Digital Strategy
Consultation Key findings and Response

Background

Between 6th of May and 9th of July 2024, Ceredigion County Council consulted with residents and stake holders on the draft Digital Strategy.

The draft strategy had already been through internal groups such as Cyber Resilience group, Leadership Group and Corporate Resources Scrutiny gaining and responding to internal feedback.

The survey was available as an online survey, in traditional print format as well as in easy read format. Paper copies were available in libraries, customer service desks and via request from CLIC.

Respondents could also provide their answers over the phone on request and some detailed responses were also provided over email. We also received a formal response from our local Health board as we continue to look to improve strategic working across the region.

A Communications Plan was implemented and involved a press release at launch along with media posts on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram posted by the Communications Team. A sample of these promotional materials is shown below.

Response Rate

There was a total of 27 responses to the consultation and 2 via email to total 29 responses.

Several responses were clearly protest responses with unhelpful comments. With such a low number of responses these significantly affect summary percentages but have not been excluded.

42% of respondents were male, 38% were female.

The consultation respondent age breakdown is below.

0-15	0%
16-25	0%
25-44	11%
45-64	57%
65+	11%
Prefer not to say	19%

27
Responses received.

41%
Responses were from council staff or councillors.

48%
Strongly agreed, agreed to the concept of 6 years with 3 bi-annual plans

26%
Strongly disagreed, disagreed to the concept of 6 years with 3 bi-annual plans

5.96
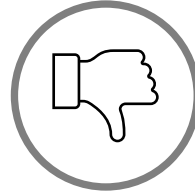Users scored the strategy out of 10

44%
Agreed the strategy allowed effective prioritisation of work.

48%
Thought the strategy would improve council services

37%
Thought the strategy would not improve council services

Comments

Respondents were asked to provide further comments. Most respondents did provide comments, and all have been read and considered.

There was little consistency in comments although some themes could be seen.

- **Staff capabilities & training** – This is recognised in the strategy and will require resources and plans developed. The strategy discusses improving digital confidence of staff and plans to draw out work to achieve this will be developed.
- **Residents' digital ability and inclusion** – Again this is recognised in the strategy, and we will need to develop plans to ensure support is there. This does exist via services such as Dysgu Bro, council libraries and community connectors. Plans will see these offerings develop and provide confidence to members of the public will be included in planning.
- **Increase community engagement in digital work –** This will be key and as part of the service design standards discussed in the strategy we will need this involvement. Further comments suggested we need to define how representative groups will be selected and this is work for the digital plan.
- **Anti-digital –** A range of comments such as 'get back into the office', 'contact should be face to face' etc highlighted some anti-digital sentiment. This is recognised in the strategy, and we have enshrined the need for face-to-face channels and non-digital access for citizens.
- **AI concerns –** Several comments both pro and anti AI outline concerns. This strategy discusses taking a cautious learning approach. An AI policy is being constructed and will guide future AI work. It is clearly a very fast-moving area offering incredible potential but will need careful management. Changes have been made to better show this in the strategy.
- **Long Term Digital preservation –** This is an area the strategy not referenced. Whilst work is work currently underway, the strategy has been amended to recognise this need.

Detailed responses

A detailed response was received from the health board suggested a range of minor improvements which could help improve the strategy generally or better align with Hywel Dda's strategies. Their response also pointed out many of the similarities and alignment that already exists.
Some of the suggestions were technical and may be better suited for inclusion in the biennial plans and will be considered for these. Others will be worked into improvements in the final version of the strategy.
Another detailed response from a council staff member also provided a range of worthwhile fine tuning which will be factored into a final version.

Conclusion

Consultation feedback has provided a range of valuable adjustments which has improved the strategy, its governance and ease of understanding for all.

A final version of the strategy incorporating these amendments will be presented to LG, scrutiny and taken forward for councils' decision on adoption.