

# COMPLEMENTING ADVOCATING **LEADING**

DIGITAL STRATEGY



Armagh City  
Banbridge  
& Craigavon  
Borough Council

# Launch of *Connected*



# Outcomes Based Approach

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graph TD; A[Aspirations for quality of life] --> B[Measurement]; B --> C[Issues/Strengths]; C --> D[Causes]; D --> E[What works]; E --> F[Community assets];
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Aspirations for quality of life

Long Term Outcome

Measurement

Population Indicator

Issues/Strengths

Baseline

Causes

Story behind baseline

What works

Evidence informed approach

Community assets

What's already out there

# Our 2030 Vision

We have a happy, healthy and connected **community**, a vibrant and sustainable **economy** and appealing **places** for living, working and learning.

# Our Plan



# ENTERPRISING ECONOMY

## LONG-TERM OUTCOME

Our borough is a centre of excellence for entrepreneurship, innovation and investment.

## SKILLED ECONOMY

### LONG-TERM OUTCOME

People are better equipped to take full advantage of the opportunities provided by our dynamic economy.

## TOURISM ECONOMY

### LONG-TERM OUTCOME

Our borough is the destination of choice for international visitors.

# Digital Strategy

- Council commissioned study to develop a *'Comprehensive Sectoral Strategy for the Digital Tech Sector in the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council Area'*
- Sector is one of 5 priority sectors identified by the Council
  - Others are Agri-Food, Life and Health Sciences, Advanced Manufacturing and the Visitor Economy
  - Strategies are being prepared for each priority sector
- Strategy development informed by desk research, data analysis, employer & stakeholder consultation

# What is 'Digital Tech'?

*'A business that provides a digital technical service/product/platform/hardware, or heavily relies on it, as its primary revenue source'*

- Active across the economy in ...
  - IT Services, Computing and Advanced Electronics, Software and Communications
  - Creating new sub-sectors e.g. edtech, fintech
  - Disrupting 'traditional' industries e.g. public sector, film and broadcast media
  - *Although the definition keeps changing!!!!*
- Viewed as one of the most important transformative influences on the way we do business going forward e.g. 4<sup>th</sup> industrial revolution
- A crucial support to the development of other ABC priority sectors



# The 'Digital Tech' Premium!



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**Digital GVA is +28% above the NI average**

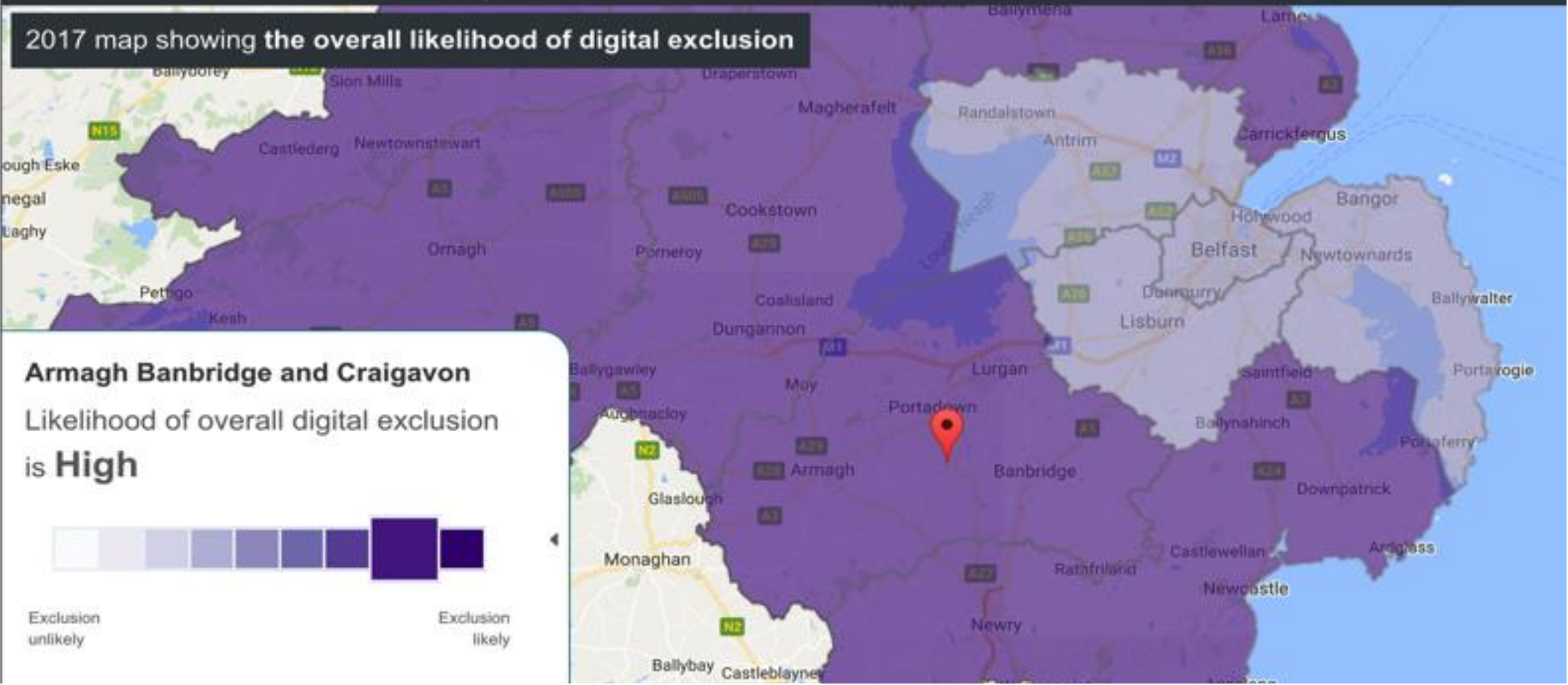


**Digital ICT wages are +44% above the NI average**

Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council has a small but important Digital Tech business base ...

- 100 to 135 businesses, 7% of NI's Digital Tech business base
- Making it one of the largest Digital Tech sectors outside Belfast
- Strong growth in last few years although recent jobs growth all down to growth in the existing business base
- Missing a lot of sole owners and managers from the statistics!

# Digital is key to the development of the wider economy BUT ABC at high risk of digital exclusion ...



# Consideration of Context

Inputs to a Strategic Approach

# A Highly Complex Local Picture

- Large, sophisticated, internationally competitive digitally enabled businesses
  - Moypark, Almac, Ulster Carpets etc.
- Small, fragmented digi-tech sector
  - But Council leadership in developing sector
- Many residents employed in digi-tech sector, but working in Belfast
- Work happening in schools, muddled approach in FE
- No networks or focus for development
- No regional strategy to guide local action

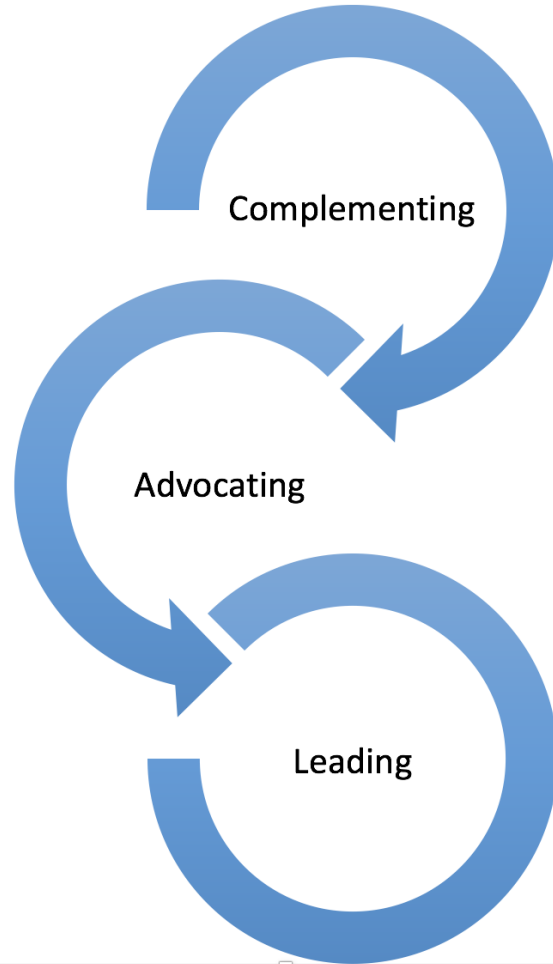
# Supportive feedback from consultation/workshops

- 3 key issues raised consistently
  - Infrastructure
  - Networking
  - Education/Skills
- Positivity around Council's recognition of the sector's role across all aspects of the economy and need for 'co-ordinating' role
- Strong willingness to engage/support Council from stakeholders including Catalyst Inc, Digital Catapult, University of Ulster, SRC, Enterprise Agencies and business community

# Rationale for Local Response

- Digital exclusion is social and economic exclusion
  - Infrastructure provision
  - Skills and aptitudes
- Sector is growing fast
  - ABC should share in that growth as much as possible
- Other policies depend on digital success
- Competitive response of other Council areas
- But what response is appropriate?

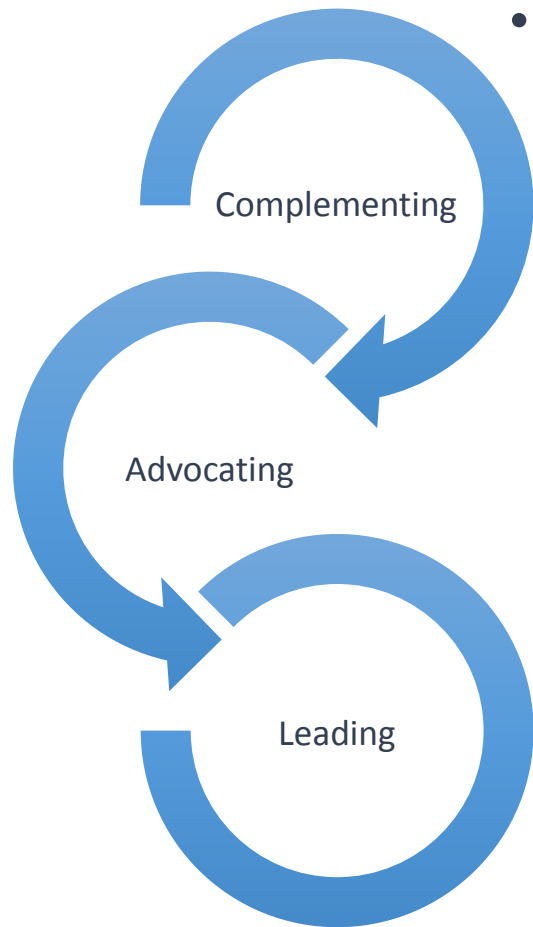
# 3 Elements to a Local Response



1. Complement UK and Northern Ireland Government initiatives
2. Advocate for the ABC area
3. Provide local leadership and focus



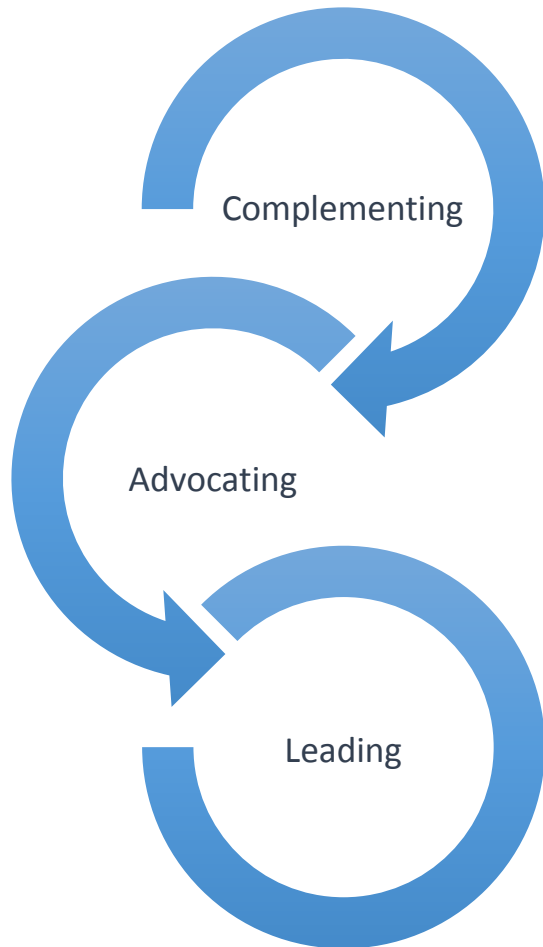
# The 3 Part Strategy



- **Complementing**

- Ensure Council's own policies and practices complement regional and national policies but reflect local priorities
- Tackling Digital Exclusion requires local action and inclusion in community development, regeneration and rural development action plans
- Work with schools, colleges and training providers to drive digital agenda. New Employability and Skills Strategy has a major focus on influencing career choice including towards the digital skills

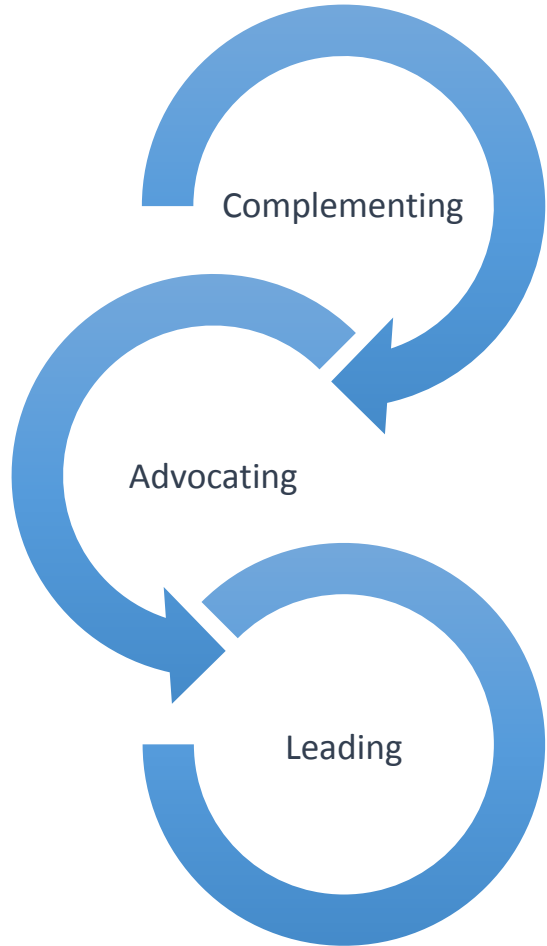
# The 3 Part Strategy



- **Advocating**

- Council needs an authoritative voice with Northern Ireland and UK policy makers and agenda setters
- Need for new approaches to mobile and fixed line infrastructure deficiencies
- Ensuring UK and Northern Ireland initiatives benefit the Council area
  - Catalyst Inc., Digital Catapult etc.
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> level provision at local level
- Agenda setting for the Council area
- Promoting Council area as location for inward investment
  - Trade and investment promotion

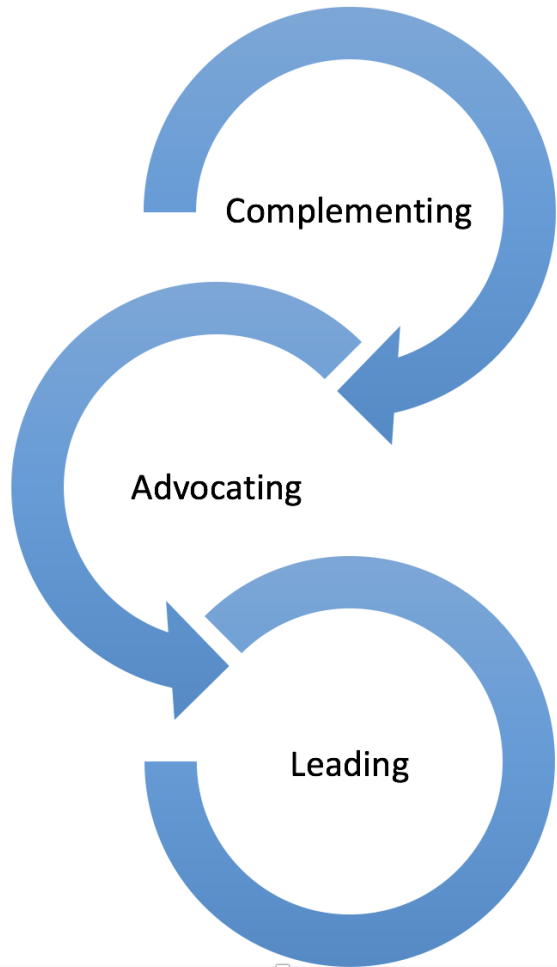
# The 3 Part Strategy



- **Leading**

- Creating a focus for the sector in the Council area
- Creating and animating sectoral networks
  - Possibly based on digital hubs
- Being a strong and dynamic partner
  - Catalyst Inc., Matrix, Digital Catapult, SRC, UU, international counterparts
- Overall, thought leadership

# How?



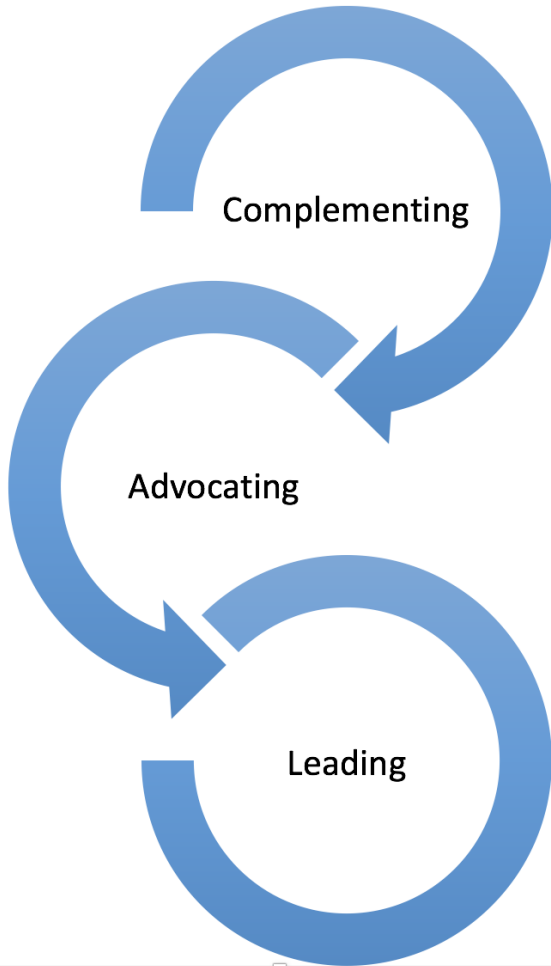
Recruit a Digital Champion or Ambassador for the Council and its area

- Needs to be authoritative with agenda setters in Central Government and yet still influential with digital businesses
- Probably a senior person from within the sector

Consult on and develop a 3 Year Digital Strategy Delivery Plan

- Delivering the Digi-Transform programme
- Progressing Digital Hub provision
- Private sector-led Digital Leadership Team
- Network development and animation
- Consistent delivery of educational initiatives such as Coderdojo
- Maximising role of education sector in skills provision
- Educating the wider population – promote digital inclusion
- Ensuring Council demonstrates best practice in digital enablement and inclusion

# How?



Promote the Council area strongly as an location for digital investment and with strong existing digital businesses

Develop partnerships with key Northern Ireland and UK partner organisations and internationally

- Strategic alliance/outreach with Catalyst Inc. considered key

Council work with the NI Executive and service providers to ensure excellent fixed-line and mobile digital infrastructure in the Borough

Create Digital Officer role within Council

- Support Digital Champion/Ambassador
- Work to implement the Digital Strategy Delivery Plan

COMPLEMENTING  
ADVOCATING  
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THANK YOU!

