

DIGITAL ENABLEMENT PLAN



Waitomo's Digital Journey

BACKGROUND

Central Government has already committed \$1.65 billion through the first phase of the Ultrafast Broadband (UFB) and Rural Broadband Initiatives (RBI) programmes to deliver faster broadband to New Zealanders. A revised goal (Sept-2015) suggests that by 2022, at least 80 percent of New Zealanders will be connected to ultra-fast broadband.

The government's telecommunications infrastructure strategy has grown out of a document released in 2008 by David Cunliffe: "Digital Strategy 2.0" which initially recommended the ultra-fast broadband and rural broadband initiatives.

At the commencement of the infrastructure roll out, the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment (MBIE) identified a "Five Point Government Action Plan" to ensure broadband uptake. The five points are: e-government, e-education, e-health, e-business and e-development.

These five points were integrated into the National Government's 2014 policy documents and have been adopted within individual department strategies.

The Government has made a further commitment of up to \$360 million (Phase 2) to extend the UFB and RBI programmes and establish a new mobile coverage initiative. In order to decide on the priority for implementation, MBIE has sought Registrations of Interest (ROI) from local authorities outlining the areas they considered should be a priority for the roll-out of the three initiatives.

Waitomo District Council (WDC) has submitted Registrations of Interest to all three programmes (Ultra-fast Broadband 2, Rural Broadband Initiative and Mobile Blackspot Fund); outlining areas in the District which we considered, should be priorities for investment.

The next step in the process is the development of a Digital Enablement Plan (DEP) specific to the Waitomo District and complements information already supplied to MBIE. The purpose of the DEP is to identify ways to achieve economic and social benefits and to increase digital awareness and engagement within the community. The DEP is important as was the ROI process that identified our community feels the effects of lack of connectivity, high cost of connectivity and poor quality of connectivity.

- The farming sector adoption of new technologies and services is restricted by poor infrastructure.
- Economic growth of the business sector is restricted by poor infrastructure.
- School age children's learning and post-compulsory education opportunities for training and development are limited by inability to access digital resources at home, particularly in rural areas.
- Visitors to the region experience poor connectivity in comparison to other parts of New Zealand and overseas.

The DEP's action list will be integrated into the District's Economic Development Strategy implementation plan and Waitomo District Council will continue to take a leadership role through excellent communications to residents and the business community along with the formation of strong relationships with telecommunications suppliers.

DIGITAL ENABLEMENT PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The development of Waitomo District Council's Digital Enablement Plan (DEP) was undertaken by the original project team that facilitated the Registration of Interest application. The DEP team includes the Group Manager Customer Services, Policy Planner, Group Manager Corporate Services, and Economic Development Officer. The team will oversee implementation of agreed projects and ensures regular monitoring and review of the DEP to align with the overall vision.

To determine suitable projects that encourage and support uptake and awareness of broadband services it was considered important to understand the potential barriers. Therefore in addition to the public surveying as part of the ROI process, further consultation with the community was undertaken.

The following steps outline the actions taken to develop the DEP's action plan.

1. Identification of stakeholders

Make up:

- Elected Members of Waitomo District Council
- Community groups (elderly groups, youth groups, clubs and societies)
- Educators (schools, preschools, tutors, tertiary institutions)
- IT representatives (IT leaders, technology experts)
- Local businesses (large, small, across industries)
- Students (Schools, tertiary institutions or studying at home)
- Library staff, volunteers

Role: to provide "inside information" on issues and challenges.

2. Decision on how best to consult with the stakeholders

- a. Engage with Council's elected members by way of a Council workshop.
- b. Hold public interactive workshops, one for general business and one for community groups.
- c. Meet with key representatives from the rural sector.

3. Council workshop held 11th August 2015

The purpose of the workshop was to assist in the development of the DEP to support potential improvements in digital connectivity and to seek feedback on the proposed process to develop the plan.

The outcome of the workshop was elected members support for the proposed direction of the DEP and consultation process with the community and business sectors.

4. Public workshops and rural meeting held 28^h August 2015

The purpose of the public workshops was to consult with stakeholders to elicit feedback and use the information collated from the engagements to identify 2-3 feasible projects for community enablement and 2-3 feasible projects for business growth.

Invitations were sent to people in key community positions i.e. community groups, schools, social groups, sports groups, health and education sector and from within the business sector. The Waitomo News also featured an article on the workshops and communicated the date, time and venue for the workshops.

Waitomo District Council engaged a workshop facilitator experienced and well versed in digital technology. A forum worksheet was prepared to collect feedback from participants.

The workshop format was defined as:

- 1) Introduction video demonstrating what is possible with digital technology – two videos were developed specific to each group – community and business, to inspire thought around the use of digital technology.
- 2) Group discussion to brainstorm all the amazing things that the community groups or businesses would do with high speed broadband assuming access, reliability and affordability.
- 3) Group discussion to brainstorm the potential barriers to achieving digital dreams. Barriers to be discussed did not include current connectivity issues.
- 4) Group discussion to identify projects that could potentially reduce the barriers to engagement for the participants, their whanau, business or community group or the wider community.

Rural meeting format:

An informal meeting with key representatives from the rural community was held to determine how to best engage with the rural sector with regard to digital issues and opportunities and how Council can assist with enablement when infrastructure is deployed. The rural sector is our district's largest business sector with the greatest needs in regard to broadband and mobile infrastructure.

5. Follow-up

Phone calls and subsequent meetings were attended with some participants to gain a better understanding of their project suggestions.

6. Data analysis

The workshop feedback identified the potential barriers to digital uptake. These barriers are summarised below for both the business and community groups. By understanding the risks/challenges that our district will potentially face in digital uptake we prioritised projects that will be the most appropriate to assist in enablement. It was also appropriate to include those projects within our community that have already been initiated and will require Council support.

Following are the factors identified as being barriers to achieving digital dreams.

BUSINESS - Barriers to achieving digital dreams

<p>Local networking/marketing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No chamber of commerce/vibrant business network to lobby. • Lack of like-minded digitally enabled businesses/people. • Lack of collective networks for ideas/entrepreneurial skills and support. Limited media spread of knowledge. 	<p>Education/skill gaps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of skills/knowledge to use devices/tablets/computers. • Time it takes to use new digital tools – learning and keeping up to date. • Businesses do not know what is out there that they can use digitally in their business.
<p>IT personnel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of IT experts. • Can't attract skilled technology people – inability to attract technical talent. • No support for IT questions – not enough local support. 	<p>Telecommunication suppliers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little knowledge of when infrastructure is arriving makes it hard to make internal decisions, i.e. CAPEX decision making. • Suppliers have poor communication to public and business community. • Business find it time consuming and frustrating to navigate through information.

COMMUNITY - Barriers to achieving digital dreams

<p>Financial barriers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs – devices and services 	<p>Education/skill gaps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of skills/knowledge gaps to use devices/tablets/computers. • Education – changing role of teachers in schools. Teachers not all digitally literate. • Lack of suitable educators for older people wanting to get online.
<p>Use of technology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of confidence to use digital technology. • Uncertainty about security/cyber-safety. 	<p>Telecommunication suppliers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to get information on new infrastructure/upgrades. • Lack of reliable information from suppliers. • Communication companies hard to deal with.

DIGITAL ENABLEMENT PLAN

Vision

- To have a digitally well connected community with the resources and skills to use technology to enhance our community's well-being and business productivity.

Objectives:

- Provide leadership and collaborate with local, regional and national partners for the delivery of digital initiatives.
- Support the provision of digital infrastructure to improve equality of access across the District.
- Develop opportunities for businesses and community to upskill and become confident users of technology.
- To promote our district as digitally-ready to attract new business development.

PROJECTS - LEADERSHIP

PROVIDE LEADERSHIP TOWARDS BECOMING A BETTER CONNECTED DISTRICT

Aim/Opportunity:

- To ensure Waitomo District's residents and businesses are aware of all the offerings to become better connected and are made fully aware of the digital opportunities in our area.

Rationale:

- Poor connectivity has been determined as a key factor holding back business growth and productivity in our district therefore the digital enablement action plan will be integrated into the district's Economic Development plan and will be an activity that Council continues to take a leadership role in.

ACTION	DETAIL AND RESPONSIBILITIES	TIMEFRAMES FOR IMPLEMENTATION
<i>Continued digital leadership focus led by an internal project team.</i>	Continuation of an internal digital project team that oversees implementation of the agreed projects and ensures regular monitoring and review of the DEP to align with the overall vision. Provide regular updates to Waitomo District's Elected Members via Council meetings. Internally resourced	Underway
	Support the establishment of a Waikato Digital Working Group led by Waikato Councils with the intention of working on collaborative initiatives to increase digital awareness. WDC's Economic Development Officer will become a member of this group.	Communications initiated August 2015

<p><i>Development of a Waitomo District Council digital communication plan developed to inform, update and educate residents on Waitomo District's Digital Journey</i></p>	<p>Communications will provide updates on new infrastructure implementation, announcements relating to UFB2, RBI2 and Mobile Blackspot Fund and information about telecommunication suppliers available in the area. Communication will be via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Dedicated website page – “Getting better connected in the Waitomo District” ➤ Ongoing articles in Waitomo Way. ➤ Facebook page updates. ➤ Relationship building to ensure coverage in local media. <p>Led by Economic Development Officer with support of Communications Officer</p>	<p>Regular</p>
<p><i>Continue to build relationships with infrastructure suppliers.</i></p>	<p>Demonstrate support towards infrastructure development in our district to facilitate trouble shooting and take up opportunities.</p> <p>Enhancing relationships with suppliers will assist in being able to provide clearer communications about what is happening with telecommunications in our district.</p> <p>Led by WDC senior management, CEO and Economic Development Officer</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
	<p>Provide support to and liaison with Vodafone for planned launch events for Aria and Benneydale RBI1 towers.</p> <p>WDC's Economic Development Officer has had confirmation from Vodafone's Community Relations staff member that Vodafone will hold a launch event.</p>	<p>February/March 2016</p>
<p><i>Shared resource to facilitate infrastructure rollout</i></p>	<p>Establish a shared resource with Otorohanga District Council – Agreement established June 2015</p> <p>Should both Council's be successful in their bids to get UFB2 in our districts we will provide a shared resource to the nominated fibre company to ensure the most efficient implementation of infrastructure.</p>	<p>When required</p>

PROJECTS - COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY EDUCATION, AWARENESS AND COMMUNICATION

Aim/Opportunity:

- To increase the awareness of benefits digital technology can bring to the social well-being of our community and to assist in breaking down the barriers of usage.

Rationale:

- Some of our community need help with the development of skills and building confidence in the use of computers and the internet.

ACTION	DETAIL	TIMEFRAMES FOR IMPLEMENTATION
<i>Seek expertise to facilitate range of digital courses.</i>	<p>Feedback from the community indicates that there is a lack of skill with basics – setting up email, using mobile phones, and general use of the internet.</p> <p>Suggested workshops:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> How to use devices & the internet Cyber-bullying awareness Online safety and privacy when using the internet <p>Facilitated by WDC, workshop series led by existing training organisations, volunteers and contractors.</p>	March 2016 - July 2016
<i>Facilitate the recruitment of digital volunteers to support digital hubs and lead workshops</i>	<p>One suggestion from the workshops was to encourage youth to act as advocates to support raising digital literacy. Investigate initiatives to encourage youth volunteers including the possibility of Waitomo District's Youth Council members.</p> <p>Hub leaders/Council to facilitate</p> <p>Internally led by Economic Development and Community Development Officer</p>	Investigations begin 2015
<i>Ensure linkages within community around digital activity i.e. schools, hubs, education facilities</i>	<p>Hold regular meetings with community groups/education facilities to ensure digital linkages within the community are happening and to discuss digital issues and how they could be solved.</p> <p>Internally led by Community Development Officer</p>	Ongoing

EXTENSION OF CURRENT DIGITAL HUB NETWORK

Aim/Opportunity:

- To increase the number of residents connecting and having access to education/use of computers and the internet.

Rationale:

- Parts of our community do not have financial resources to purchase equipment (tablets, laptops, desktop computers) and/or access the internet.
- This initiative can commence before new infrastructure is deployed to ensure the community is better enabled when areas are selected for development.

ACTIONS	DETAIL	TIMEFRAMES FOR IMPLEMENTATION
<i>Facilitate and encourage the development of hubs in other district locations</i>	<p>A community has already indicated to Council an intent to progress and is looking at the feasibility of a digital hub for their community.</p> <p>WDC will support the investigations regarding the feasibility of the hub and any other approaches made by community groups.</p>	Underway
	<p>Investigate digital community space at Te Kuiti Railway Building. Completion of restoration of this building owned by WDC will occur</p>	Initiate October/November

	towards the end of the year. It is likely there will be a room available for public meeting space and it could provide the opportunity for digital facilities such as Wi-Fi to be implemented. This will be investigated along with further scoping around demand for use of this room and what type of usage it would get so that it could be maximised for digital use if need be.	2015
<i>Extension of digital services provided by Te Kuiti library.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of educational digital devices for use at library. • Investigate installation of mounted tablets in library for 'quick/reference' use. • Investigate setting up of weekly digital device 'get-together's with volunteers to facilitate education. 	Planning underway 2015/2016
<i>Co-ordination of digital activities & education in community</i>	Online calendar of digital events such as training days, fun events etc. Need to find most appropriate community portal/s. Led by WDC's Economic Development Officer.	Initiate December 2015
	Investigate regular piece in Waitomo News to communicate digital activity and events across Waitomo and Otorohanga Districts. Led by WDC's Economic Development Officer and Otorohanga District Council's IT Manager with support of Communications Officer	October/November 2015

SUPPORT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMMUNITY TRUST THAT WILL ENABLE SCHOOL CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES TO OWN THEIR OWN DIGITAL EDUCATIONAL DEVICE FOR USE AT SCHOOL AND HOME.

Aim/Opportunity:

- Enable our community's children and their families to have access to digital technology and to increase use of digital technology.

Rationale:

- Many schools already have, or will soon be getting ultra-fast, uncapped broadband. This will allow hundreds of devices to be connected to the internet during school hours. Outside of school hours our children will become advocates of digital technology and will contribute towards our wider community becoming more digitally able.

ACTION	DETAIL	TIMEFRAMES FOR IMPLEMENTATION
<i>Support the establishment of a Community Trust to enable school children to buy their own digital device.</i>	<p>WDC to provide support by way of providing linkages with this project and other key digital initiatives that WDC are aware of. WDC will ensure that telecommunication suppliers and other key business are aware of the project to stimulate interest and to assist in gaining support for the project.</p> <p>WDC will ensure other digital network groups are up to date with progress of the Trust's initiative.</p>	Initiated August 2015

PROJECTS - BUSINESS

ENCOURAGE INCREASED BUSINESS ACTIVITY VIA INCREASED DIGITAL CAPABILITY

Aim/Opportunity:

- To promote the Waitomo District as a place to live/work and play

Rationale:

- Waitomo will be a more digitally attractive place to visit with better connectivity for tourists encouraging them to stay longer and do more. With better infrastructure in place Waitomo district will also be a more solid business proposition for those wishing to relocate or start businesses in the area.

ACTION	DETAIL	TIMEFRAMES FOR IMPLEMENTATION
<p><i>Explore the feasibility and cost structure to support free Wi-Fi in commercial zones and high volume tourist spots.</i></p>	<p>Conduct feasibility study on possibilities of free Wi-Fi hotspots in Waitomo and Te Kuiti</p> <p>Led by Economic Development Officer</p>	<p>January 2016</p> <p>Implementation March 2016</p>
	<p>Educate and inform Waitomo business groups about benefits of providing free Wi-Fi hotspots for the community.</p> <p>Led by Economic Development Officer</p>	<p>Ongoing from December 2015</p>
<p><i>Marketing campaign to attract new business.</i></p>	<p>Promote the fact that business can now conduct themselves as a 21st century business in the Waitomo District due to arrival of UFB.</p> <p>Led by Economic Development Officer with support of Communications Officer</p>	<p>When new infrastructure arrives</p>
<p><i>Advertise need for digital experts in our area</i></p>	<p>Raise awareness of expertise gap. It is apparent from recent community and business engagement that there is a lack of IT resource in our community and this poses a threat to business opportunity.</p> <p>Led by Economic Development Officer with support of Communications Officer</p>	<p>When new infrastructure arrives</p>

SUPPORT DIGITAL ENABLEMENT IN THE DISTRICT'S KEY BUSINESS SECTORS – AGRICULTURE AND TOURISM

Aim/Opportunity:

- To ensure that when improved infrastructure is deployed these two sectors have the skills, expertise and business strategies in place to fully take advantage of the opportunities available to them to grow their businesses.

Rationale:

- These sectors have significant digital technology and resources that they could be utilising in their businesses currently however are being held back by poor broadband and mobile phone services. Keeping them well informed and engaged with timeframes of the RBI2 and UFB2 process will ensure immediate uptake and engagement with the new infrastructure.

ACTION	DETAIL	TIMEFRAMES FOR IMPLEMENTATION
<p><i>Establishment of a rural working group focused on raising awareness of broadband infrastructure and it's benefits</i></p>	<p>An informal working group has been established comprising local representatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chris Irons, Federated Farmers, Meat & Fibre Executive Hilary Walker, Federated Farmers Regional Policy Adviser Andrew Jolly, Extension Manager, Beef and Lamb Martin Coup, Beef and Lamb National Chair, Farmers Council Russell Proffit, Raupuha Stud Rachel Barton, Arapito Farm Jacqui Hahns, Dairy Industry Chairperson, Waikato <p>This group will provide Waitomo District Council a liaison point through which communications and connections can be made to keep the Waitomo farming community informed about infrastructure developments, provide testimonials about suppliers and share case studies on the improvements as a result of better broadband.</p> <p>Council internal resource support provided to attend meetings and provide information</p>	<p>Initiated in August 2015 and will continue to meet when appropriate.</p>
	<p>This group will also provide local knowledge to WDC to provide suppliers seeking information about infrastructure deployment i.e. land access.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
	<p>Collaborative Digital day for Otorohanga District Council's (ODC) and Waitomo District Council's (WDC) rural sector.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold an agricultural innovation day inviting suppliers to area. Use existing rural networks and communication channels to market the event, i.e. Rural Women's, Beef & Lamb. <p>Council's internal resources plus contractor for digital day events.</p>	<p>November/ December 2017</p>

<i>Continue relationship with tourism sector</i>	Meet regularly with Destination Waitomo and Destination Pureora to provide updates on infrastructure progress and discuss issues that could be resolved in short-term.	Ongoing from May 2015
	<p>Collaborative Digital day for ODC's and WDC's tourism operators.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage services of digital tourism expert to provide workshops/training. Provide opportunity for operators to take a free digital assessment to determine an action plan on how to improve their digital use. <p>Collaborative efforts WDC and ODC – Economic Development Officer WDC, and IT Manager ODC.</p>	September 2016

ESTABLISH A DIGITAL AWARENESS PROGRAMME FOR LOCAL BUSINESS

Aim/Opportunity:

- To promote the benefits of digital technology to the Waitomo's current business community

Rationale:

- Many of our area's successful business do not appear to be digitally engaged. If we can begin the process of raising awareness before infrastructure is deployed uptake is likely to be higher.

ACTION	DETAIL	TIMEFRAMES FOR IMPLEMENTATION
<i>Establish a network of digital advocates to invigorate local business into use of digital technology.</i>	<p>Provide 20 small to medium businesses the opportunity to have an assessment of their digital skills and maturity. Provide support for their action plan and track their results.</p> <p>Communicate successes of these businesses to the wider business district via the local business networks.</p> <p>Contracted out to external resource, facilitated by WDC Economic Development Officer.</p>	June 2016