

## **DIGITAL WATFORD BOARD**

**1 October 2018**

Present: Councillor M Watkin (Chair)  
Councillor M Hofman (Vice-Chair)  
Councillors K Collett, R Martins and M Turmaine (to minute no.7)

Also present: Emma Doree, West Herts College  
Barry Wilson, Watford Community Housing  
Kelly Privitera, Watford Community Housing  
Maria Manion, Watford BID  
Paul Quinn, UTC

Officers: Head of Service Transformation  
Watford 2020 Programme Manager  
Democratic Services Manager

### **1 Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Taryn Pearson-Rose, Hertfordshire County Council.  
Kelly Privitera replaced Paul Richmond from Watford Community Housing

### **2 Disclosure of interests**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **3 Minutes**

The minutes for 15 January 2018 were submitted and signed.

### **4 Review of objectives**

The Board received a presentation from the Head of Service Transformation.

- It was highlighted there were 110,000 users of the Town Centre Wi-Fi. The board asked what use was made of information from them.
  - The Head of Service Transformation and Ms Manion explained that, through the Wi-Fi usage data it was possible to track dwell time

and where people were coming from if they were using tracking on their device. The Economic Development Officer at Watford Borough Council could monitor through-put and when the network was being accessed. The information could be used to supplement footfall data.

- It was explained that the Wi-Fi had been provided by a third party and there would be additional cost to have more reports on its use.
- The Head of Service Transformation explained that the contract with the Wi-Fi provider was monitored by the Client Team at the Council and he would request further information about feedback from the supplier.

## RESOLVED

That the Board notes the presentation

## 5 **Review of the Digital Watford Seminar**

The Board received a presentation from the Watford 2020 Programme Manager.

- Board members were asked for their feedback on the event.
  - Councillor Watkin congratulated and thanked officers for a very successful event
  - Councillor Collett thought it was good that young people had attended and there was some good feedback on Facebook afterwards. The food and venue were good and presentations were excellent. The whole experience from the evening was to see the room full of engaged people, and it felt like 'Digital Watford' had taken off.
  - Councillor Martins commented that the event helped to quantify what the Digital Watford Board was trying to do and what was happening on the ground e.g., car park sensors. Speaking to people afterwards they were excited about Watford being at the forefront of technology.
  - Emma Doree, West Herts College, thought it was a good and positive way for young people to understand the council and technology provided a way for them to get involved.
  - Paul Quinn commented on whether it was possible for the presentation to be repeated at other venues. Future seminars were covered as part of the last agenda item.

## RESOLVED

That the Board notes the presentation

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### **Partner projects**

Updates were received from Digital Watford Board members on current projects.

- Emma Doree, West Herts College
  - o There had been a number of curriculum developments in the last year as there was a significant increase in interest around IT. Applications for courses in IT, including cyber security and gaming, had increased. The college would be having an open day in October. There was some linked work with primary schools.
  - o A new photocopying strategy to reduce paper had been introduced, using a system called 'PaperCut', which had seen a dramatic impact financially and on the amount of waste.
  - o The College's Business Lounge had been successfully launched for people to use for meetings and events. It was not used by staff or students but was for the local community and businesses. This helped the college to make good business connections which may lead to student involvement in projects in the future.
  - o Councillor Watkin asked for councillors to have a tour of the college IT suite. Action – for Democratic Services Manager to arrange a tour.
- Maria Manion, Watford Business Improvement District (BID)
  - o The BID had a business improvement grant available for businesses this year. The idea was to encourage smaller businesses and SME's to look at the way they trade and to make physical and technological improvements. Unfortunately there had not been a great take up with only a few applications. The BID team were making personal approaches to businesses and taking application forms round to encourage them to apply. The grant was for £2,000 or 50% of the cost, whichever is lower. It was publicised by the BID e-newsletter. Councillor Martins suggested the Chamber of Commerce could offer the businesses some advice.
  - o The BID run a Business Against Crime Scheme and Pubwatch Scheme. They were looking at linking the two schemes via Smartphones. The retail sector wanted a radio function as well. The BID was currently operating a pilot scheme and looking at cost profiling. Both schemes needed to operate individually as they may be required at different times.
- Barry Wilson and Kelly Privitera, Watford Community Housing

- o Watford Community Housing was running pilot projects in 96 properties using different types of devices.
- o The devices would help residents to reduce their fuel bills. One device was a fit and leave system and the other was a remote control. Information was received from the devices regarding how it was being used and how the household were using their heating. It was also possible to receive environmental information about the building.
- o Watford Community Housing was interested in using LoRaWAN to carry data back to their offices in Clarendon Road.
- Paul Quinn, UTC
  - o The UTC had been using 'PaperCut' for five years, the software gave a percentage of trees used each week.
  - o The UTC was inviting partners to come and see the school, they were also providing an outreach service to primary schools to support children with coding and to develop their skills.
  - o Students at the UTC used robotics and learnt about cyber security. The College had links with partners in the industry who were reporting a skills shortage in these areas.

## RESOLVED

- o That the presentation be noted
- o That the actions identified be undertaken

## 7

### **Update on Watford Borough Council projects**

The Board received a presentation from the Head of Service Transformation on the following projects:

- Taxis and parking
  - o The Head of Service Transformation explained that there were a number of challenges to be overcome as part of the proof of concept projects particularly around privacy and data protection concerns, which needed to be understood and overcome before any wider roll-out could be considered.
  - o One of the applications would be to use sensors to tell residents where there was a space to park e.g., on St Albans Road, or within a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) sensors could be used to help a resident navigate to a parking space near to their house.
  - o The Board commented that this technology could be included in the infrastructure in new developments. There was also an

environmental advantage of reducing fuel consumption by cars driving around looking for a parking space.

- Footfall
  - o The Head of Service Transformation explained that the council was using two sorts of counters one of which was battery operated and portable which therefore could be used very flexibly and deployed in places with no electrical power infrastructure. Additionally the costs were significantly lower than traditional footfall counters.
  - o The footfall counters had a “real-time” dashboard so the data and information could be used far more pro-actively. There was a delay of about an hour to receiving the information; however, present counters only provided information weekly.
  - o There was a potential that the portable counters could be rented out as a commercial opportunity for the council
- Smart litter bins
  - o The Head of Service Transformation suggested that bin sensors could be used in flats and communal bins in other areas beyond the current project for the council litter bins.

Councillor Hofman suggested the Board could look at establishing smart energy network. Action – Head of Service Transformation to arrange a meeting with Councillor Hofman to discuss further.

#### RESOLVED

- o That the presentation be noted
- o That the actions identified be undertaken

## 8

### **What next for Digital Watford**

The Board discussed the future of Digital Watford. It was identified that there was a need for leadership in the Town to take up opportunities and also to look for grants and government funding in the future. The Council or the Chamber of Commerce were in a good position to do this. As technology was continually evolving it was necessary to keep up with new ideas and to share best practice of what was being developed elsewhere.

The Board commented that, in comparison to other Hertfordshire authorities, Watford was cutting edge and ahead in technological advancements e.g., Watford was one of the only towns in Hertfordshire with Town Centre Wi-Fi.

There was scope to develop projects from Watford in other areas of Hertfordshire and other local authorities would be able to learn from Watford's experience.

There was an advantage for Watford to be seen as a town and local authority which was willing to take some risks as part of its innovation and would therefore attract companies wishing to carry out pilots and trials which the town could capitalise upon.

The Board discussed how to engage young people and get their ideas on how they would like to see Watford in the future. A survey through a social media platform was suggested. A future seminar was also discussed which would require input across the Digital Watford Board membership. Action – Head of Service Transformation to meet with West Herts College on how to take this forward.

The Board also suggested a business event with the Chamber of Commerce and BID. Action – Councillor Watkin to discuss ideas with the Chamber of Commerce.

#### RESOLVED

- o That the presentation be noted
- o That the actions identified be undertaken

Chair

The Meeting started at 6.30 pm  
and finished at 8.05 pm

**“WE’VE GOT SOMETHING  
YOU MIGHT LIKE TO SEE”**

# Digital Watford Board

1 October 2018

Version 0.1



# Digital Watford – Review of Objectives





# Vision and Objectives

“Businesses and residents in Watford will exploit a cutting edge digital infrastructure to transform the way they work, live and recreate”

- Implement town-wide technologies
- Raise awareness of technologies and support / facilitate their take-up and usage
- Support development of the town through use of digital platforms

# Implement town-wide technologies

- Town centre wi-fi operational
- Trial LoRaWAN network operational and stable
- Rooftop wireless broadband – implementation in progress

# **Raise awareness of technologies and support / facilitate their take-up and usage**

A number of groups have been communicated with:

- Digital Watford Board members
- Digital Watford seminar attendees
- Press coverage following Digital Watford seminar
- Council departments
- Chamber

No-one has approached us to make use of the technologies

# Support development of the town through use of digital platforms

- Watford 2020 programme is making use of the technology to enhance the way the council operates
- Transport App – mayoral manifesto commitment
- LoRaWAN parking sensors

# Digital Watford Seminar Review



## Data about the event

- 42 attendees from across Watford and wider – residents, businesses, public sector
- People heard about the event either from the invitation or social media advertising (Facebook and LinkedIn)
- Survey responders – rated content at 8.43
- Venue and catering well received!
- All responders rated as excellent or very good and would likely attend again

# Qualitative feedback

- Multiple conversations at the event and subsequently – interesting and valuable
- What did Board members think?

# Digital Watford Board members projects







# Update on WBC Projects



# WBC – Taxis and Parking

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| <b>Objectives</b>      | To develop technology (probably using LoRa) to identify that an individual vehicle is in a specific parking bay and be alerted when it arrived and when it leaves  |
| <b>Business Case</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Enable better communication with customers of taxis about where taxis' are located</li><li>- Support targeted enforcement when parked vehicles are not entitled to park in a given space (e.g. unlicensed taxis)</li></ul> |
| <b>Progress</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Challenge winner – IoT Solutions</li><li>- Contract under development</li><li>- Planning for first pilot underway – mobilisation in autumn 2018</li></ul>  |
| <b>Lessons learned</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-</li></ul>  |

# WBC – Footfall counters

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| <b>Objectives</b>      | To develop, using LoRa, technology that can provide footfall information to the same or better quality than existing camera type methodologies.   |
| <b>Business Case</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Reduced cost of data capture, analytics and visualisation</li><li>- Enable flexible deployment to new locations</li></ul>   |
| <b>Progress</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Challenge winner – Giosprite</li><li>- Contract under development</li><li>- Planning for installation underway – hoped to be in place in time for Fireworks</li></ul> |
| <b>Lessons learned</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-</li></ul>   |

# WBC – Smart litter bins

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| <b>Objectives</b>      | To introduce smart litter bins that can alert the council when they are approaching full so they can then be emptied.  |
| <b>Business Case</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Reduce cost of emptying litter bins through new, intelligence led, rather than “round” methodology</li><li>- Improved public realm through reduction in overflowing bins</li></ul> |
| <b>Progress</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Initial trial locations identified</li><li>- Trial sensor identified</li><li>- Business Case being reviewed</li></ul>  |
| <b>Lessons learned</b> | -  |

# Discussion – What next for Digital Watford?

