Un Llais Cymru
One Voice Wales

Community & Town Councils Digital Guidance

Digitising Service Delivery

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Digitising Services for Community and Town Councils in Wales

Transforming Local Governance in the Digital Age

Introduction

As the world increasingly moves towards digital solutions, Community and Town Councils in Wales have a unique opportunity to enhance their service delivery through digitisation. This transformation can streamline operations, improve accessibility, and foster greater community engagement.

Typical Services and Their Digital Transformation

Managing Community Buildings and Village Halls

Community buildings and village halls are central to local life, hosting various events and activities. Digitisation can streamline their management through online booking systems, virtual tours, and digital calendars. Residents can book facilities online, check availability in real-time, and even make payments securely through integrated payment gateways. Virtual tours can allow potential users to view the spaces without needing a physical visit, thus saving time and resources.

Managing Parks and Playgrounds

Parks and playgrounds are vital for community well-being. Digital solutions can include the use of mobile apps to report maintenance issues, online scheduling for park activities, and digital signage to provide real-time information about park events. These tools can ensure that parks are well-maintained and that the community is well-informed about the available amenities.

Managing Burial Grounds

The management of burial grounds can be digitised through online record-keeping systems. These systems can maintain detailed databases of plots, which can be accessed by staff and the public for information regarding plot availability, burial records, and maintenance schedules. Additionally, online mapping of burial grounds can help families locate gravesites easily.

Managing Allotments

Allotment management can be enhanced through digital platforms that handle plot allocations, rental payments, and community announcements. An online portal can allow allotment holders to manage their plots, pay fees, and communicate with fellow gardeners. This can reduce administrative burdens and improve the overall allotment experience.

Providing Public Toilets

Public toilets can benefit from digitised maintenance reporting systems and real-time usage monitoring. Mobile apps can enable users to report issues such as cleanliness or plumbing problems directly to the maintenance team. Furthermore, digital signage can provide information on the nearest available public toilets and their opening hours.

Other Place-based Services

Other services, such as waste management, street lighting, and community safety, can be digitised through mobile apps and online platforms. Residents can report issues, track service requests, and receive updates through these digital tools, ensuring timely and efficient service delivery.

Benefits of Digitisation

The digitisation of community and town council services offers numerous benefits:

- Accessibility: Digital platforms can be accessed 24/7, allowing residents to interact with services at their convenience.
- Efficiency: Automation of administrative tasks reduces the workload on staff, allowing them to focus on more critical tasks.
- Transparency: Online systems provide transparency in service delivery, allowing residents to track requests and view updates in real time.
- Cost Savings: Digital solutions can reduce the need for paper-based processes and physical visits, leading to significant cost savings.
- Environmental Impact: Reducing paper usage and physical travel contributes to a lower carbon footprint.

Cost Elements of Digitisation

The cost of digitising services can be broken down into several key elements:

- Initial Setup: This includes the cost of developing and implementing digital platforms, such as websites, mobile apps, and online systems. It may also involve purchasing hardware like computers, servers, and digital signage.
- Training: Staff will need training to use new digital tools effectively. This cost includes training sessions, materials, and possibly hiring external trainers.
- Maintenance: Ongoing maintenance costs cover software updates, technical support, and system monitoring to ensure smooth operation.
- Security: Ensuring data security and privacy is crucial. This involves investing in cybersecurity measures, such as firewalls, encryption, and regular security audits.

Bilingual Delivery in Welsh and English

In Wales, delivering services bilingually is essential to meet the needs of all residents. Here's how digitisation can support this:

- Language Options: Digital platforms should offer users the option to choose between Welsh and English. This can be implemented through language selection menus on websites and apps.
- Content Translation: All digital content, including forms, instructions, and notifications, should be available in both languages. This may require professional translation services to ensure accuracy and cultural appropriateness.
- Customer Support: Customer support services should be available in both Welsh and English, allowing residents to seek help and provide feedback in their preferred language.
- Compliance: Adhering to the Welsh Language Standards set by the Welsh Government ensures that all digital services meet legal requirements for bilingual delivery.

Conclusion

Digitising the services of Community and Town Councils in Wales presents an opportunity to enhance efficiency, accessibility, and community engagement. By investing in digital solutions and ensuring bilingual delivery, councils can provide high-quality services that meet the evolving needs of their residents. This transformation not only streamlines operations but also fosters a more inclusive and connected community, paving the way for a future where local governance is more responsive and transparent.

Version History

	Date	Issuer	Reason	Review Date
V1	16/02/25	Justin Horrell	Initial Version	16/02/26