Digital Policy Framework – Output from Jersey Youth Parliament Focus Group 4 August 2016

Attendees

- Ben Jehan
- Amy Vatcher
- Robyn Ann Le Plongeon
- Andrew Houiellebecq
- Benedict Lewis

On 4 August 2016, five members of the Jersey Youth Parliament discussed the draft Digital Policy Framework and made critical suggestions. The discussion focussed on digital skills, digital infrastructure and government digital transformation.

Digital Skills

- The attendees agreed that Digital Jersey played a really important role in facilitating digital skills for young people by hosting the Jersey Coders programme. They felt that this should be expanded and supported.
- One attendee noted that Jersey College for Girls did not offer, or had not previously offered, ICT education from GCSE level, and they felt that all schools on the Island should be mandated to offer ICT education at this level.
- Attendees disagreed over whether ICT education should be made compulsory for all students up to GCSE level. Some felt that this would provide everyone with a solid grounding in using technology and would help with employability. Others felt that it might dampen the creativity of some students, or run the risk of teaching toolsets that may have a limited shelf-life.
- Some attendees felt that the framework did not differentiate enough between skills necessary to use technology, and more advanced digital skills applicable to the digital sector, such as programming.
- Attendees agreed that the best way to foster interest in careers in the digital sector was to increase the visibility of these careers within the school system. One attendee suggested that schools should work more closely with Digital Jersey and the digital sector to encourage exposure.
- Some attendees claimed that the availability of technology was not so much of an issue in schools, but the availability of teachers who knew how to use it effectively was. Some felt that lesson time was often wasted by teachers performing analog tasks through digital media. One attendee suggested that teachers should not be forced to use technology to deliver their subject's curriculum if this did not suit their teaching style.
- The attendees had universal praise for the Jersey Coders programme.

Digital Infrastructure

- One attendee suggested that the Jersey Fibre project should not be promoted as a fantastic business opportunity, since Jersey's isolated island geography means it will always have high latency – something which could be a disadvantage for some digital businesses. The

attendee suggested that we should encourage more businesses to host services on-island to direct traffic away from off-island connections, improving latency rates.

- The attendees agreed that the rollout of the Jersey Fibre project had been too slow, and that it would have made more sense to prioritise St. Helier and business centres before the rest of the island.
- Some attendees felt that Telecoms should be regulated as a public utility, like water or electricity, although did not generally have strong views on how telecoms should be regulated.

Government Digital Transformation

- The most prominent opinion amongst the group was that eGovernment should happen more quickly to enable voting reforms. A number of the attendees felt that voters should be given the option to vote online, and believed that more political decisions should be made through public online referenda.
- Some attendees felt that eGovernment had the opportunity to reconnect voters with politicians, as activity within government and the States Assembly should become increasingly visible.
- One attendee argued that the eGov Digital ID had to have three components to be safe:
    o Something you have (e.g. a card or app)
    o Something you know (e.g. a password or passcode)
    o Something you are (e.g. biometric data)
- The group agreed that MedTech was a positive prospect for Jersey. They wanted to see government commitment to the rollout of medical technology that would empower the patient and reduce costs for the Health Department. They also thought that Jersey should pursue becoming a MedTech testbed.
- Some attendees were concerned about government's open data agenda. They were particularly concerned about the prospect of anonymised personal data being re-identified.
- One attendee suggested that at elections, every candidate should publish a personal manifesto online to a particular format to make these easier to compare.