

# Birmingham City Council

## Report to Cabinet

7 September 2021



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**Subject:** **Digital Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan**

**Report of:** Peter Bishop - Director for Digital and Customer Services  
Ilgun Yusuf - Acting Assistant Director for Skills and Employability

**Relevant Cabinet Member:** Councillor Brigid Jones, Deputy Leader  
Councillor John Cotton, Social Inclusion, Community Safety and Equalities  
Councillor Jayne Francis, Education, Skills and Culture  
Councillor Tristan Chatfield, Finance and Resources

**Relevant O &S Chair(s):** Councillor Carl Rice, Coordinating Scrutiny Committee

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Are specific wards affected?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No – All wards affected
If yes, name(s) of ward(s):		
Is this a key decision?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, add Forward Plan Reference:		
Is the decision eligible for call-in?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?  Yes  No

If relevant, provide exempt information paragraph number or reason if confidential:

## 1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 There has been an acceleration in digital uptake since the pandemic. It was inevitable that the pandemic would increase the dependence on the internet and lead to a massive acceleration in many pre-existing digital trends. The lockdown has been a catalyst for breaking through the inertia that existed in some sectors in relation to digitalisation. These trends will not be reversed, and further services will move to a greater online presence.
- 1.2 The Digital Inclusion Strategy is central, as a cross cutting theme, to maximising the short and longer impact of the Council Recovery Plan and wider city actions for reducing poverty and closing the inequality gap. Evidence shows that individuals and communities with the lowest levels of digital access and skills also tend to have the lowest levels of: health/wellbeing outcomes; formal qualifications/skills; employment/'good jobs'; and income.
- 1.3 Evidence also shows that digital skills gained through training tend to be lost after three months if not applied within this timescale as a result of limited opportunities and incentives to access digital equipment or connectivity. For this reason, linking a digital skills strategy to wider plans for housing and placed-based community renewal is vital as well as integrating practical solutions to providing connectivity or kit at locations such as Youth Hubs, libraries and community centres. For example, representatives of the Youth City Board are currently advising library management on how to adapt or even transform services to better suit young people.
- 1.4 The design and implementation of a city-wide Digital Inclusion Strategy is a major recommendation of the 'recovery report' for young people (Breaking Down Barriers: Working Towards Birmingham's Future). This strategy aligns with key actions stated in the report such as developing a city-wide approach to digital inclusion, linked to existing regional aspirations (including the West Midlands Digital Inclusion Coalition) and underpinned by a robust partnership framework for action bringing together the public sector, voluntary and community organisations, and businesses. Consideration should also be given to the provision of secure, comfortable and accessible space for young people to use the internet and internet-enabled devices.

- 1.5 The UK has made five years' worth of progress in one year in terms of its digital engagement. A further 1.5 million more people are now online, increasing the percentage of people online from 92% in 2020 to 95% in 2021. On average people are spending an extra 13 hours online a week with increasing levels of willingness to enhance their digital skills if appropriate support is available (Lloyds Consumer Digital Index 2021).
- 1.6 However, those who are not engaging effectively with the digital world are at risk of being left behind. Technological change means that digital skills and access to digital connectivity are increasingly important for connecting with citizens and communities, accessing information and services and meeting the changing demands for day to day living. This is leading to an increasing digital divide and giving rise to inequalities in access to opportunities, knowledge, services and goods resulting in digital poverty.
- 1.7 In 2021, there still remains 2.6 million people completely offline, 39% of whom are under the age of 60 dispelling the idea that all offline people are older, with 11.9 million adults still lacking essential digital skills.
- 1.8 The pandemic has exposed systemic weaknesses in digital infrastructure, digital skills, digital poverty at all age groups and further isolated those with existing vulnerabilities, such as mental and physical disabilities, those socially excluded and already in financial poverty.
- 1.9 Birmingham has seen a faster rate of digital inclusion in recent years, and it has now moved to 91.4% (2019) from 88.6% (2018). The percentage of digitally excluded people has reduced from 11.2% in 2018 to 8.6% in 2019, and no doubt this will be further reduced in 2021 once the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Reports are released for Birmingham.
- 1.10 At first, this is really encouraging, however, the reality and lived experience for Birmingham's and the wider region's vulnerable citizens is in stark contrast. Being able to use the internet once in the past 3 months using any device (the Lloyds Consumer Digital Index measure for digital inclusion) does not reflect a person's ability to have access to a suitable device, their affordability of data packages to stay connected nor the digital skills to improve their learning or employment opportunities. There is a strong link between social and financial exclusion and digital exclusion and therefore, actions need to be designed to increase digital inclusion activities within other partnership strategies such as the Financial Inclusion Strategy and the Council's Customer Services Strategy.
- 1.11 The lived experience of our vulnerable communities over the last 12 months has shown that digital poverty is persistent across all ages leaving many excluded and increasing the level of inequality and vulnerability across the City. This is further backed up in the Lloyds Consumer Digital Index 2021 report which

suggests that data and device affordability is a real issue – with almost a third of those offline (31%) saying cheaper mobile data would motivate them to get online.

- 1.12 The Council recognised the importance of digital inclusion within its Information and Communications Technology and Digital Strategy (ICT&D) 2016- 2021 and its role in achieving the outcomes of the Economic and Community Recovery taskforce for our communities and businesses to recover and prosper. However, tackling digital exclusion is not something that the Council can, or should, do alone. It requires working collectively with businesses, voluntary and community organisations, education and training providers, and communities.
- 1.13 As a result, the Council has co-produced a city-wide Digital Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan (see Appendix A) following workshops and consultations with city partners and stakeholders as well as the conclusions from the Digital Inclusion Landscape Report (see Appendix B). This two-year city Digital Inclusion Strategy outlines how we can join up services, challenge inequalities, and make the most of all the skills and opportunities that we already have in our city.
- 1.14 The Digital Inclusion Strategy proposes a phased Action Plan and sets out the key role of the Council in supporting the delivery of the Action Plan. It establishes the need to fund a small digital inclusion team in order to co-ordinate the various strands of digital activity and to establish a partner led governance approach that will enable city partners to work together to create a joined up and end to end digital journey for our citizens and communities to support their outcomes. It outlines how the Council will use its existing computer assets to support vulnerable citizens and communities to access devices and connectivity.

## **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 That Cabinet notes the findings of the Digital Inclusion Landscape Report.
- 2.2 Approves the City-wide Digital Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan (as recommended by the Breaking Down Barriers: Working towards Birmingham's future).
- 2.3 Approves the establishment of a digital inclusion team for a two-year period at a cost of circa £0.433m and an operational budget of £0.050m from January 2022 funded from a draw down from the Community Recovery Plan Reserve.
- 2.4 Approves the provision of a budget of £0.250m to fund an average cost of £50 per device for recycling the kit into the community. For 2021/22, a total of 2,200 devices will be offered to community groups for distribution to citizens at a one-off cost of £0.110m. It is anticipated that up to 5,000 devices will be recycled over two years at a one-off cost of £0.250m, funded by a draw down from the Community Recovery Plan Reserve

- 2.5 Delegates authority to the Director for Digital and Customer Services, Assistant Director, Employment and Skills, the Assistant Director Development & Commercial or their delegate, in conjunction with the Chief Finance Officer or their delegate, and the City Solicitor or their delegate to approve the procurement strategy and selection of successful bidder(s) following the conclusion of the tender process and to execute the necessary contractual documentation to effect this outcome.

### **3 Background**

- 3.1 It has been over 30 years since the launch of the world wide web. The internet has transformed services and continues to radically change the way people live, learn and work. Government figures show the country's thriving digital sector contributed £149 billion to the UK in 2018, accounting for 7.7 per cent of the UK economy.
- 3.2 Possessing digital skills such as the [Essential Digital Skills Framework](#) and access to ICT has the potential to reduce people's social, economic and health inequalities, social isolation and relieve the day to day mental and physical stresses that have been exacerbated during the lockdown. They are key to helping achieve the Council's overall vision that Birmingham is a city of growth where every child, citizen and place matters and will be a key component of our levelling up agenda and community recovery efforts post Covid.
- 3.3 However, a gap exists between those who have skills, easy access to ICT and the internet and those who do not – known as the “digital divide”. Those who are already at a disadvantage, whether through age, disability, or income, are most likely to be missing out, thus widening inequality in the city. A lack of digital skills and access to the digital world can be hugely detrimental, leading to poorer health outcomes, a lower life expectancy, and an increased risk of poverty. The pandemic has exacerbated the impacts of digital poverty, leaving many families having to choose between spending money on food or data. It is this poverty that is widening and deepening the digital divide.
- 3.4 In July 2020, the Council undertook a Digital Inclusion Landscape Review (see Appendix B) to better understand the factors that cause digital exclusion and to map out the level of type of digital inclusion provision across the City. The review concluded the following:

#### **Levels and Reasons for Digital exclusion**

- (i) The percentage of internet users in the UK increased to 90.8% in 2019 from 89.8% in 2018 (ONS). In comparison, Birmingham saw a faster rate of digital inclusion in recent years, and it has now moved to 91.4% (2019) from 88.6% (2018). The most recent stats also indicate that in Birmingham the percentage of those digitally excluded has reduced from 11.2% in 2018 to 8.6% in 2019. The ONS stats for Birmingham are not yet available.

- (ii) There are many reasons why people are not digitally included. Most common reasons are cited below and many people who are excluded will experience at least one if not all these issues:
  - a. Affordability of devices and connectivity costs
  - b. The skills gap to use the internet and devices, or means to learn
  - c. A lack of internet and / or device access
  - d. The motivation and confidence to use, understand or engage
  - e. Trust and a fear of crime, or not knowing where to start to go online
- (iii) The factors impacting on digital inclusion are complex and multifaceted and there are different levels of digital inclusion. For example, connectivity in the home does not mean people are digitally included. They may lack skills in using the devices and applications, they may only afford limited data packages, or have inappropriate devices, and/or inadequate numbers of devices to meet family needs.
- (iv) COVID-19 has highlighted the importance of digital inclusion for all age groups and not just those who are over 65 years. For example, whilst over 65s remain the largest excluded group, there are other groups that require intervention and support. For example;
- (v) 700,000 of those aged between 11 and 18 years (12%) could not access the internet at home from a computer or tablet, and a further 60,000 had no internet access at home across the UK (ONS, 2019)
- (vi) 23.3% adult internet non-users were disabled compared with only 6.0% of those without a disability (ONS, 2019).
- (vii) Older people, people with long term conditions and disabilities,
- (viii) People living in poverty / with social deprivation
- (ix) The socio-economic conditions in Birmingham have an impact on digital inclusion as there is a correlation between social exclusion and deprivation. It is widely anticipated that Birmingham will be heavily impacted with job losses and economic downturn, leading to a further increase in deprivation following COVID-19.

### **Levels and types of digital inclusion provision**

- (i) The review also provided a snapshot of the types of digital activities and the organisations currently delivering them. A summary of the main findings is:
  - There is little data at a locality level to identify the level of digital inclusion and the reasons for it.
  - Much of the views on the levels and reasons for not being digital included is anecdotal.
  - Many of the activities being undertaken are reactive and based on requests from the communities.
  - Most of the activities relate to the development of digital skills.
  - The available training covers the full range of skills identified in the essential digital skills

- For older adults most of the digital inclusion work is being carried out by the Neighbourhood Network Service (NNS) and their Assets (i.e. local organisations based in the locality)
  - Many of NNS and local partners identified lack of connectivity and lack of devices as the key constraints that are stopping them from delivering their digital skills and or training as much of it was delivered in libraries, community centres, shared spaces or even cafes, all of which have closed due to COVID-19.
  - Numerous initiatives have been set up at national level to try to address the lack of devices and connectivity issues. However, these are limited in scope and are time limited.
- (ii) There is some excellent work being undertaken by organisations and City partners to deliver digital skills. However, there is a lack of transparency in the work being delivered and its overall impacts on addressing digital inclusion. It appears that;
- Services are not joined up enough and efforts are duplicated or mirrored across providers;
  - Some of the work is uncoordinated and siloed, leading to lost opportunities for joint and collaborative working and;
  - There is a lack of clear pathways or co-ordinated handovers to ensure that people continue to develop or even use their skills;

3.5 The Review also identified several partners/strategic groups who work with vulnerable people across the City such as the Child Poverty Action Forum, the Birmingham Financial Inclusion Partnership, the Birmingham Education Partnership (BEP) and many more who were impacted by digital exclusion. In particular, at the start of the pandemic, Birmingham Education Partnership estimated that there were potentially 5,000 vulnerable young people of all ages in schools who may be in digital poverty i.e. with no or little access to computer devices and connectivity meaning that they were unable to access online learning, left isolated from the friends with considerable adverse impacts on their education and wellbeing.

3.6 The Review concluded that there needed to be better links and coordination between the public, private and community and voluntary sectors, so that they can work together to maximise expertise, experience and resources to better meet user needs. Joining up support with a view to then fostering citizens' independence and resilience is at the heart of helping them build the confidence and skills they need to resolve the root causes of their issues and opportunities.

3.7 In May 2021, the Digital Landscape Review report was updated to take into account any further evidence and activities relating to digital inclusion as a result of Covid. The updated Review is incorporated in Appendix B and shows that;

- (i) There has been an acceleration in digital uptake since the pandemic.
- (ii) The UK has made five years' worth of progress in one year in terms of its digital engagement.

- (iii) The pandemic has increased the dependence on the internet and led to a massive acceleration in many pre-existing digital trends: from online shopping to online GP appointments, automation of jobs to remote working.
- (iv) The lockdown has been a catalyst for breaking through the inertia that existed in some sectors in relation to digitalisation. We think that these trends will not be reversed, and further services will move to a greater online presence.

3.8 Many citizens have had to learn new digital skills and use the internet for the first time. This is reflected in the latest annual Lloyds Banking Consumer Digital Index report 2021 which indicates that there has been a significant increase in the number of people who are online – 1.5 million more people are now online, meaning that 95% of UK adults have used the internet in the past three months at least once using any device.

3.9 At first, this is really encouraging, however, the reality and experience for Birmingham's and the wider region's vulnerable citizens is in stark contrast. Being able to use the internet once in the past 3 months does not reflect a person's ability to have access to a device, their affordability of data packages to stay connected nor the digital skills to improve their learning or employment opportunities. The lived experience of our vulnerable communities over the last 12 months has shown that digital poverty is persistent across all ages leaving many excluded and increasing the level of inequality and vulnerability across the City. This is further backed up in the Lloyds CDI 2021 which suggests that data and device affordability is a real issue – with almost a third of those offline (31%) saying cheaper mobile data would motivate them to get online. Digital poverty and in particular data poverty have increased during the pandemic. For example;

- (i) Nationally, 2.6 million people are completely offline, 39% of whom are under the age of 60 dispelling the idea that all offline people are older (GoodThings Foundation 2021)
- (ii) 4.7 million UK homes have struggled to afford their telecoms bills this year – almost 1 in 5 households (19%), with many households cutting back on spending on food and clothes just to stay connected
- (iii) 1 in 6 broadband customers – people who are already online – struggled to pay their bill between March 2020 and January 2021
- (iv) Nearly one in five (19%) UK households reported at least one affordability issue with their communications services (Education in England Annual Report)
- (v) Access to suitable devices and connectivity were cited by 7% of households, claiming their only method of accessing the internet was through a mobile phone or other mobile device, such as a dongle or USB



- 3.10 In addition, a report by Citizens Advice (Broadband Must be Available to Everyone, Jan 2021) found that some groups have been disproportionately affected; disabled people, people on means-tested benefits, and people from ethnic minority backgrounds were finding it harder to pay.
- 3.11 Although the Council does not have a digital inclusion budget per se, it does commission services and funds other activities that enable digital inclusion activities to be undertaken. For example, in 2020 the Council's Education and Skills Directorate spent funds totalling £0.986m on the digital and IT provision in the Library of Birmingham and Community Libraries, digital platforms to support young people with mental health issues and a skills and employability project. Also, Birmingham Adult Education Services now includes free basic digital skills training as well as Maths and English for anyone over 19 years old.
- 3.12 Similarly, in 2020 the Adult Social Care directorate commissioned the Neighbourhood Network Services to deliver a multitude of services to older citizens, and whilst there is no specific digital inclusion allocation, the NNS have allocated circa £0.153m to date for digital inclusion activities which represents 2.7% of their commissioned budgets. There is also some nominal spend on providing access to computers within Council premises within the Neighbourhoods directorate.
- 3.13 The Council has continued to develop initiatives and work with city and regional partners to increase digital inclusion activities for citizens and communities. Some examples include;
- (i) Supporting the establishment of the WM Coalition for Digital Inclusion
  - (ii) Funding Neighbourhood Network Scheme to establish computer loan schemes and increased digital skills provision
  - (iii) Securing £0.5million for a Computer Loan scheme as part of the PURE2 project to provide connectivity and devices for vulnerable citizens
  - (iv) Distributed for free up to 630 Council desktop computers to charities and community organisations
  - (v) Supporting the Digital Education Partnership to deliver over 1,000 devices to the vulnerable school children who were ineligible for the Department for Education scheme.
- 3.14 In September 2020 over 25 stakeholders and community organisations attended a workshop to support the Council on developing an interim Digital Inclusion Strategy. The workshop further reinforced the need for raising the awareness, greater alignment and coordination of digital inclusion activities across the City. Many of the stakeholders and organisations were not aware of each other's activities resulting in missed opportunities to collaborate and join up service provision.
- 3.15 In June 2021, a further two workshops were held with over 75 city partners and stakeholders representing over 40 organisations from the public, private and

community and voluntary sectors. These workshops have enabled the Council to co-design and co-produce a City-wide Digital Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan as set out in Appendix A.

- 3.16 The Strategy outlines why digital inclusion is an issue for the citizens and communities of Birmingham and how, together with the public, private and voluntary, community, social enterprise and faith sectors, we can work across the City to ensure we can address both the causes and effects of digital inequality and digital poverty. The Strategy aims to support all age groups recognising the impact the pandemic has had on not only the elderly and vulnerable people but also young people in schools from deprived backgrounds with little or no access to digital devices and connectivity.
- 3.17 The delivery of this Strategy will play an integral role in creating opportunities for our communities to recover from the impacts of the lockdowns and start to put in place a sustainable Action Plan and an approach to accelerate the inclusive economic and community recovery plans for the City. It has been influenced and shaped by city wide organisations who have experience, knowledge and expertise and aims to build on the excellent work being undertaken by them over recent years.
- 3.18 It is important to recognise that this is a City response and aims to bring together existing activities as well as identifying additional areas where collectively we can add greater value and opportunities for our citizens and communities. This is the Council's first step in developing a comprehensive and holistic approach to address the digital divide;
- 3.19 The strategy extends to citizens, communities and organisations and seeks to set out key principles and actions for relevant organisations in Birmingham to adopt in order to help tackle barriers to digital inclusion. Based on feedback from communities and the research, seven areas of focus have been established;
- a joined-up approach
  - creating social value opportunities
  - digital literacy and skills gap
  - access to digital devices and affordable connectivity;
  - access and accessibility;
  - motivation and confidence;
  - building trust and addressing online security concerns
- 3.20 In order to address the above, it is proposed that the Council set up a digital inclusion function and support the establishment of a governance board, chaired by a community lead that will work with communities, partner organisations and other digital inclusion partners to influence and enable greater co-ordination between the various organisations and to identify end to end pathways for citizens and communities to build and use their digital skills. These functions would work closely with existing partners to minimise duplication and ensure

resources are used more effectively, build capacity as well as support the delivery of the joint Action Plan.

- 3.21 It is intended that these functions will be funded from the Community Recovery Plan Reserve for two years and will sit within Birmingham Adult Education Service (BAES) of the Education and Skills Directorate. The digital inclusion team will consist of a number of FTEs and the indicative costs for this function over two years are £0.433m with an operational budget of £0.050m (£0.025m per annum).
- 3.22 This Strategy and Action Plan proposes that the Council's recycles its laptops and ensures that they are distributed to vulnerable citizens and families rather than sold. There are a number of companies that recycle computer equipment for reuse in the community and their prices range from nil to £100 per device. This Report proposes that a budget of £0.250m is set aside for the recycling up to 5,000 devices at an average cost of £50 per device over two years. Where possible the Council will prioritise recycling from organisations where there is a nil cost. However, a mix of recycling companies will be used to ensure there is an equitable and even distribution of devices amongst various charities and community organisations with a focus on those in need. Any underspends on this budget will be returned to the Community Recovery Plan Reserve.
- 3.23 This Strategy and Action Plan also recognises the importance of data poverty for our most vulnerable citizens and communities. However, it acknowledges that there are now a few community organisations trying to address this and the role of the Council is to support these initiatives. The Council will use its social value powers and relationships with telecommunication providers and the wider private sector to support this.

#### **4 Options Considered and Recommended Proposal**

- 4.1 The Council's ICT&D Strategy 2016-2021 recognised the importance of digital facilitation and already a number of actions have been delivered. Therefore, the Council could continue to leave community and voluntary sector organisations and commissioned services to provide ad hoc and siloed digital inclusion activities. However, such an approach will not reduce current inequalities or digital poverty as much as a more coordinated approach. It will increase and deepen the digital divide increasing the vulnerability and inequalities for those that are not digitally included. This is the do-nothing option. Therefore, the option to develop a City-wide Digital Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan which has been co-produced with stakeholders and community organisations and endorsed by several city partners is recommended.

#### **5 Consultation**

- 5.1 All relevant Cabinet Members and the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee have been consulted. The Strategy and Action Plan has been shared with relevant directorate Department Management Teams.

- 5.2 Several consultations have been held with the Citizens Involvement panel, the Adults Commissioning Citizens' Panel representing people with disabilities as well as a number of Neighbourhood Network Services and their assets. A number of stakeholder workshops were held on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2020, 16<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2021 and attended by over 75 representatives from over 40 public, private and community and voluntary sector organisations to develop the City-wide Digital Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan.

## **6 Risk Management**

- 6.1 As more and more services come online, there is a risk that those that are most vulnerable will become further disconnected from society and will not be able to access essential public services leading to greater inequalities and digital poverty.
- 6.2 There is a risk that alternative non digital channels will continue to decline, leaving many vulnerable citizens and communities unable to access services easily increasing further inequalities especially for those already in poverty.

## **7 Compliance Issues**

- 7.1 The aim of the city wide Digital Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan is to support Birmingham citizens and communities to build their skills, confidence and trust in using digital in order to tackle inequality as a result increasing digital poverty. The Digital Inclusion Strategy supports the Council Plan 2018-2022, strategic outcomes of creating a city of growth where every child, citizen and place matters and is a key strand of the Economic and Community Recovery activities.
- 7.2 This approach is also aligned to the Council's ICT& D Strategy 2016- 2021 which identified digital facilitation as one of its key themes. COVID-19 has raised the urgency to address digital exclusion and this Digital Inclusion Strategy will enable the City to deliver those outcomes.

## **8 Legal Implications**

- 8.1 The City Council will carry out this work under its General Power of Competence Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011.

## **9 Financial Implications**

- 9.1 The cost of the two-year digital inclusion function will be £0.216.5m per annum (£0.433m over two years) with an operational budget of £0.025m (£0.050m over two years). It is intended that these costs are met from the Community Recovery Plan Reserve which was established by Cabinet in June 2021 with a balance of £10m.
- 9.2 The provision of a budget of £0.250m for two years to support the recycling of 5,000 laptops and distribution to vulnerable citizens and communities. The cost of recycling the laptops varies from nil cost to £100 per device. The funding

requested is based on an average of £50 per device. Where possible, those organisations that have a nil cost will be prioritised. Any underspends will be refunded to the Community Recovery Plan Reserve.

- 9.3 Cabinet is asked to approve the drawdown of £0.433m, for the digital inclusion function, £0.050m operational budget and £0.250m to support the recycling of laptops from the Community Recovery Plan Reserve.

## **10 Procurement Implications**

- 10.1 The Council will undertake a procurement exercise to establish contracts with a number of companies to recycle its old kit for distribution into the community using its digital procurement platform, FinditinBirmingham. The procurement process is due in early September 2021.

## **11 Human Resources Implications**

- 11.1 Recruitment to the Digital Inclusion co-ordinator team will be in line with Birmingham City Council's Recruitment and Selection process. In agreement with Birmingham City Council's commitment to mitigate where possible against compulsory redundancy in the first instance job opportunities will be made available to employees at immediate risk of compulsory redundancy.

## **12 Public Sector Equality Duty**

- 12.1 An initial screening for an Equality Analysis (EA) has been undertaken and concluded that a full EA is not required at this time, with no adverse impacts on the protected groups and characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. The reference number of the EA is EQUA731.

## **13 Appendices**

- 13.1 Appendix A - The City-wide Digital Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan

- 13.2 Appendix B - The Digital Inclusion Landscape Report

- 13.3 Background Documents

Report to Cabinet 18th October 2016 - Birmingham City Council Strategic ICT & Digital Investment Programme (2016 - 2021) ICT and Digital Strategy (2016 – 2021)

Report to Cabinet 21<sup>st</sup> July 2020 - Initial Analysis of the Impact of COVID-19 on Birmingham's Communities (specifically Sections 3.4.56 and 3.8.8)

Breaking Down Barriers: Working Towards Birmingham's Future (Recommendation Six: Design and implement a city-wide Digital Inclusion Strategy)