

# Digital West Midlands

## The Regional ICT Strategy



Executive Summary



Information and Communications Technologies are pervasive. There is not an organisation or a sector whose policies and processes have not been transformed by the adoption and application of ICT. Public sector bodies are judged on the successful delivery of their services online, while private sector businesses cannot compete in a global marketplace without using IT to manage client relationships and to deliver effective, compelling and valued products and services.

Digital West Midlands can transform the region by increasing the accessibility and take-up of ICT among its citizens and businesses; by encouraging collaborative, high value local government and other public services; by stimulating step-change in the use of ICT within the regional economy; and by establishing a common framework for the development, appraisal and delivery of the projects and programmes which use ICT to deliver transformational services of their own.

All of this can be achieved, but it will not be easy. Through Digital West Midlands and the West Midlands Economic Strategy ICT must be recognised not just as a set of tools, but as a major delivery vehicle for economic prosperity, with key delivery agents committed to achieving our vision.

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Chair, Regional ICT Steering Group

# Digital West Midlands – The Regional ICT Strategy



**Information and Communications Technology (ICT) plays a critical role in society, and has a direct economic impact on everyone. It is a tool for caring, connecting, educating, employing, entertaining, informing, monitoring, paying and supporting its businesses and citizens.**

According to the DTI, between 1995 and 2000, 40% of Europe's productivity growth and 25% of the European Union's GDP were due to ICT alone. For the same period ICT exploitation accounted for 60% of productivity growth in the USA. The UK IT Industry alone contributes £30Bn GVA, and ICT intensive industries now contribute 45% of the entire UK GVA, the highest percentage of all G7 countries apart from Germany.

Just as ICT infrastructure underpins the economic growth and sustained performance of the region, so must Digital West Midlands underpin the aims and objectives of Delivering Advantage – the West Midlands Economic Strategy (WMES) in getting the West Midlands recognized as a world class region in which to invest, work, learn, visit and live, and to help it become the most successful in creating wealth to benefit all of its people.

Through Digital West Midlands the Regional ICT Steering Group, the lead partner for guiding and advising on ICT, has developed a vision that positions ICT as a major driver of economic growth:

**“By 2010 the West Midlands will be an exemplar region, exploiting and coordinating its Information and Communications Technologies to help drive the UK economy beyond the knowledge divide through enhanced productivity, competitiveness and efficiency.”**

Digital West Midlands has been developed through consultation with a broad range of partners across the region to meet this challenge, setting out a strong and ambitious vision. This will be achieved by delivering against the four key themes: enabling broadband & digital inclusion, championing technology for learning, exploiting e-services and procurement excellence, and unlocking ICT for Industry.

Digital West Midlands provides a regional response to a number of key ICT-related issues. Factors considered have included national and regional economic policy, geographical data, industry trends, and international comparisons between the West Midlands and other regions. Of the various barriers to economic growth identified, two can be directly addressed by Digital West Midlands: That the region is suffering from two tiers of economic activity and that e-business adoption within the region is slow. By focusing our efforts on addressing these two critical areas, we believe that other barriers to economic growth will be indirectly addressed.

## 1. Tackling a region divided by two tiers of economic activity

Digital West Midlands will work to address the region's social and economic imbalances. It will also ensure that a new digital divide – between those that have access to high speed, high-value services, and those that do not – does not emerge. It will achieve this by developing a pervasive, inclusive online services network. This network will deliver economic opportunities to businesses and citizens regardless of geography or technological barriers.

Two key strategic themes have been developed to address this: The Knowledge Advantage, which seeks to enable broadband and digital inclusion, and The Service Advantage, which seeks to aggregate and distribute e-services across the region.

## 2. Addressing slow e-business adoption

Digital West Midlands will work to stimulate the region's adoption of new technologies, particularly within learning and work environments. It will achieve this by raising the awareness of businesses and citizens by communicating the benefits and opportunities presented by ICT. We will focus upon teachers and learners, and upon managers and the workforce.

Two key strategic themes have been developed to address this: The Learning Advantage, which seeks to champion technology for learning, and The e-Business Advantage, which seeks to unlock ICT for Industry.

The effective take-up and exploitation of technologies and services, for both social and economic advantage, will be one of the toughest challenges faced by the West Midlands over the next five years.

For the West Midlands to achieve the economic goal of becoming a world-class region in which to invest, work, learn, visit and live and the most successful in creating wealth to benefit all of its people, then the ICT services and infrastructure that need to support it must also be world-class.

### **In summary, Digital West Midlands:**

- Sets out the ambitious journey that we must take to effectively use ICT as a means of to achieve the vision set out in The West Midlands Economic Strategy.
- Challenges the region to best exploit ICT, directly influencing the development of Delivering Advantage and the regional strategies that support it.
- Makes the business case for ICT to be used not just as an enabler, but as a mainstream delivery vehicle for economic development.
- Encourages regional ownership through multiple partners and agencies across the West Midlands, making optimal use of the funding and support available, and ensuring that the region's ICT projects can be aligned.
- Outlines the region's response to the government's Digital Strategy, Connecting the UK.
- Specifies the region's long-term ICT requirement to ensure that it achieves economic advantage through proper investment and the configuration of resources.
- Sets out the delivery framework needed to give real digital advantage to the region and its citizens by 2010.

**Digital West Midlands is underpinned by 4 key strategic themes which must be delivered together. These themes are:**

**Theme 1 – The Knowledge Advantage: Enabling Broadband & Digital Inclusion**

The Knowledge Advantage will enable greater awareness of, access to and adoption of broadband and other digital technologies. Equitable opportunities for the exploitation of ICT by everyone in the West Midlands will be provided.

The region's vision for enabling broadband and digital inclusion is:

***“By 2010, to serve all businesses, citizens and institutions with an exemplar network to deliver equitable benefit to all communities.”***

This will be achieved by building on the existing experience in the region to exploit a sustainable broadband environment providing user-friendly, high value services so that all businesses, citizens and communities can choose to actively engage with social and commercial opportunity.

**Theme 2 – The Learning Advantage: Championing Technology for Learning**

The Learning Advantage will champion the use and encourage the deployment of learning technologies. It will ensure that the region's ICT infrastructure can respond effectively to the needs of e-learning and regional skills agenda.

The region's vision for championing technology for learning is:

***“By 2010, to be a world class knowledge-working region exploiting learning technologies to raise the prosperity of communities, businesses and all individuals.”***

The strategy will build on the existing modernisation programmes in the public sector, especially within schools and colleges, to encourage more enterprise and entrepreneurship. It will be focused on influencing policy and key investment areas. It will better inform the decisions made by learners and technology providers. It will inspire individuals and employers to consider the benefits presented by learning technologies. Finally, it will raise the aspirations of individuals and businesses to make better use of the opportunities available through ICT.

**Theme 3 – The Service Advantage: Exploiting e-Services & Procurement Excellence**

The Service Advantage will encourage businesses and citizens to fully exploit the opportunities presented by the regional network and other resources. It will enhance the public sector's ability to deliver public value and will encourage it to effectively engage with the region's business base.

The region's vision for exploiting e-services and procurement excellence is:

***“By 2010, to drive the aggregation and collaborative working of public sector knowledge and procurement services to stimulate the growth of an intelligent and prosperous society.”***

This will be achieved by developing a joined up region where excellence in e-procurement and efficient public services (particularly within health and education) can stimulate local and regional economic growth to create opportunities for businesses and citizens.

This will be achieved by developing a joined up region where excellence in procurement and efficient public services can stimulate local and regional economic growth to create opportunities for businesses and citizens.

The strategy will influence and facilitate the delivery of public sector modernisation and efficiency, creating an active public sector environment that will encourage enterprise within the region.

**Theme 4 – The e-Business Advantage: Unlocking ICT for Industry**

The e-Business Advantage will identify and demonstrate the potential benefits offered to the region’s businesses by ICT and in harnessing the expertise of the regions ICT and New Media Clusters, a step change in the adoption of e-business will be created to stimulate the competitiveness of the region.

The region’s vision for unlocking ICT for Industry is:

***“By 2010, to be a world class region exploiting e-business in creating interconnected business communities for entrepreneurial and commercial advantage.”***

This will be achieved by creating an environment where it is simple for all companies in the West Midlands region to confidently adopt e-business strategies as the natural route to running a successful business.

These themes must maintain their strategic focus by making the journey needed to best use ICT to make the West Midlands a world-class region. This journey, articulated below, sets out the how the four key themes of Digital West Midlands will work together to deliver our vision. By closing the knowledge divide, creating an informed region and establishing an interconnected exemplar region, the West Midlands will be in a position to achieve and fully exploit significant digital advantage by 2010.

Digital West Midlands Tackling a region divided by two tiers of economic activity		Addressing Slow e-Business Adoption	
Theme 1 The Knowledge Advantage: Enabling Broadband & Digital Inclusion	Theme 3 The Service Advantage: Exploiting e-Services & Procurement Excellence	Theme 2 The Learning Advantage: Championing Technology for Learning	Theme 4 The e-Business Advantage: Unlocking ICT for Industry
If the digital divide is to be effectively removed, and the knowledge divide significantly reduced, then services must be deliverable over viable alternatives to broadband by <b>December 2007</b> .	If the region is to exploit the economic opportunities created by Digital West Midlands, an interconnected network delivering e-services across multiple platforms to all sectors must be in place by <b>July 2009</b> .	To ensure that the region is well-placed to exploit the new opportunities created by Digital West Midlands, a significant increase in awareness and ICT adoption across all sectors must be achieved by <b>July 2008</b> .	If the region’s use of ICT is to provide a foundation for future economic success it must be in a position to demonstrate significant digital advantage by <b>December 2010</b> .

## The Challenge

Digital West Midlands seeks to deliver its strategic objectives by:

1. influencing other regional strategies and the region's delivery vehicles
2. making a strong business case for the region to adopt ICT as a mainstream delivery vehicle
3. demonstrating how the region will respond to the UK Digital Strategy
4. demonstrating how Digital West Midlands can make best use of European funds

### 1. Influencing other regional strategies

The table below outlines the relationship between the four key strategic themes of Digital West Midlands and the four pillars of Delivering Advantage.

Delivering Advantage The Four Pillars	Digital West Midlands Key Strategic Themes			
	Knowledge Advantage	Learning Advantage	Service Advantage	e-Business Advantage
Regenerating Communities	The Service Advantage will endeavour to make online services accessible to communities, while the Knowledge Advantage will trial the use of alternative tools and technologies to make new services and opportunities available to all.			
Promoting a Learning and Skilful Region	While increasing the reach of services across all sectors will be addressed by all four themes, the promotion of workforce skills opportunities will be built into the e-Business Advantage as a means of supporting the activities of the Regional Skills Partnership. However, it is the Learning Advantage that will champion learning technologies.			
Creating Conditions for Growth	With broadband infrastructure in place the emphasis on regional infrastructure has shifted towards service take-up and delivery. Take up will be addressed by all four themes, but the coordinated integration of the regional e-services infrastructure will be delivered through the Service Advantage.			

The table below outlines the relationship between the Digital West Midlands and the region's strategic delivery vehicles.

West Midlands Strategic Delivery Vehicles	Digital West Midlands Key Strategic Themes			
	Knowledge Advantage	Learning Advantage	Service Advantage	e-Business Advantage
Regeneration Zones	The ICT Steering Group will work with the zones to identify opportunities to utilize existing initiatives and projects, and to ensure that the strategy is referenced in all future Zone Implementation Plans (ZIP). This will include the development of agreed action plans stating how the strategy will be delivered within each zone.			
High Technology Corridors	The knowledge capital developed and exploited within the High Technology Corridors will be vital to achieve the objectives of Digital West Midlands. The ICT Steering Group will work with corridor partnerships to identify opportunities to utilize existing initiatives and projects.			
Business Clusters	<p>ICT needs to play a much more prominent role within clusters. E-business support should be delivered through existing initiatives, particularly those serving the needs of business clusters. Most clusters have identified ICT as an issue, but lack the focus and expertise to provide a coherent solution.</p> <p>A strong, flourishing and competent ICT supply base is need to drive the implementation of Digital West Midlands, which positions the ICT and New Media Clusters as part of the region's mainstream ICT delivery vehicle.</p>			

The table below sets out the ICT challenges that need to be met by regional stakeholders by 2010.

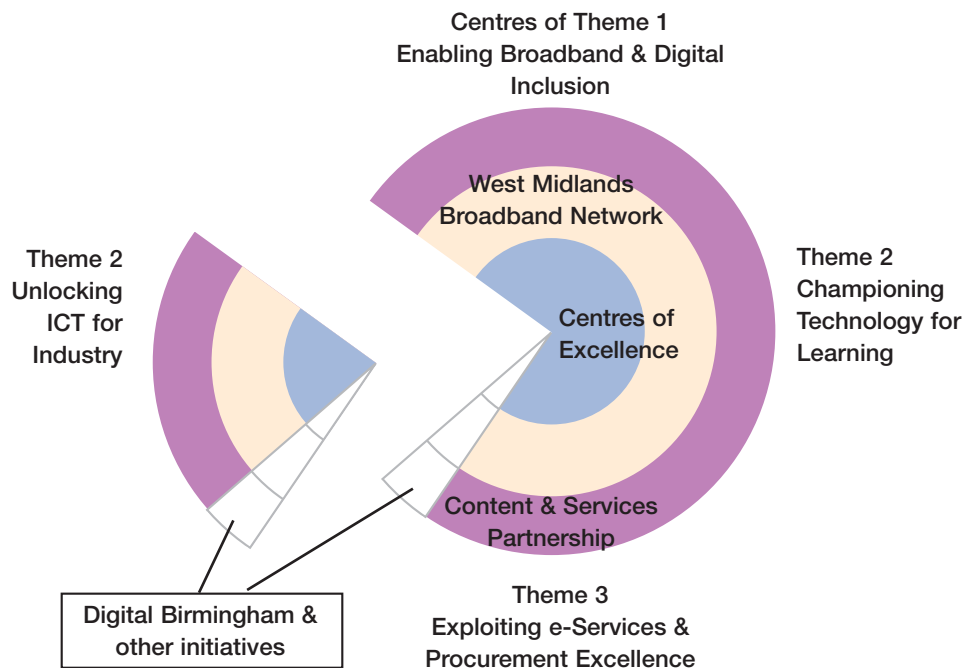
The Stakeholders	The Challenge for 2010
Advantage West Midlands	<p>Pilot the development of the Regional ICT Appraisal Framework</p> <p>Recognise the end users of content and services as a priority business cluster</p> <p>Position ICT as a corporate delivery vehicle</p>
Delivering Advantage – The West Midlands Economic Strategy	<p>Embed Digital West Midlands into the WMES, positioning ICT as a mainstream delivery vehicle.</p>
Sub-regional ICT initiatives	<p>Explore the potential to pilot the regional roll-out of the One Laptop Per Child (OLPC) initiative announced at the World Economic Forum in January 2005.</p> <p>Align with the objectives of Digital West Midlands and act as a sub-regional champions for the ICT Strategy.</p>
Government Office for the West Midlands	<p>Ensure that all 2010 bids are ICT-proofed using the Regional ICT Appraisal Framework</p>
The ICT Cluster	<p>Work with Open Advantage to establish an Open Source Learning Programme</p> <p>Agree an annual target with for partnership working with the region's ICT supplier base</p> <p>Work with the Regional Enterprise Board and the Screen &amp; New Media Cluster to increase the number of high-growth ICT and New Media start-ups</p>
Innovation & Technology Council	<p>Work with WMHEA to create an HE-led content-focused regional grid programme.</p> <p>Work with the Screen &amp; New Media Cluster to support local innovation in computer-games based learning, digital and interactive television, mobile and PDA applications</p> <p>Work with Regeneration Zones and the WMHEA to increase the number of ICT Qualifications offered by the region's HEIs.</p>
The International Business Strategy	<p>Develop a technology marketing pack for partnerships.</p> <p>Sponsor research and dissemination of potential growth for small and large ICT developers and providers</p> <p>Attract overseas hardware, software and learning technology investment into the region</p> <p>Take ownership of the goal "to have comparable levels of ICT-focused investment to the City of London by 2010"</p> <p>Take ownership of the goal "to establish WM as a major near-sourcing region with the highest level of ICT investment outside of London and the South East by 2010".</p>
Learning & Skills Council	<p>Embed the new ITQ as a requirement for all publicly funded IT training.</p> <p>Repurpose Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) services for broader distribution and promotion</p>
Regeneration Zone Partnerships	<p>Ensure at least one alternative technology trial and one collaborative content project per Regeneration Zone</p> <p>Secure the delivery of at least two online communication and consultation events per regeneration zone per year</p> <p>Create local initiatives to target a number of the poorest communities and use ICT as a means of increasing wealth and higher-level employability within the workforce.</p> <p>Ensure equitable ICT investment opportunities in urban and rural areas.</p> <p>Work with WMHEA and the Innovation &amp; Technology Council to increase the number of ICT Qualifications offered by the region's HEIs.</p> <p>Raise sub-regional knowledge worker density</p>

The Stakeholders	The Challenge for 2010
The Regional Enterprise Board	<p>Embed e-business adoption into the Business Transformation Programme.</p> <p>Set a target for businesses adopting public sector collaborative working tools.</p> <p>Build a strong home-source enabled workforce.</p> <p>Work with the ICT and Screen &amp; New Media Clusters to increase the number of high-growth ICT and New Media start-ups.</p> <p>Specify and develop a regional tender journal to underpin the promotion of online opportunities.</p>
The Regional Procurement Forum	<p>Develop a workforce-focused programme based on public sector excellence.</p> <p>Encourage a significant number of public bodies to commit to the publication of the regional tender journal.</p> <p>Integrate and develop the sustainable communication of regional procurement standards.</p> <p>Work with WMLGA and WMBC to showcase local excellence at a national level.</p> <p>Take ownership of the goal “to be one of the best regions for e-skills adoption within businesses by 2010”.</p>
The Regional Skills Partnership	<p>Align with the objectives of Digital West Midlands.</p>
Rural Access to Services Partnerships	<p>Support the development of a Regional Content &amp; Services Network.</p> <p>Agree an annual target with for partnership working with the region's ICT supplier base.</p>
The Screen and New Media Cluster	<p>Work with the Innovation &amp; Technology Council to support local innovation in computer-games based learning, digital and interactive television, mobile and PDA applications.</p> <p>Work with the Regional enterprise Board and the ICT Cluster to increase the number of high-growth ICT and New Media start-ups.</p> <p>Ensure at least one alternative technology trial and one collaborative content project per Regeneration Zone.</p>
The West Midlands Broadband Company	<p>Pilot the delivery of collaborative services across the regional broadband network.</p> <p>Complete a number of innovative technology trials to extend the reach of digital technologies.</p> <p>Work with WMLGA and the regional Procurement Forum to showcase local excellence at a national level.</p>
West Midlands HEA	<p>Work with Open Advantage to establish an Open Source Learning Programme</p> <p>Work with the Innovation &amp; Technology Council to create an HE-led content-focused regional grid programme.</p>
West Midlands Connects (WMLGA)	<p>Work with Regeneration Zones and the Innovation &amp; Technology Council to increase the number of ICT Qualifications offered by the region's HEIs.</p> <p>Work with WMBC and the Regional Procurement Forum to showcase local excellence at a national level.</p>
West Midlands Regional Assembly/Housing Strategy/Spatial Strategy	<p>Adopt and promote the ICT Planning Toolkit.</p> <p>Support the creation or development of an online 'state of the region' resource for ICT.</p>

## 2. Making a strong business case for ICT as a mainstream delivery vehicle

ICT underpins the performance and productivity of businesses and individuals. To embed the vision and objectives of Digital West Midlands, it is therefore necessary to extend its reach beyond policy makers, through implementation and into the wider marketplace.

To achieve this, centres of excellence for e-business support will need to deliver services across the regional broadband network, and will need to engage with public sector projects and private sector suppliers to effect step-change within the user community.



### Centres of Excellence for e-Business Support

To ensure that ICT and, in particular, e-business priorities are addressed, the region needs to establish an online business advisory service which will be supported by recognised Centres of Excellence delivering e-business support through the region's existing projects and initiatives. This must include the Business Transformation Programme being delivered through the Business Links' network.

These centres will be drawn from across a number of sectors and/or priority business clusters, based upon their expertise. They should be delivering their services through the Regional Broadband Network and a wider Content & Services Partnership.

### The West Midlands Broadband Network

Digital West Midlands will use the regional broadband backbone as the means to deliver interconnected digital services across the whole of the region, and will support WMBC in managing the aggregation and distribution of online content and services.

In June 2001, Making the Connection, the second phase of the original Regional ICT Strategy, initiated the development of the Regional Broadband Network. This initiative brought together the region's schools and universities onto a single broadband backbone. Managed by the West Midlands Broadband Company, the backbone now serves a wide range of public sector institutions. It has built on these successes by managing last mile broadband provision, and will have made 100% broadband coverage a reality by summer 2006.

### **Regional Content & Services Partnership**

In addition to e-Business support and advice, Digital West Midlands needs to bring the end users and adopters of ICT together with those regional initiatives and business clusters able to act as service deliverers to support the network. This means supporting the development of the ICT and New Media Clusters as service providers delivering benefit across all sectors, and, through the involvement of the Regeneration Zones and, in particular, the region's six Rural Access to Service Partnerships, across the whole of the West Midlands region.

While cluster development has raised the capacity and capability of the region's ICT supply base, the development of a regional content and services partnership will bring the public and private sector together to ensure that the West Midlands e-services marketplace provides access to as many good quality solutions providers as possible.

This partnership needs to represent and support those businesses using, or wanting to adopt, content and services as a significant revenue or marketing tool. For this reason, these users should be supported and resourced as a priority business cluster within the region.

### **Digital Birmingham & Other Initiatives**

The strategy needs to make best use of the opportunity presented by having Birmingham as a physical hub at the heart of the wider regional network.

We will encourage Digital Birmingham to work with other initiatives across the region to forge a powerful content and service delivery partnership which will better enable home and mobile working and will reinforce the region's identity. If this approach is successful, ICT will provide the means to drive a wedge through the North-South Divide.

In March 2005 the Chancellor announced Birmingham's designation as a Science City. Science Cities are a valuable model for targeting investment in science and technology in cities that have particular potential to benefit from higher growth in this area. ICT, particularly through the development and exploitation of an interconnected regional network, will help to extend the impact of Birmingham as a Science City. It can extend the reach of local projects and activities that can be harnessed for regional benefit. This will add regional value to research and development and to university-business collaboration, as well as influencing a wider spectrum of factors that will contribute to the growth of knowledge-intensive industries across the West Midlands.

In October 2005 Birmingham City Council decided to make 2006 the year of Digital Birmingham, setting itself the ambitious goal to have Birmingham recognised as the leading European Digital City by 2010.

The focus on Birmingham as a geographical hub needs to be offset through the city's relationship with sub-regional initiatives, particularly in rural areas. The network therefore needs to engage with major initiatives delivering ICT support across the region.

### **Regional e-Business Programme**

It is envisaged that the implementation of a regional e-Business Programme to address e-business adoption will also facilitate the development of the regional content & services partnership.

### 3. Responding to the UK Digital Strategy

Connecting the UK sets out a cross-government framework for using ICT to underpin the continued social and economic prosperity of the UK. Eight key strategic actions have been identified as a means of raising the UK's game. Most of these are in perfect alignment with Digital West Midlands. E-business is the notable exception: where the national strategy seeks to build on the country's overall e-business successes, Digital West Midlands seeks to address significant shortfalls in e-business take-up which must be addressed if the UK is to achieve its ambition to become a world leader in digital excellence.

The table below sets out how Digital West Midlands will support the delivery of Connecting the UK.

Connecting the UK Key strategic actions	Digital West Midlands Key Strategic Themes			
	Knowledge Advantage	Learning Advantage	Service Advantage	e-Business Advantage
<b>Raising our game: Making the UK a World Leader in digital excellence</b>				
1. Transform Learning with ICT	The Learning Advantage will be a key regional driver for carrying forward the learning transformation agenda, and is aligned with Harnessing Technology, the DfES Learning Strategy.			
2. Set up a Digital Challenge for LAs	The alignment between Digital West Midlands and the UK Digital Strategy will allow regional bidding criteria to be based upon the recommendations and objectives set out by Digital West Midlands.			
3. Make the UK the safest place to use the internet	In delivering the e-Business Advantage it will be essential for awareness raising, training and good practice policy guidance to promote and demonstrate risk and security management to businesses adopting new technologies. At an operational level, a regional e-Crime prevention centre will position the West Midlands as a leader in this area, and provide a profile for the region that will be recognised nationally and internationally.			
4. Promote the creation of Innovative Broadband Content	The creation, development, promotion and distribution of innovative content underpins the delivery of Digital West Midlands. In December 2004 the DTI, in collaboration with Advantage West Midlands, produced a report that challenged government to consider investment in content as a means of stimulating the take-up and exploitation of broadband technologies. The government has responded positively to its recommendations.			
<b>Constructing a robust strategy to achieve our vision</b>				
5. Set out a strategy for the transformation of delivery of public services	Through aggregation, procurement excellence, the development of high value, regionally coordinated e-services, and the trialling of alternative technologies, Digital West Midlands will spearhead the transformation of public service delivery.			
6. Ofcom's strategy should consider improving competition and take-up in the broadband market	Advantage West Midlands and the West Midlands Broadband Company have, along with the other RDAs and Devolved Administrations, been sharing data & intelligence with Ofcom. They continue to lobby and advise on the state of the regional broadband market.			

Connecting the UK Key strategic actions	Digital West Midlands Key Strategic Themes			
	Knowledge Advantage	Learning Advantage	Service Advantage	e-Business Advantage
Tackling social exclusion & bridging the digital divide				
7. Improve accessibility to technology for the digitally excluded and ease of use for the disabled	The development, adoption and promotion of a regional ICT appraisal framework will ensure that publicly funded projects, and websites, will effectively address accessibility and ease of use issues. Delivery of the e-Business Advantage will also ensure that awareness raising, training and good practice policy guidance will promote and demonstrate the benefits of accessibility and ease of use to businesses adopting ICT.			
8. Review the digital divide in 2008	Digital West Midlands seeks to map, benchmark and work to effectively close the digital divide within the West Midlands region. Our goal is to effectively close the digital divide by December 2007.			

#### 4. Making best use of European funds

At a regional level the West Midlands has not effectively engaged with the eEurope agenda. If the sustainable funding and project development activities are to be ensured, then a co-ordinated regional approach needs to be taken towards supporting and utilising the challenges set by the European Information Society.

i2010 Strategic Pillars	How Digital West Midlands will deliver
Pillar 1 – “information space”	By developing an interconnected exemplar region focused on the sharing and exploitation of its knowledge resources, the strategy will provide the West Midlands with the opportunity to effectively influence the development of a modern, market-oriented regulatory framework for the digital economy.
Pillar 2 – “innovation in ICT”	By supporting and harnessing the activities of the region’s ICT and Screen & New Media Clusters, by developing centres of excellence for raising the awareness of the benefits of ICT and through the provision of better data and intelligence, the strategy should strengthen both the level of ICT investment and sophistication of ICT research and development within the region.
Pillar 3 – “inclusion and better services for citizens”	Through the Service Advantage and the Knowledge Advantage, Digital West Midlands seeks to provide near-universal connectivity and an interconnected public sector network to deliver equitable services for the benefit of all citizens and communities.



## Summary of Strategic Objectives

A total of 16 Strategic Objectives have been identified. These are summarised below:

<b>The Knowledge Advantage – Enabling broadband &amp; digital inclusion</b>	
“By 2010, to serve all businesses, citizens and institutions with an exemplar network to deliver equitable benefit to all communities.”	
The Knowledge Advantage – Enabling broadband & digital inclusion	
S01.1	Effectively remove the digital divide by December 2007.
S01.2	Create informed communities able to exploit the opportunities presented by ICT and the region’s knowledge infrastructure by April 2008.
S01.3	Create an effective and interconnected exemplar region able to bring social and economic advantage through more sophisticated choices and the best possible access to knowledge services by April 2009.
S01.4	Enable businesses, communities and individuals to take full advantage of the knowledge economy by April 2009.
<b>The Learning Advantage – Championing technology for learning</b>	
“By 2010, to be a world class knowledge-working region exploiting learning technologies to raise the prosperity of communities, businesses and all individuals.”	
A significant increase in awareness and ICT adoption across all sectors must be achieved by July 2008.	
S02.1	Be in the top half of English regions for improving skills through the use of technology by December 2007
S02.2	Champion positive e-learning and e-skills opportunities to establish the most sophisticated learning culture of any English region by July 2008.
S02.3	Ensure that the right ICT infrastructure is in place to enable the most sophisticated learning culture of any English region by December 2008.
S02.4	Be internationally renowned as an innovative and prosperous e-learning region by December 2010.
<b>The Service Advantage – Exploiting e-services &amp; procurement excellence</b>	
“By 2010, to drive the aggregation and collaborative working of public sector knowledge and procurement services to stimulate the growth of an intelligent and prosperous society.”	
An interconnected network delivering e-services across multiple platforms to all sectors must be in place by July 2009.	
S03.1	Create a framework to support SME engagement and interaction with e-government and procurement services by December 2006.
S03.2	Facilitate regional adoption of common standards for public sector e-services by April 2007.
S03.3	Facilitate public sector adoption of collaborative knowledge working to support efficiency and enhance value by April 2008.
S03.4	Establish a framework to deliver common network services through effective inter-working partnerships by April 2008.
<b>The e-Business Advantage – Unlocking ICT for industry</b>	
“By 2010, to be a world class region exploiting e-business in creating interconnected business communities for entrepreneurial and commercial advantage.”	
Demonstrate significant digital advantage by December 2010.	
S03.1	Re-establish the e-Business Delivery Infrastructure by December 2006.
S03.2	Be in the top third of English Regions for e-business adoption by December 2007.
S03.3	Be an interconnected exemplar region developing world class IP in key sectors by December 2008.
S03.4	Be internationally renowned as having an attractive, creative and entrepreneurial e-business culture by December 2010.

## The Regional ICT Appraisal Framework

The requirement for Regional Guidance to ensure the effective strategic deployment of ICT within the region's public sector was introduced in the first Regional ICT Strategy, 'Connecting People to Opportunity' (2000).

Digital West Midlands has identified 5 elements which need to be brought together in the form of a Regional ICT Appraisal Framework. This elements will need to be developed and championed and embedded within the regional appraisal processes applied to new projects using ICT, and to ICT-specific projects and programmes. Once established, it should be promoted to stakeholders across the region. The elements to be incorporated into this framework are:

- 1) The Longson Model (Connecting People to Opportunity, 2000) established the frame work against which regional guidance should be set.
- 2) The Four Principles (Digital West Midlands, 2006). In developing Digital West Midlands, the ICT Steering Group accepted four universal strategic principles, against which any implementation plan for the strategy needs to be delivered. These are outlined below.
- 3) The ICT Capacity Mapping Project (Bournbrook Consultancy, 2005) has identified criteria for self-assessment and audit of partners delivering ICT-specific projects and programmes.
- 4) The ICT Toolkit for Planners and Developers (East Midlands Development Agency, 2004) offers guidance notes and checklists for planners, developers and others involved in planning, land and property development or regeneration projects.
- 5) The Regional Website Audit (Bournbrook Consultancy, 2005).

The elements identified will inform the development of the Regional ICT Appraisal Framework, which will be structured as follows:

Longson Delivery Model	Strategic Principles			
	Regional Coordination	Raising Awareness	Harnessing Resources	Aggregation & Collaborative Working
Networking & Interoperability	Case by Case Application of Appraisal Elements:			
Common Standards	General guidance based on strategic principles			
Replication	Use of ICT Capacity Mapping Assessment Criteria – for ICT specific projects			
Scalability	Use of the ICT Toolkit for Planners and Developers – for capital/infrastructure projects			
Local Initiatives	Guidance based on the Regional Website Audit – for all projects using web sites			





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