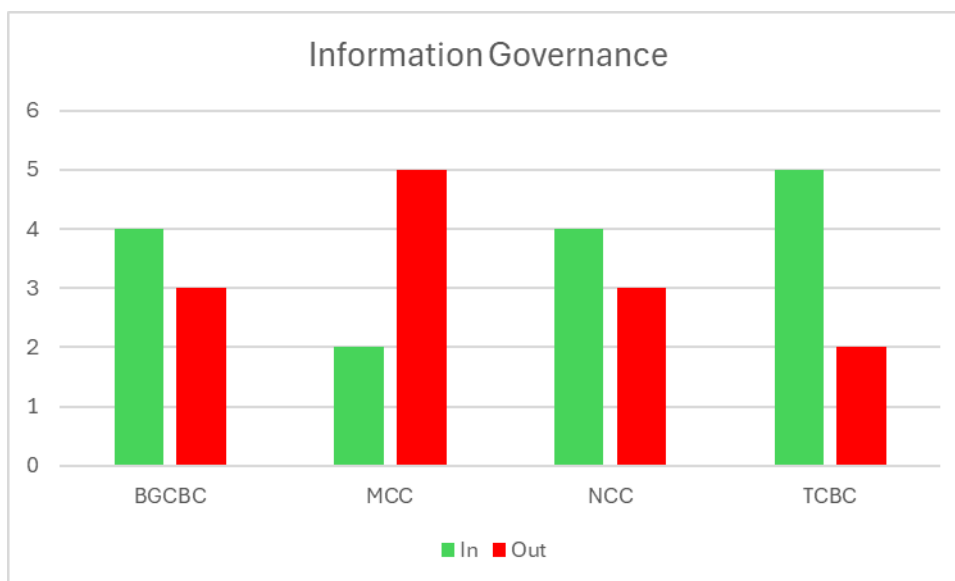


44. Information Governance

The evaluation of the information governance strand has produced these outcomes:

INFORMATION GOVERNANCE SERVICE
BGCBC VIEW - IN
MCC VIEW - OUT
NCC VIEW - IN
TCBC VIEW - IN

The breakdown of the evaluation is:



45. Options

Option One – All remain as is, i.e the BAU in the evaluation assessments

Option Two – Agree the intent to share Digital Services only as per the evaluation assessment shown below.

DIGITAL SERVICE
BGCBC VIEW - IN
MCC VIEW - IN
NCC VIEW - OUT
TCBC VIEW - IN

Option Three – Agree the intent to share Data Services only as per the evaluation assessment shown below.

DATA SERVICE
BGCBC VIEW - IN
MCC VIEW - IN
NCC VIEW - OUT
TCBC VIEW - IN

Option Four – Agree the intent to share Information Governance Services only as per the evaluation assessment shown below.

INFORMATION GOVERNANCE SERVICE
BGCBC VIEW - IN
MCC VIEW - OUT
NCC VIEW - IN
TCBC VIEW - IN

Option Five – Info Sec Services will need to be completed at another Board as we have been unable to finalise this evaluation.

Option Six – Agree the intent to share all services as per the evaluation assessment shown below.

DIGITAL SERVICE
BGCBC VIEW - IN
MCC VIEW - IN
NCC VIEW - OUT
TCBC VIEW - IN

DATA SERVICE
BGCBC VIEW - IN
MCC VIEW - IN
NCC VIEW - OUT
TCBC VIEW - IN

INFORMATION GOVERNANCE SERVICE
BGCBC VIEW - IN
MCC VIEW - OUT
NCC VIEW - IN
TCBC VIEW - IN

46. **Risks**

As well as the many benefits described within this document, there have been risks identified through the process:

- Integrating data from multiple authorities increases the risk of data breaches and unauthorised access which can lead to loss of sensitive information and reputational damage.
- There are some different systems in place which will make product management complex to begin with.
- If the resources in the business are unable to be released the service will only be able to operate for a limited number of partners.
- Establishing a new clear governance structure and accountability will be complex, leading to potential conflicts and inefficiencies in decision-making processes.
- Staff and stakeholders may resist changes due to fear of job loss, changes in work processes, or lack of understanding of the benefits of the shared service.
- The initial costs of setting up the shared service, including technology investments, training, and integration, may exceed budgets or projected savings may not materialise as quickly as expected.
- During the transition to a shared service, there may be disruptions to existing services, affecting the reliability and continuity of service delivery to the public.
- Differences in organisational cultures, priorities, and working practices across the four authorities can hinder effective collaboration and integration.
- Navigating the legal and regulatory requirements for data sharing and digital services across multiple partners can be complex and may pose compliance risks.

The mitigation for many of these risks is the experience that the current SRS technology service has from fourteen years of delivering a shared service.

	In addition to this, we are starting from a positive place with some partners in these service areas which will enable us to cover others.
47.	<p><u>Dependencies</u></p> <p>Many of these services are dependent on each other and lifting one would require the lifting of another.</p> <p>The SRS preference would have been to have managed all four strands as a single programme of work with partners support.</p>
48.	<p><u>Constraints</u></p> <p>The OneWales Digital future will only be constrained by the decisions taken by the four individual partners.</p> <p>A phrase used by the Strategic Board on July 16th was “we are either all in or not”.</p>

49. **Final Views**

50. **Delivery Timeline**

The process of moving forward is highly dependent on the partner organisations. If option six is agreed and if decisions are given in good time, the timeline for the organisational activities required could be as follows:

- The partners to advise what decision-making process is required within each to progress the recommendation.
- New governance model to be brought back to the April Strategic Board for agreement so the timeline for implementation then dependent on the Board.
- Start the informal group that have agreed to work on this with the SRS, that includes a number of key sector individuals hand picked by the COO for their experience, knowledge and ambition. They include WLGA CDO, CDPS Chief Execs, Scottish Local Government SRO, Neath Port Talbot CDO and the Chair of LocalGovDigital.
- OneWales repositioning will take six months of effort, so the timeline dependent on the Board agreement above.
- The agile delivery model will be a work in progress and whilst it will start straight away, we are expecting twelve to eighteen months for it to bedded in, so a date of April 1st 2026 onwards would be more suitable.

If option six is agreed and if decisions are given in good time, the timeline for the shared digital service could be as follows:

- A shadow digital service to be formed after today's Board to be in place by April 1st 2025 if support is available within the partners to move it forward, support required from OD / HR as this would require a secondment model.
- Staff transfers to be reviewed and a target to transfer into the shared digital service by April 1st 2026.

	<p>If option six is agreed and if decisions are given in good time, the timeline for the shared digital service could be as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The technology required to underpin the new shared data service in place by April 1st 2025 - As there are minimal resources transferring in the data space, an investment case would need to be written for a data service within the SRS to be formed after today's Board. <p>If option six is agreed and if decisions are given in good time, the timeline for the shared information governance service could be as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A shadow information governance service to be formed after today's Board to be in place by April 1st 2025 if support is available within the partners to move it forward, support required from OD / HR as this would require a secondment model - Staff transfers to be reviewed and a target to transfer into the shared information governance service by April 1st 2026 <p>Bring back the update in the Information Security service for the April Board.</p>
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51.	<p><u>Summary Recommendation</u></p> <p>To agree to option six, that is to agree to an intent to share all the services that have been evaluated and agreed by the partners and provide the SRS COO with absolute clarity of next steps.</p>
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