meath
a connected county

comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council

Meath's

Digital Strategy

Using technology to make life better and easier

Draft: 19 July 2019

Table of Contents

Introduction

What is a Digital Strategy?

Digital is the nearly instant, free and flawless ability to connect people, devices, physical objects and information anywhere.

This Digital Strategy will set out Meath County Council's ambitions to meet the needs and aspirations of the people of County Meath enabling them to benefit from digital technologies and infrastructure throughout the county.

The Digital Strategy is about delivering better informed people, better business, better jobs and opportunities, better education, better services and public services, and a better experience for visitors and investors.

Background to the Digital Strategy

An EU wide initiative

The Digital Agenda is one of seven flagship initiatives under the Europe 2020 strategy[1]. It focuses on modern technologies and online services that will allow Europe to create jobs and promote economic prosperity. It aims to improve the daily lives of EU citizens and businesses in a variety of ways.

Successful delivery and implementation of The Digital Agenda in Ireland is a Government priority. The overall aim of The Digital Agenda is "to deliver sustainable economic and social benefits from a digital single market based on fast and ultrafast internet and interoperable applications."

Ireland is going through a rapid change and upgrading of its fixed-wired telecommunications infrastructure driven by the National Broadband Plan (NBP). The Mobile Phone and Broadband Taskforce[2] is delivering significant changes within the wireless sector and digital strategies are being introduced across the public sector.

In Meath, significant improvements have been made to the digital infrastructure throughout the county by commercial operators. Mobile phone blackspots are being addressed with the installation of new antenna sites and the county is already leading the way in innovative programmes to deliver improved digital skills and the adoption of digital tools.

Measuring performance

In order to ensure the effective adoption of digital, the strategy will seek to improve key performance indicators to reflect its progress. A number of resources have been used to create a baseline on which to build measurable targets as for the Digital Strategy. This information came from International, National and Local research to provide information on how Ireland and Meath are performing in the Digital world.

The Europe's Digital Economy and Society Index 2019[3] tracks the progress made by EU Member States in terms of their digitisation, combining quantitive evidence from the Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) and qualitative information on country specific policies. This provides an over view of Ireland's Digital Maturity.

The DESI looks at five measures on how a country is performing; it's level of connectivity, human capital, use of the internet, integration of digital technologies and digital public services.

---

[1] https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/europe-2020-strategy
[2] https://www.dccae.gov.ie/en-ie/communications/topics/Broadband/mobile-phone-and-broadband-taskforce/Pages/Mobile-Phone-and-Broadband-Taskforce.aspx
[3] https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/desi

Overall Ireland ranks 7th in the DESI 2019. The country is identified as leading in the number of STEM graduates and the use of ecommerce by SME's is supported by the relatively high availability and growing use of fast internet. The report does identify issues such as, low levels of rural broadband, low take up of fixed broadband and a lack of basic digital skills in 48% of the population which leaves a lot of room for improvement.

In January 2018 Indecon International Economic Consultants carried out digital assessments of each local authority[4]. Indecon provided research using the Digital Readiness Assessment (DRA) tool to provide a measure of Meath's Digital Maturity (Figure 1). The DRA measured quantitive and qualitative on County Meath from a wide range of sources including Central Statistics Office and internal surveys. The County's performance was compared with a peer group of counties (Figure 1.) with a similar urban rural population division and against the Country as a whole.

The DRA was measured against seven pillars that were identified from international digital strategies and the themes of the Local Economic and Community Plans (LECPs) across the Country (Table 1).
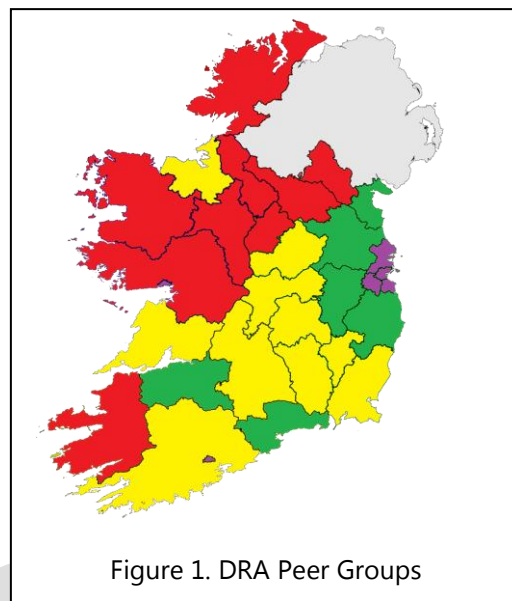

Figure 1. DRA Peer Groups

1. Digital Skills	an assessment of the digital skills of the population- the Human Capital within the LA Area. This covers both formal skills as well as the skills needed to engage in the digital society.
2. Infrastructure	the fundamental facilities in each LA that enable digital activity i.e. the use of digital tools (Appendix C), the connectivity of the county, the level of mobile and fixed internet penetration, broadband penetration, and the cost/speed of these services.
3. Innovation & Entrepreneurship	considers measures of digital initiative and risk, and creation of new ideas or processes. It includes the formalised partnerships and the adoption of digital tools by businesses.
4. Digital Economy and Employment	include the number of persons employed in ICT areas as a proportion of the local labour force, the utilisation of digital tools by businesses and supports for business to develop in the digital economy.
5. Digital Services	relates to the level and take-up of services through the internet (Appendix D).
6. Community & Culture	concerns the level of digital integration that is present in the LA in relation to these areas. Measures include the level of community engagement, partnerships and the development of a common language on digital issues.
7. Transitioning to Digital	measured based on a weighted average of the performance in the above areas, importantly to include rates of change, as well as the LAs supports to drive digital change.

Table 1. The Seven Pillars of the Digital Readiness Assessments

---

[4] The Indecon DRA was commissioned by the Department of Rural & Community Development on behalf of the Local Authorities to give an independent comparative measure.

The LA's were identified at their Transformational Levels for each pillar as a representation of their progress (Table 2).

Level 1 - Formative:	Minimal take-up of digital technologies; focussed on LA's own service provision; resource levels and commitment of organisation low and conducted in the absence of an explicit strong strategy.
Level 2 - Emerging:	Take-up of digital technologies is evident across a number of LA services but not in others; take-up variable; Limited out-reach to wider community; resource levels dedicated low, though commitment to long-term strategy; strategy being formed.
Level 3 - Developed:	Take-up of digital technologies is the most important channel across a number of LA services; active out-reach to wider community though limited actual change in behaviours being achieved; resource levels to promote digital strategy strong and in line with published long-term strategy.
Level 4 – Highly Developed:	Ambitious programme of adaption of digital technologies; programmes to promote digital engagement in the wider community; explicit published digital strategy which is an integrated element of the Local Authorities overall planning.
Level 5 - Transformational:	World-leading adaption of digital technologies both in terms of own processes; impactful engagement in the wider community; explicit digital strategy which is a core, integrated element of the Local Authorities overall planning.

Table 2. Transformational Levels of the DRA

Meath County Council performed well under the Digital Services and Digital Infrastructure but there is scope for improvement. Meath does need to make improvements in Digital Skills, Digital Transition and Community & Culture.
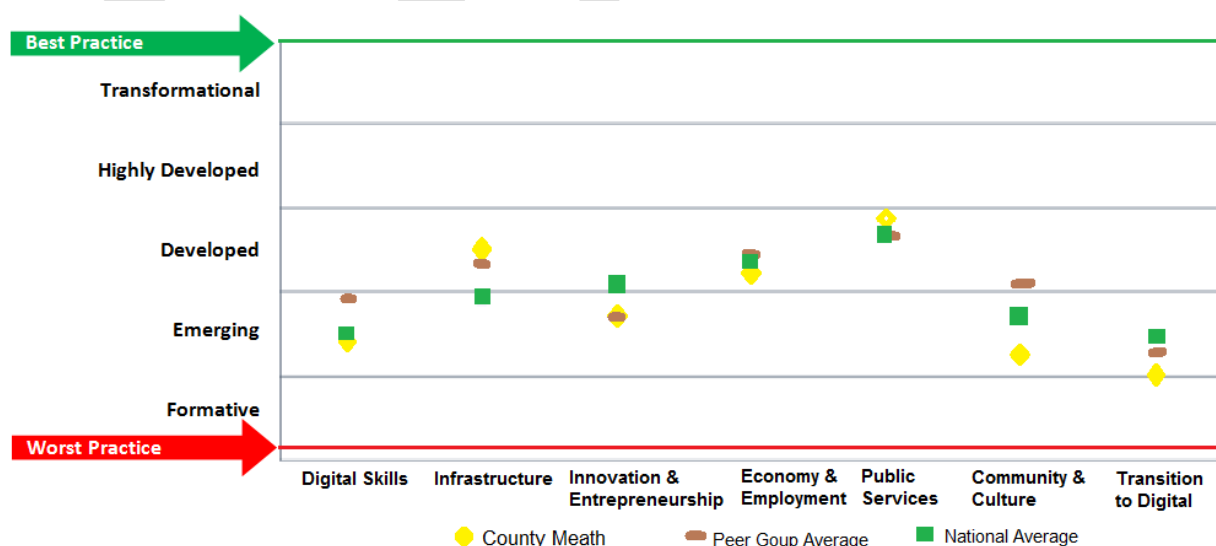

Figure 2. Digital Readiness Assessment of County Meath (Jan 2018)

Identifying Our Priorities

In March 2019 a wide ranging stakeholder engagement process was carried out. This included an online public survey and detailed stakeholder interviews.

These contributions were then brought to a stakeholder workshop held on the 30th April 2019 from which the County's Strengths, Weaknesses, Threats and Opportunities were examined (Figure 2). The priorities for the county were then explored in 3 subgroups. These sub groups looked at the key areas of Digital Skills, Digital Enterprise and Economy and Digital Public Services. A fourth pillar- Digital Infrastructure is also necessary to deliver the basic communications networks to be able to effectively deliver on the other pillars.

Strengths
Location (GDA, Airport, Ports)
Workforce
Educated Population
Committed Local Authority (innovative, leader)
Skilled L.A. Staff
Transport Infrastructure
Tourism & Culture (theatre, GAA, Baseball)
Low Set Up Costs
Quality of Life
Retail Experience (Branding, Artisan Foods)

Weaknesses
Infrastructure (Broadband)
Jobs in Dublin (IT skills/ Language skills) Leakage c. 5K+ ICT outbound Commuters (56%)
Lack of Confidence- more outward looking
Lack of high quality office spaces
Perception- Meath seems "Far Away" (outside M50)
Competition- want to work in Dublin
Lack of loyalty to the County, lack of community spirit, not from area & don't engage
Loss of trained staff/corporate knowledge- key resources into key areas
compared to other LAs, Not all the same

Opportunities
Third level opportunities (Proximity to large 3rd level facilities)
Linkages
Vibrant community sector

Threats:
Competition between LAs
Continued Dominance of Dublin
Cyber security
Economic Instability/cyclical economy
Obsolesce of technology
Protecting the Environment/Climate change- managing major event etc.
Investment decisions by central government
Social exclusion- sections of community being left behind
Fractured communities- people not engaging in community life
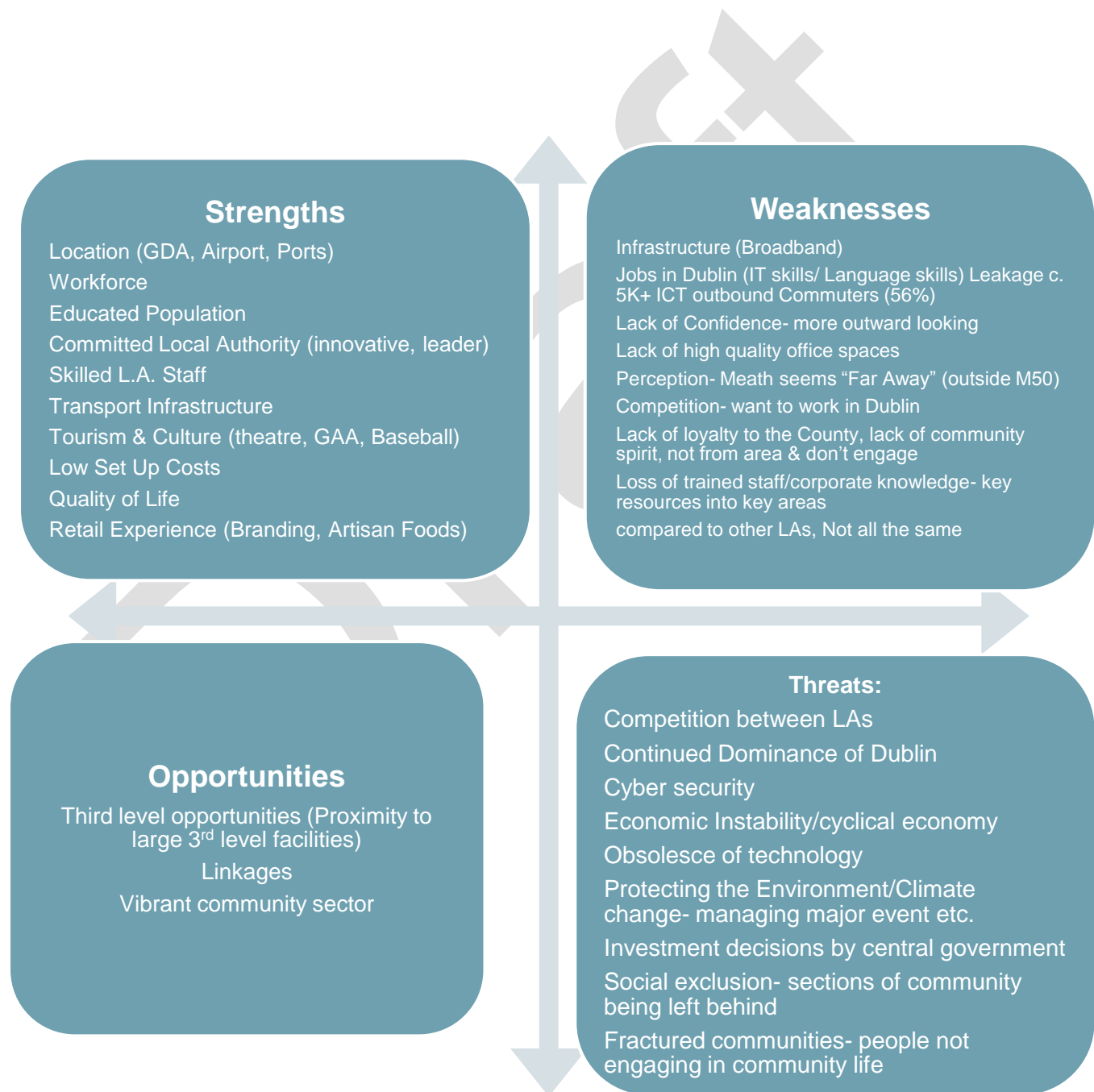
Figure 3. SWOT Analysis on Co. Meath

Pillar A- Digital Infrastructure:

The Need

Survey Respondents[5] identified that the availability of High Speed Broadband (HSB) is critical (28.1%), without which rural and urban businesses are severely impacted. The call to bring "broadband to all areas in Meath" was clearly identified as one of the biggest challenges that Meath residents face.

The issue is not purely a rural/urban divide one. Although many in rural areas still struggle with slow or no broadband, residents in many urban housing estates built during the late 1970s and 1980s have inadequate infrastructure to deliver HSB. Residents in some newly built estates are waiting significant periods of time before they are able to get broadband services.

National Solutions to National Problems

The National Broadband Plan[6] the combination of private commercial investment coupled with public investment in fibre networks across the country. The contract to deliver public investment in rural fibre is due to be signed by the end of 2019 and this will support the delivery of Ultrafast Broadband to rural areas over the next 5-7 years.

Infrastructure Connectivity in Co. Meath

The DRA identifies that Meath's Broadband Infrastructure is above average but it is concentrated in the major County towns.

The latest DCCAE Broadband map[7] (Map 1) illustrates the premises in Co. Meath that are currently able to access high speed broadband. A further 2 % of premises have already been connected as part of Open Eir's planned commercial rural deployment leaving 23.6% of the premises requiring government intervention to get access.

There will be approximately 20,400 predominantly rural premises who have been identified on the map as not being commercially viable and requiring the support of the NBP Intervention Strategy to receive fixed line fibre broadband[8].

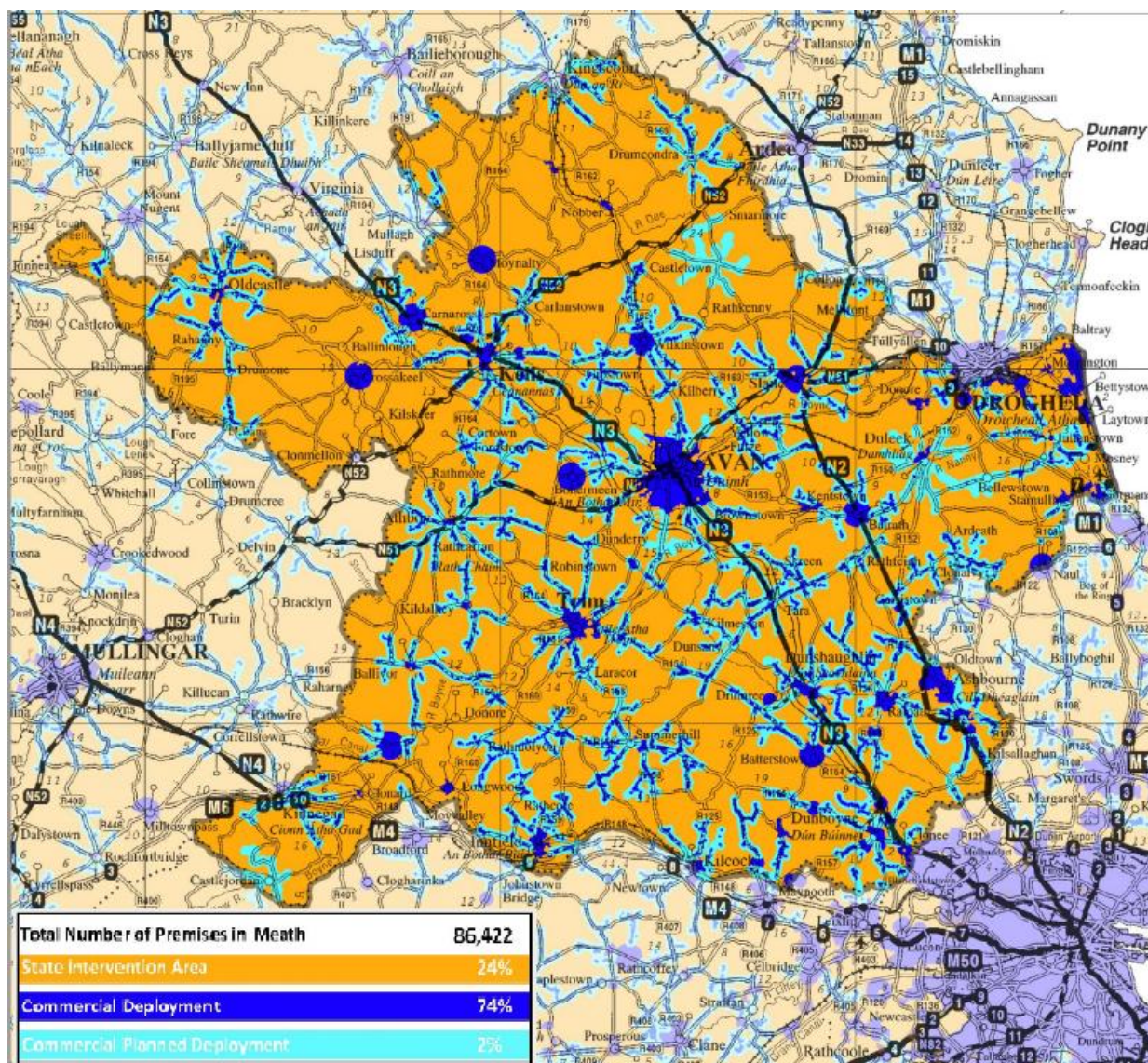[5] From online public survey through consult.meath.ie in February - March 2019
[6] https://www.dccae.gov.ie/en-ie/communications/topics/Broadband/national-broadband-plan/Pages/National-Broadband-Plan-Preffered-Bidder-Announcement.aspx
[7] https://www.dccae.gov.ie/en-ie/communications/topics/Broadband/national-broadband-plan/high-speed-broadband-map/Pages/NBP-Map.aspx
[8] https://www.dccae.gov.ie/documents/County%20Statistics.pdf

Total Number of Premises in Meath	86,422
State Intervention Area	24%
Commercial Deployment	74%
Commercial Planned Deployment	2%

Map 1. NBP Map for Quarter 1 2019 Co. Meath[9]

Bridging the gap

Supporting Fibre Network Development

Through its work with the network operators, Meath County Council has developed clear procedures and policies for the development of infrastructure in roads. Meath County Council will **work proactively** to support the continued rollout of commercial and public investment in wired broadband infrastructure.

Meath currently has the 6th highest high speed broadband penetration in Ireland. To ensure that Meath remains as one of the fastest counties in Ireland Meath County Council will continue to **actively engage with telecom infrastructure providers** to ensure the continued rollout of fibre networks across the county.

The 2013- 2019 County Development Plan introduced the requirement for telecommunications ducting to be installed during construction. Meath County Council will **encourage the development of open access networks in all new developments**. This will include the development of shared duct and chamber networks in new housing and commercial developments to minimise the cost of infrastructure development and provide the maximum connectivity opportunities for residents.

---

[9] https://www.dccae.gov.ie/documents/NBP_MAP_COUNTY__Meath.pdf [Accessed 19 June 2019]

To support the NBP public investment in infrastructure, Meath County Council will seek to minimise the administrative costs of the project by **providing streamlined Road Opening Licence processing** and will **facilitate cross municipal district T2[1] licence applications**.

Our success will be measured by recording the total Kilometres of fibre delivered across the County and the number and percentage of premises connected to FTTH networks across all providers.

Support Mobile Network Development

The NBP Public investment will take up to 7 years to deliver its network. For rural residents this is too long and therefore wireless connectivity is the only option for short term connection to HSB.

Progress has been made on identifying and remedying mobile phone blackspots across the county however there is an on-going need for further development and densification as the population of the County increases.

To support continued mobile network development Meath County Council will continue to **proactively engage with mobile operators** to identify and remedy blackspots. Where suitable the Council will **support the use of public infrastructure to improve coverage**. As newer slim-line monopole and street lamp mounted antennae are developed Meath County Council will **develop clear policies and procedures to support suitable developments**.

Our success will be measured by recording the average percentage of the population and the percentage of Meath's geographic area covered by 3G, 4G and 5G technologies across all providers.

Providing Access

To support rural communities over the duration of the rollout funding will also be provided for **the development of Broadband Connection Points (BCP) in community facilities across the county**. Many of these BCPs will be supported to become Community & Local Enterprise (CLE) Hubs.

The European Commission wishes to promote free Wi-Fi connectivity for citizens and visitors in public spaces[10]. To support this, the EU's WIFI4EU Initiative matched by Department of Rural & Community Development funding will provide the equipment and installation costs of internet access points across the county. Meath County Council will use this funding to **provide free public Wi-FI in urban centres and community facilities** throughout the county.

To demonstrate our continued commitment we will be measured on the number of BCPs and Hubs delivered, the number of Free Public Wi-FI Access Points Connected and the number of users using these facilities.

---

[10] https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/policies/wifi4eu-free-wi-fi-europeans

Digital Skills:

The digital skills of the population, the Human Capital within the LA Area cover both formal skills (such as technical IT skills) as well as the skills needed to engage in the digital society (e.g. access and use of the internet).

Ireland ranks 11th among EU countries in the DESI 2019 on Digital Skills[(3)], above the EU average regarding Human Capital, but is still lagging behind the highest performing countries.

Although Ireland performs well on ICT Graduates and ICT specialists employed in the Country, it lags behind EU averages on the skill levels of Internet Users such as Individuals with Basic Digital Skills, Individuals with Basic Software Skills and Individuals with above basic Digital Skills[(3)].

The DRA identified the Digital Skills level in Co. Meath as "Emerging" with only 3.5% of Meath's population having a computer science degree and 1.1% of the population of Meath have 3rd level qualification in computer use.

Across the county 69% of the population have a PC and 75% have internet access showing a high level of uptake on digital tools[11]. However rural areas lag significantly behind urban centres like Ratoath which has 81% of homes with PCs.

There are several initiatives to up skill and improve the digital literacy of the disadvantaged sectors of society such as the Digital Skills for Citizens programme, peer-2-peer and Schools Digital Champion programmes. However, the DESI identified that there is no coordinated and targeted national strategy specifically for digital skills, which would cover all the different levels of skills and different stages of life, and which would provide a specific roadmap to close the digital skills gap with the rest of the EU.

Access to Digital

With as much as 75% of the homes in some rural areas lacking broadband[(11)], the County cannot achieve its objectives without improved connectivity and access to digital equipment to enable people to up skill.

Meath County Council hosts the Age Friendly National Office and has supported the development of Age Friendly Technologies. Through the Age Friendly National Office we will **promote the use of age friendly technologies and skills development programmes.**

The National Broadband Plan Intervention rollout will not commence until 2020, to provide both an interim solution and a community resource, Meath County Council, Meath Partnership and other voluntary organisations will **support the development and promote utilisation of Broadband Connection Points** as community hubs for education and shared skills development.

Digital Skills development provides great opportunities for local communities of all ages and abilities. Meath County Library Services provides accessibility and improving access to technologies such as 3D printers, smart tables, Tablets, VR headsets and digital tools for use by members[12]. The library service will **continue to improve on its provision of technology for all levels and the development of IT learning centres** across the county.

Upskilling the County

There are already a host of training programmes available across the county. Actions through this strategy we will **link existing training service providers to avoid duplication of services**, this will enable us to **create partnerships on digital skills programmes** and **provide sustainable training development for all ages and levels of ability**. We will

---

[11] Census 2016 Broadband and Car Ownership data secured from the CSO June 2019
[12] Some facilities and equipment are already installed in Trim Open Library, WIFI available in all libraries.

also work with partner organisations to **explore funding opportunities for new digital programmes** such as the VEX Robotics initiative in schools.

The Meath County Library Service will increase its outreach services and **promote library training services such as digital skills training, e-learning and e-magazines.**

Supporting Participation, Inclusion and Access

24.7 percent of Meath's population do not have internet access [11], partner organisations have identified that engaging the "hard to reach" is getting more difficult. It is necessary for us to improve our communications with community groups and individuals to encourage them to benefit from the supports. To do this action we will **improve communications through the PPN to relevant organisations and use other channels directly with citizens across the County.**

Several organisations are providing supports for these sectors and it is essential that we **build on existing forums to co-ordinate service provision** across the County. These organisations and citizens at large will be encouraged to **make use of existing services and facilities** such as the Unity Centre, Library services and age friendly programme locations as well as the new CLE Hubs.

To provide a wider range of opportunities for citizens to engage in digital tools and services we will seek to **develop online cultural resources** expanding on previous Arts and Heritage initiatives such as oral histories, grave records, field name projects and the archiving of Local Authority records and collections.

Specific programmes will be examined to **improve the skill levels among Travellers** and encourage their continued educational attainment.

We will measure our performance to improve digital skills based on the number of programmes delivered, the number of locations and the number of participants across the County. We will also be measured on the number of community hubs delivered and their usage, the grants drawn down to deliver these hubs.

Our performance will also be measured based on the added funding for digital skills programmes across the County. The library will continue to record their level of engagement, utilisation of e-learning and e-magazine services and outreach activities. It will also be measured on it's improvement in digital across the County.

Stimulating the Digital Economy

An Online Nation

Ireland ranks strongly in the Integration of Digital Technology into enterprises according to the DESI[2].

	Ireland DESI 2017 value	Ireland DESI 2018 value	Ireland DESI 2019 value	Ireland DESI 2019 rank	EU DESI 2019 value
4a1 Electronic information sharing % enterprises	25% 2015	28% 2017	28% 2017	19	34% 2017
4a2 Social media % enterprises	36% 2016	36% 2017	36% 2017	4	21% 2017
4a3 Big data % enterprises	**NA** 2016	**NA** 2016	20% 2018	4	12% 2018
4a4 Cloud % enterprises	24% 2016	**NA** 2017	33% 2018	5	18% 2018
4b1 SMEs selling online % SMEs	30% 2016	30% 2017	30% 2018	2	17% 2018
4b2 e-Commerce turnover % SME turnover	22% 2016	23% 2017	26% 2018	1	10% 2018
4b3 Selling online cross-border % SMEs	16% 2015	17% 2017	17% 2017	1	8% 2017

Table 3. Abridged Ireland's Integration of Digital Technology[2]

The overall size of the digital economy in Ireland in 2017 was estimated at €30 billion or 13% of the total Irish economy GDP. It was estimated to reach €44 billion by 2020[13]. Ireland's digitally intensive sectors employ 212,000 (10.6%) of Ireland's workers[14].

There is significant scope to improve the level of electronic file sharing being done by companies[(3)]. Opportunities also exist to make further improvements in the number of businesses using Social Media and cloud services.

However, while Irish Small, Medium and Large Enterprises have benefitted from the adoption of digital technologies and ecommerce, micro-enterprises have not yet benefitted to the same extent[15].

The EU definition of a small enterprise considers those with 10-49 employees. In Ireland 92% of all enterprises are micro businesses which are not captured in the DESI research. IEDR research finds only 30% of SME's (including Micro-enterprises) **with websites** can process payments or take sales orders online[16]. While 89% of SMEs recognise the importance of their website, only 37% promote their businesses online and most have static websites lacking any functionality[15].

---

[13] https://www.frontier-economics.com/documents/2018/01/frontiernews_brexit-and-ireland.pdf [Accessed 17th August 2018]
[14] https://www.ibec.ie/IBEC/Press/PressPublicationsdoclib3.nsf/vPages/Newsroom~calls-for-government-to-make-ireland-global-digital-leader-26-04-2018/$file/Ibec+-+Accelerate+Digital+Ambition+2018.pdf [Accessed 17August 2018]
[15] https://www.iedr.ie/uploads/IEDR-Digital-Health-Index-Q417.pdf [Accessed 9 February 2018]
[16] https://www.iedr.ie/uploads/IE-Domain-Registry-SME-Digital-Health-Index-2018.pdf

The Local Enterprise Office (LEO) in Meath is the primary business support agency for start up and micro enterprises. To improve their digital presence and to begin to do business online the LEO offers supports to micro and small businesses through the Trading Online Vouchers[17]. The LEOs also provide social media and online business skills training.

Connected Businesses

"Poor internet connection" is cited as a barrier for 18% of SMEs[18] (see figure 4). It is therefore essential that businesses are able to connect to high speed broadband.

We will **develop guidance to support businesses to connect to broadband solutions** and advise them on the best options available.

A process by which businesses can report issues will be established that will enable us to **identify rural and urban blackspot areas** and where possible work with the telecom providers to deliver solutions.

Figure 4. The main barriers that prevent SME's getting online[30]

The BCPs and the CLE Hubs will help businesses based in rural areas. The strategy will **provide access to local hubs** providing opportunities for entrepreneurs to get online locally and to link with LEO Meath and Meath Enterprise supports.

Our performance will be measured through the delivery of guidance for businesses, the number of premises passed and hubs made available to local entrepreneurs.

Stimulating Engagement

19% of Irish SMEs have no digital assets at all [18]. 29% of these enterprises have 1-2 employees. 66% have a website and the numbers using Facebook has risen to 62%[18].

Research[18] has shown that where possible Irish SMEs are integrating the full range of e-commerce and research tools into their digital and overall business plans.

Slow adoption is limiting business's ability to utilise digital tools, to improve online trading by Small and Micro enterprises and operate more efficiently. To address this we will **develop an engagement strategy to promote broadband uptake, identify demand hotspots and stimulate digital opportunities.**

To improve business's ability to do business with the Council, we will **develop Meath County Council Apps or Mobile friendly website tools** to enable efficient engagement and communication with the council.

---

[17] https://www.localenterprise.ie/Meath/Financial-Supports/Online-Trading-Vouchers/ [Accessed 9 February 2018]

[18] http://www.cso.ie/px/pxeirestat/statire/SelectVarVal/Define.asp?maintable=ICA64&PLanguage=0

Performance on stimulating engagement will be measured based on the delivery of the engagement strategy and usage of the hubs and take up of services. Downloads, level of functionality, and use of the Council App and website will be used as a measure of the effectiveness of this strategy and the tools.

Digital Transformation

However, efforts still need to be made to ensure that online SMEs have access to resources to understand and exploit these technologies, either through training initiatives or investment schemes.

21% of businesses identified that they lack the knowledge to go online[25]. Working with our partner organisations we will **Identify skills gaps and collaborate on Digital Skills Development programmes.** To do this effectively we will need to **continually review and co-ordinate training offerings from training organisations (LEO, LMETB, Meath Partnership)** to provide accessible training opportunities such as briefings and online bite-sized learning resources. It will also be necessary to **Indentify and secure funding streams to support initiatives** to enable businesses to benefit from digital technologies.

We will measure our performance to improve digital skills of the business sectors based on the number of programmes delivered, the number of locations and the number of participants across the County. We will also be measured on the value of funding secured to deliver supports for digital initiatives.

Digital Services:

The European Digital Single Market

The European Commission has placed "digital" at the core of its strategic development[19]. This strategy aims to open up digital opportunities for people and business and enhance Europe's position as a world leader in the digital economy.

The Commission sees effective eGovernment as providing a wide variety of benefits including more efficiency and savings for governments and businesses, increased transparency, and greater participation of citizens in political life.

The DESI 2019[(3)] identified that on Digital Public Services shows that Ireland is performing relatively well. However, the report identifies three areas which are where Meath County Council can contribute to improvements: e-Government Users, Pre-filled Forms, Online Service Completion. National initiatives are required to improve utilisation of e-health and e-prescriptions. The Public Service Data Strategy 2019-2023[20] aims to promote the reuse of data, where possible, so that citizens and businesses do not have to provide the same information over and over again.

Meath County Council has already developed a strong digital services infrastructure with good levels of online engagement including one of the highest online payments of Motor tax at 78.9%. The new Meath.ie website and online consultation platform are facilitating increased service provision.

Excellence in Customer Services

In 2019, Meath County Council launched its new website with enhanced functionality and a better user interface. This will now enable the Council to engage in **Proactive external communications through its website, social media, interactive maps,** further developing the functionality and integration with our social media, public consultation and planning platforms.

Over time applications for council permits and grants be moved on to meath.ie providing a **Streamlined process (online forms, FAQs, SOPS) and increase quality of service (reliability, completion).**

To provide improved identity and confidence in Meath County Council communications and initiatives **a new Communications Strategy with consistent branding will be rolled out across all mediums.**

We are able to measure our performance through using the range of online tools such as Google analytics, the number of our followers and the level of engagement in the council's online services. We will also survey users and the market to optimise our performance.

Build influential partnerships with key stakeholders

Across the County, Meath County Council and its external partners have a wealth of tacit knowledge and experience. To improve performance they will **Improve collaboration and communications** between stakeholders

---

[19] https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities_en
[20] https://www.per.gov.ie/en/minister-of-state-odonovan-launches-the-public-service-data-strategy-2019-2023/

by exploiting digital tools such as Office 365 and Sharepoint, and make use of business cases and programme management tools.

Using these tools will support stakeholders to **Identify and Act on Synergies** across the county and lead to **proactive engagement** on a wider range of projects.

We will know we are delivering on these actions through the number of collaborative projects being delivered and partnership opportunities developed.

Support culture of staff excellence

In line with Meath's Corporate Policy Objective 1- to Deliver Excellent Services and support staff to work in ways that realise better and more efficient services for customers, other staff and stakeholders, we will continue to take measures to **Proactively attract, develop and retain staff.** This in part will be delivered by supporting staff to **Identify skill gaps and provide training** to enable all staff to flourish. The use of digital tools will **Encourage knowledge sharing** across the organisation.

Meath County Council will demonstrate its commitment by internally reviewing its Human Resource procedures to maximise learning and identify opportunities to promote its culture and opportunities for personal development and shared learning through employment with Meath County Council.

Enabling the Strategy

Commitment and Structures

Meath County Council has several existing statutory and non statutory plans which this Digital Strategy will have to complement and support. In particular the County Development Plan and Local Economic and Community Plan will both direct the objectives of this strategy.

Delivery of Change

Key Performance Indicators have been identified for each of the Priorities and Action Points (Appendix A). **Specific projects will be identified** to support the improvement of these performance indicators. These projects will have **quarterly reporting on progress** with an **annual review of the Actions and performance indicators**.

Appendix A.- Key Performance Indicators

Digital Infrastructure

Priority	Actions	2020 Milestones	Lead Partner	KPIs
1. Support commercial FTTP development	a. Work proactively to support continued roll out of broadband			(i) Km of fibre delivered (ii) Number and % of premises connected
	b. Actively engage with telecoms Infrastructure Providers			
	c. encourage the development of open access networks in all new developments			
	d. provide streamlined ROL Processing and cross MD T2[1] applications			
2. Support Mobile network development	a. Proactively engage with mobile operators to identify blackspots			(i) % of population Coverage for 3, 4 & 5G (ii)% of geographic coverage for 3, 4 & 5G
	b. Support the use of public infrastructure where possible to improve coverage			
	c. Develop a policies and procedures to support suitable developments			
3. Develop wireless connectivity	a. Develop Broadband Connection Points in community facilities across Co. Meath			(i) Number of BCPs /hubs delivered
	b. Provide free public WIFI in urban centres and community facilities			(i) Number of Aps delivered (ii) Number of users

Digital Skills

Priority	Target Actions	2020 Milestones	Lead Partner	KPIs
1. Technical/physical infrastructure	a. Promote Age friendly technologies & skills, utilising Age Friendly National Office as a mechanism			(i) Number of Programme Participants (ii) Number of programmes delivered
	b. support the development and promotion of Broadband Connection Points			(i) Number of community Hubs available (ii) Total number of hrs available (iii) Number of users
	c. Promotion of funding streams (LEADER/RRDF) to complement NBP BCPs			(i) Number of Grants awarded (ii) Total value of Grants Awarded (€)
	d. Provision of technology for all levels, IT learning centres, 3D printers			(i) number of digitally enabled libraries, (ii) Number of open libraries, (iii) No of digital equipment bookings (iv) Internet Bookings (v) Wi-Fi Users (vi) uptake of digital magazines (vII) research (viii) universal class (ix) language learning
2. Education/Training	a. Outreach Library training services i.e. Mosney/roadshows to promote range of e-services: etraining/elearning/emagazines			(i) Number of roadshow locations, (ii) Numbers engaged in roadshows
	b. Link existing training service providers around event location (Google, 3rd Age, LMETB, FB, Meath Partnership)- to avoid duplication of services			
	c. Sustainable training for all ages/levels of ability/ongoing training			(i) number of participants in training programmes
	d. Partnerships "Digital Skills for Citizens" (eg. 3rd Age & Meath Partnership)			(i) number of participants in Digital Skills for Citizens (ii) Number of venues for programme
	e. Explore funding for new digital programmes (eg VEX Robotics)			(i) € secured (ii) programmes delivered

Priority	Target Actions	2020 Milestones	Lead Partner	KPIs
3. Participation /inclusion/access	a. Improve communications through the PPN to relevant organisations and use other channels directly with citizens across the County			
	b. Build on existing Forums to co-ordinate service provision (NTD/ Prosper Meath/SICAP/LMETB) – no duplication of services			(i) annual meeting (LCDC?)
	c. Encourage use of existing services and facilities by hard to reach communities - Unity centre/library services/ age friendly			(i) number of distinct programmes/workshops (ii) Number of Venues utilised (iii) Number of participants on programmes
	d. Develop online Cultural resources eg. oral histories, grave records, local history, field names project, Archiving of LA Records - existing groups			(i) number of Groups attending Workshops/Programmes (ii) number of resources available
	e. Deliver Travellers workshops to improve their skill levels			(i) Number of participants (ii) Number of workshops delivered

20

Digital Economy

Priority	Actions	2020 Milestones	Lead Partner	KPIs
1. Broadband	a. develop guidance to support business to Broadband solutions			(i) Number of premises passed (ii) Number of premises connected
	b. Identify rural & urban blackspots areas			
	c. The development of Outliers/hubs			(i) Number of community Hubs available (ii) Total number of hrs available (iii) Number of users
2. Engagement	a. Engagement strategy to promote broadband availability, identify demand hotspots and stimulate digital opportunities			(i) Strategy Developed (ii) Numbers engaged
	b. Meath Co. Co. App/Mobile optimised site/Microsite to engage and communicate with the council			(i) Number of functionalities within App (ii) Number of App Downloads, (iii) Usage of different functionalities (iv) Time spent on MCC Sites/Apps
3. Digital Transformation	a. Identify Skills gaps and collaborate on Digital Skills Development			(i) number of course participants
	b. Continually review and co-ordinate training offerings from training organisations (LEO, LMETB, Meath Partnership)			(i) number of training programmes provided
	c. Identify and secure funding streams to support initiatives			(i) value (€) of funding secured

Digital Services

Priority	Actions	2020 Milestones	Lead Partner	KPIs
1. Excellence in customer services	a. Proactive external communications (website, social media, interactive maps)			(i) Utilise Google Analytics measures (ii) Number of posts/communications made (iii) number of followers (iv) Number of engagements (reposts etc.) and goal conversions (v) User Surveys
	b. Streamline processes (online forms, FAQs, SOPS) and increase quality of service (reliability, completion)			(i) number of forms available online (ii) Number of FAQ's online and updated (iii) Number of submissions online (iv) time spent from start to end of each process (v) User surveys
	c. Communications strategy with strong identity through consistent branding			(i) Marketing surveys
2. Build influential partnerships with key stakeholders	a. Improve internal collaboration, efficient communications (365 & Sharepoint, business case, programme management)			(i) Staff survey before and after implementation
	b. Identify and act on synergies			(i) Number of opportunities identified
	c. Proactive engagement with stakeholders			(i) Number of opportunities identified (ii) Number of partnerships delivered
3. Support culture of staff excellence	a. Proactively attract, develop and retain staff			(i) Turnover of staff (ii) Average Stay (iii) Reasons for leaving through exit interviews
	b. Identify skill gaps and provide training			(i) Skills inventory of staff (ii) Number of staff attending digital training
	c. Encourage knowledge sharing			(i) number of online resources (ii) Number of FAQ's in Knowledge bases (iii) Number of Cross-training sessions delivered

Appendix B.- Glossary of Terms

BBO	Broadband Officer
CRO	Company Registration Office
CSO	Central Statistics Office
DCCEA	Department of Communications Climate Action and Environment
DCU	Dublin City University
DES	Department of Education & Skills
DESI	Digital Economy and Society Index
DHPLG	Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government
DRA	Digital Readiness Assessment
DRCD	Department of Rural and Community Development
DSL	Digital Subscriber Line
EDPR	Europe's Digital Progress Report
EU	European Union
FTTP	Fibre to the Premises
FWA	Fixed Wireless Access
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
GEM	Global Economic Monitor
HR	Human Resources
ICT	Information & Communication Technology
ITB	Institute of Technology Blanchardstown
ISP	Internet Service Provider
LA	Local Authorities

LCDC	Local Economic Development Committee
LECP	Local Economic and Community Plan
LEO	Local Enterprise Office
MANs	Metropolitan Area Networks
MCC	Meath County Council
MD	Municipal District
MPBT	Mobile Phone and Broadband Taskforce
NCCA	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
NBP	National Broadband Plan
PPN	Public Participation Network
PR	Public Relations
RMO	Roads Management Office
ROL	Road Opening Licence
SMEs	Small & Medium Enterprises
SPC	Strategic Policy Committees
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics
Telcos	Telecommunications Companies
TII	Transport Infrastructure Ireland
VCC	Virtual Community College
VDSL	Very-high-bit-rate Digital Subscriber Line
VOIP	Voice Over Internet Protocol

Extent of Use of Following Digital Technologies in your Area	Nationally			Peer Group			Meath County Council
	Provided by LA	Provided by Not by	Not Provided	Provided by LA	Provided by Not by	Not Provided	
To integrate real-time information on vehicle flows to manage traffic congestion	29%	19%	52%	50%	33%	17%	Not Provided
To maximise energy efficiency through smart grid technology	13%	16%	71%	0%	0%	100%	Not Provided
To support more effective/efficient waste management	26%	16%	58%	0%	17%	83%	Not Provided
To provide telehealth/telecare to improve citizens health	3%	26%	71%	17%	33%	50%	Provided But Not by LA
To provide virtual mechanisms to facilitate online co-working	19%	16%	65%	17%	17%	67%	Provided But Not by LA
To provide real time information on cultural activities	68%	10%	23%	50%	17%	33%	Provided by LA
To provide real time information to wider community and the public to assist them to make better choices	65%	10%	26%	33%	17%	50%	Provided by LA
To provide GIS data sharing	71%	0%	29%	50%	0%	50%	Not Provided
Real time information on floods and other natural disaster risks in the country	55%	23%	23%	33%	50%	17%	Provided But Not by LA
Centralised integrated digital dashboard providing real time information for citizens	26%	3%	71%	33%	0%	67%	Not Provided

25

% of LAs who Support Digital Public Interaction with LA	Nationally				Peer Group				Meath County Council
	Service Not Available	Service Not Available by Planned for Introduction in Next Year	Service Available but Usage Low	Service Available and Used Extensively	Service Not Available	Service Not Available by Planned for Introduction in Next Year	Service Available but Usage Low	Service Available and Used Extensively	
Community/Public Complaints	13%	6%	39%	42%	0%	0%	50%	50%	Extensive
Customer/Citizen Requests	10%	13%	29%	48%	0%	17%	17%	67%	Planned
Applications for Grant Funding	48%	32%	6%	13%	33%	50%	17%	0%	Not Available
Community Welfare Applications	84%	10%	6%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	Not Available
Infor on Enterprise Development	3%	6%	29%	61%	0%	0%	50%	50%	Usage Low
Participation in National Integrated Licence Applications	48%	26%	13%	13%	83%	0%	17%	0%	Usage Low
Road Opening Licences	16%	6%	10%	68%	17%	17%	17%	50%	Extensive
Scaffolding Licences	81%	3%	3%	13%	100%	0%	0%	0%	Not Available
Payment of Commercial Rates	35%	10%	23%	32%	33%	0%	50%	17%	Usage Low
Payments for Licences	29%	16%	26%	29%	33%	0%	50%	17%	Usage Low
Tender Notices	6%	0%	6%	87%	0%	0%	0%	100%	Extensive

% of LAs who Support Digital Public Interaction with LA	Nationally				Peer Group				Meath County Council
	Service Not Available	Service Not Available by Planned for Introduction in Next Year	Service Available but Usage Low	Service Available and Used Extensively	Service Not Available	Service Not Available by Planned for Introduction in Next Year	Service Available but Usage Low	Service Available and Used Extensively	
E-Procurement	10%	0%	23%	68%	0%	0%	33%	67%	Extensive
Access to Electoral Register	3%	0%	10%	87%	0%	0%	0%	100%	Extensive
Library Services	0%	0%	3%	97%	0%	0%	0%	100%	Extensive
Commercial Registrations	87%	3%	6%	3%	83%	0%	17%	0%	Not Available
Residential Planning Applications	32%	48%	0%	19%	50%	50%	0%	0%	Planned
Commercial Planning Applications	32%	48%	0%	19%	50%	50%	0%	0%	Planned
Payment for Planning Applications	48%	45%	0%	6%	50%	50%	0%	0%	Planned
Search Planning Applications	3%	3%	0%	94%	0%	0%	0%	100%	Extensive
E-Parking	55%	13%	3%	29%	33%	33%	0%	33%	Not Available
E-Access of Archiving LA Records	71%	10%	10%	10%	67%	0%	17%	17%	Not Available
E-Traffic Information	68%	10%	13%	10%	67%	0%	33%	0%	Not Available
Skip permits	90%	0%	3%	6%	100%	0%	0%	0%	Not Available

% of LAs who Provide the Following Services	Nationally			Peer Group			Meath County Council
	Service Not Available	Service Available But Low Usage	Service Available and Used Extensively	Service Not Available	Service Available But Low Usage	Service Available and Used Extensively	
LinkedIn profile	52%	39%	10%	33%	33%	33%	Extensive
YouTube channel	19%	68%	13%	17%	50%	33%	Low Usage
Video content on website	16%	58%	26%	17%	50%	33%	Low Usage
Internet access in Libraries	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	Extensive
Facebook page	6%	0%	94%	0%	0%	100%	Extensive
Twitter account	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	Extensive
Free Wi-Fi (in public places)	29%	16%	55%	0%	17%	83%	Extensive
Free Wi-Fi (for public) in council offices	6%	29%	65%	0%	17%	83%	Extensive
Website optimised for smartphone	13%	6%	81%	33%	0%	67%	Extensive
Self-service website	52%	23%	26%	50%	17%	33%	Low Usage
Local Authority smart phone app	71%	13%	16%	67%	0%	33%	Extensive
Ability to run data analysis on website	32%	13%	55%	50%	0%	50%	Extensive