esd toolkit
improving together

Efficient Services leading to Improved Lives:
Good practice in using technology to deliver local public services

Executive Summary

Background

Information Communication Technology (ICT) is widely acknowledged as a catalyst of opportunities for those people within disadvantaged or vulnerable groups as well as for delivering services more effectively and efficiently. Understanding the potential uses of technology in its variety of formats is an essential consideration for local authorities when designing services with their communities.

Local service providers should consider implementing the good practice of the leading local authorities in this area, to ensure that policy and practice are in place to promote and develop effective technology support for innovative service delivery.

The Digital Inclusion Beacon Framework

The purpose of the full document is to provide an introduction into the areas that local authorities could consider. The document uses the Digital Inclusion Beacon Framework to guide the reader through all areas of strategy creation as identified in Beacon authorities where successful programmes have been developed. It draws examples from the four 2009 Beacon Award winning local authorities in the Digital Inclusion category.

The common elements in these authorities' approaches are identified and form the foundation of the tool. By understanding what has worked elsewhere, the hope is that these lessons can be used to assist other local authorities faced with the same problems but unique considerations.

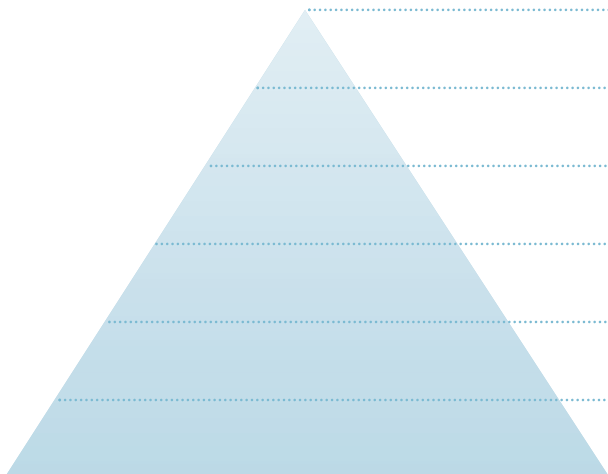### The Digital Inclusion Beacon Framework

Leadership, Vision and Strategy

Enabling Actions

Community Engagement and Empowerment

Essential Partnerships

Effective Partnerships

Evidenced Outcomes

1) Leadership, Vision and Strategy

Any successful initiative requires commitment and direction that needs to be set from the top. A shared organisational vision is needed for the cohesive integration of technology in service delivery within a local authority.

2) Enabling Actions

Successful strategies will be coupled with the authority's understanding of the community that it serves and its specific needs. Alongside this customer insight will be the insight as to how the organisation is set up to best deliver the strategies.

3) Community Engagement and Empowerment

Technology is recognised as an enabler for improving interaction, improving access to services and helping to overcome other barriers such as lack of skills. However, authorities need to take a structured approach to providing these technological services to ensure they are effective and that they reach those marginalised as the most in need within society.

4) Essential Partnerships

Comprehensive service delivery will involve the participation of partners to ensure that gaps do not appear in the service into which socially excluded groups fall. To provide Digital Inclusive services, partnerships across the public, private and third sector are essential.

5) Effective Partnerships

While the advantages brought by a broad range of partnerships to provide enhanced service provision have been acknowledged, this needs to be balanced with an effective working structure. Shared objectives and rewards are important as are considerations on how the partnership can act in a joined up manner.

6) Evidenced Outcomes

Success of any initiative requires outcomes that are both quantitative and qualitative demonstrating that Digital Inclusion is improving

Full Document Summary

Embedding technology in local service delivery requires a strategic approach to ensure that disadvantaged and vulnerable communities are able to access the services that they need. Keeping up to date with technology and understanding its potential to deliver services should be a major concern for local authorities and best handled with a systematic and planned approach.

The Digital Inclusion Beacon Framework is a tool which covers the full range of areas that local authorities may consider when looking at strategy for using technology to deliver services more effectively. It provides a structure for discussions rather than offering prescriptive advice recognising that the challenges faced by each authority are different.

By following the Framework, a local service provider will be asked to consider:

• The Leadership and Vision for the strategy as implementation will require a senior Champion.

• The importance of knowing the community, and if change is to be delivered, whether the local authority has the structure to manage this.

• Ways of engaging with communities, particularly those that are vulnerable and empowering them to be involved in the design of services.

• What partnerships will benefit the strategy and the elements that need to be in place for this to be a success.

• How success of a strategy could be measured.

By using examples from Beacon authorities it is possible to share in the experience and learning of other organisations and contribute to the onward development of the concepts. Using ICT is an evolving and fast developing area where shared learning will greatly assist in achieving its potential.

The full document is available on www.esd-toolkit.org.uk