

Digital Readiness Assessment for Irish Local Authorities

Summary

Q1 2018

Indecon Economic Consultants

July 2018

Executive Summary

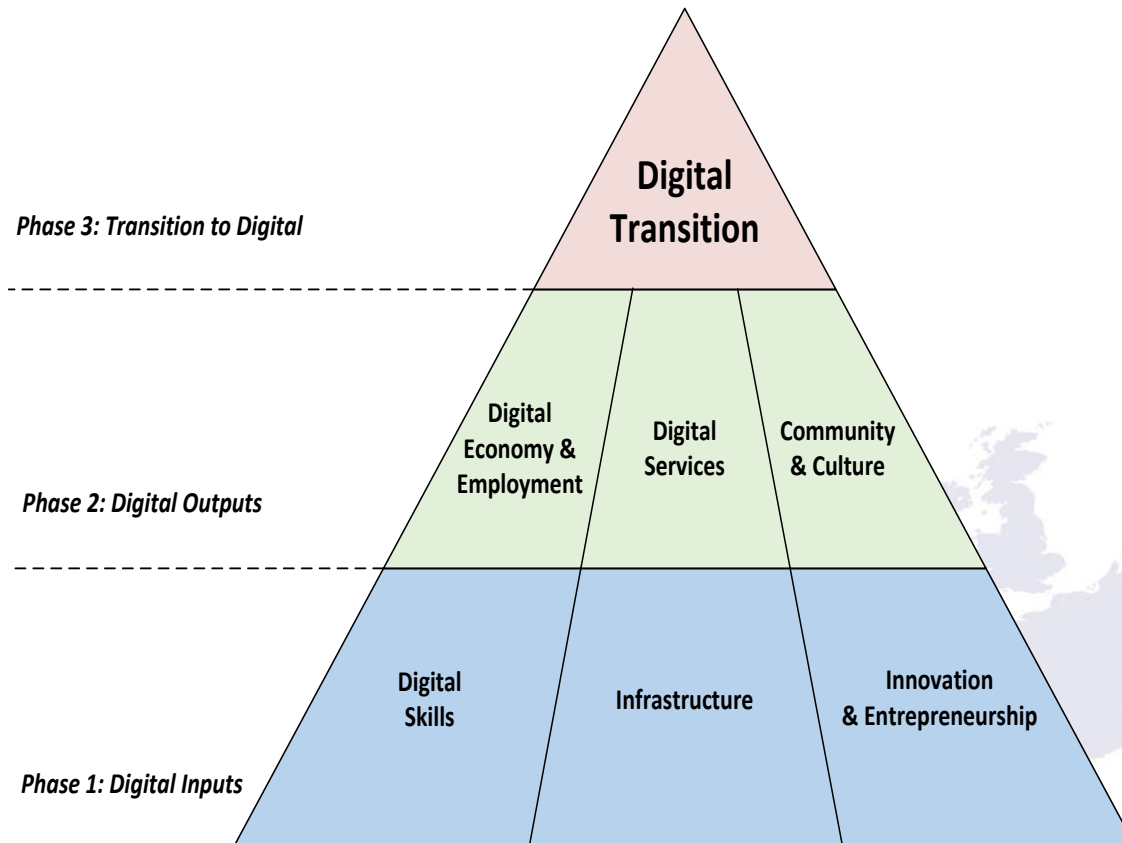
- ❑ This report represents a summary of the results of the Digital Readiness Assessment (DRA) for Irish Local Authorities, which measures digital maturity across seven pillars.
- ❑ DRAs recognise that Local Authorities are at different starting points and have different needs. In the DRAs, each Local Authority is compared with its peers as well as the national average.
- ❑ Transformational levels represent a five-level classification of progress for each Local Authority as follows:
 - Level 1 - Formative
 - Level 2 - Emerging
 - Level 3 - Developed
 - Level 4 – Highly Developed
 - Level 5 – Transformational
- ❑ The national average of the score of each of the 31 Local Authorities across the 7 pillars shows that Irish Local Authorities are typically classed as ‘Emerging’ or ‘Developed’
- ❑ The DRAs can be used as starting point by each Local Authority in developing their digital strategies.

1. Introduction

- ❑ This report represents a summary of the results of the Digital Readiness Assessment (DRA) for Irish Local Authorities
- ❑ Each DRA measures the digital maturity across seven pillars
- ❑ It covers both activities of households and businesses in the region, as well as the activities of each Council itself
- ❑ DRAs recognise that Local Authorities are at different starting points and have different needs, and each Local Authority is compared with its peers as well as the national average
- ❑ Can be used as starting point for objectives and action plans
- ❑ Where feasible independent empirical evidence has informed analysis and this is supported by judgement of Local Authority digital officers
- ❑ It is a matter for each Local Authority to finalise their own assessment of the issues using the DRAs as an external input to their own assessment

2. Framework

- Each Digital Readiness Assessment measures the digital maturity across seven pillars



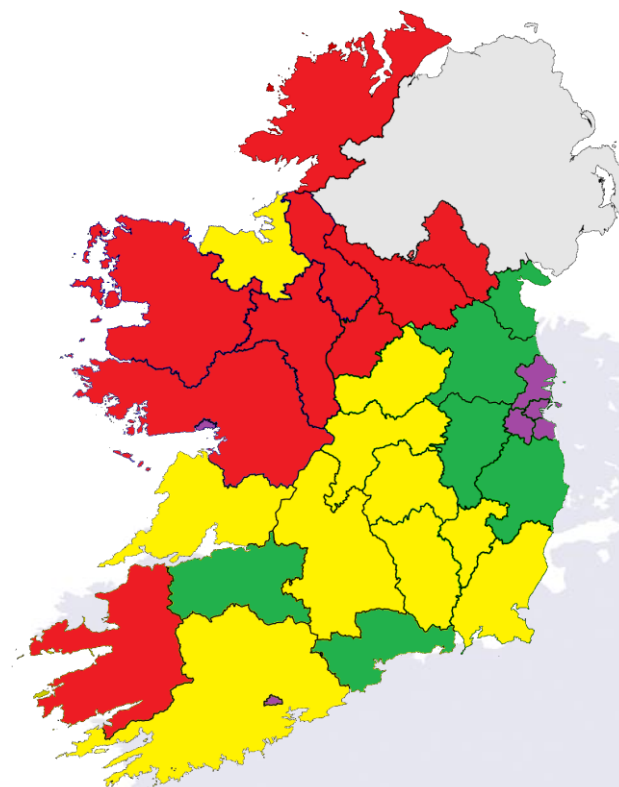
3. Classification

□ Transformational levels represent a five-level classification of progress as follows:

- **Level 1 - Formative:** Minimal take-up of digital technologies; focussed on LA's own service provision; resource levels and commitment of organisation low and conducted in the absence of an explicit strong strategy.
- **Level 2 - Emerging:** Take-up of digital technologies is evident across a number of LA services but not in others; take-up variable; Limited out-reach to wider community; resource levels dedicated low, though commitment to long-term strategy; strategy being formed.
- **Level 3 - Developed:** Take-up of digital technologies is the most important channel across a number of LA services; active out-reach to wider community though limited actual change in behaviours being achieved; resource levels to promote digital strategy strong and in line with published long-term strategy.
- **Level 4 – Highly Developed:** Ambitious programme of adaption of digital technologies; programmes to promote digital engagement in the wider community; explicit published digital strategy which is an integrated element of the Local Authorities overall planning.
- **Level 5 - Transformational:** World-leading adaption of digital technologies both in terms of own processes; impactful engagement in the wider community; explicit digital strategy which is a core, integrated element of the Local Authorities overall planning.

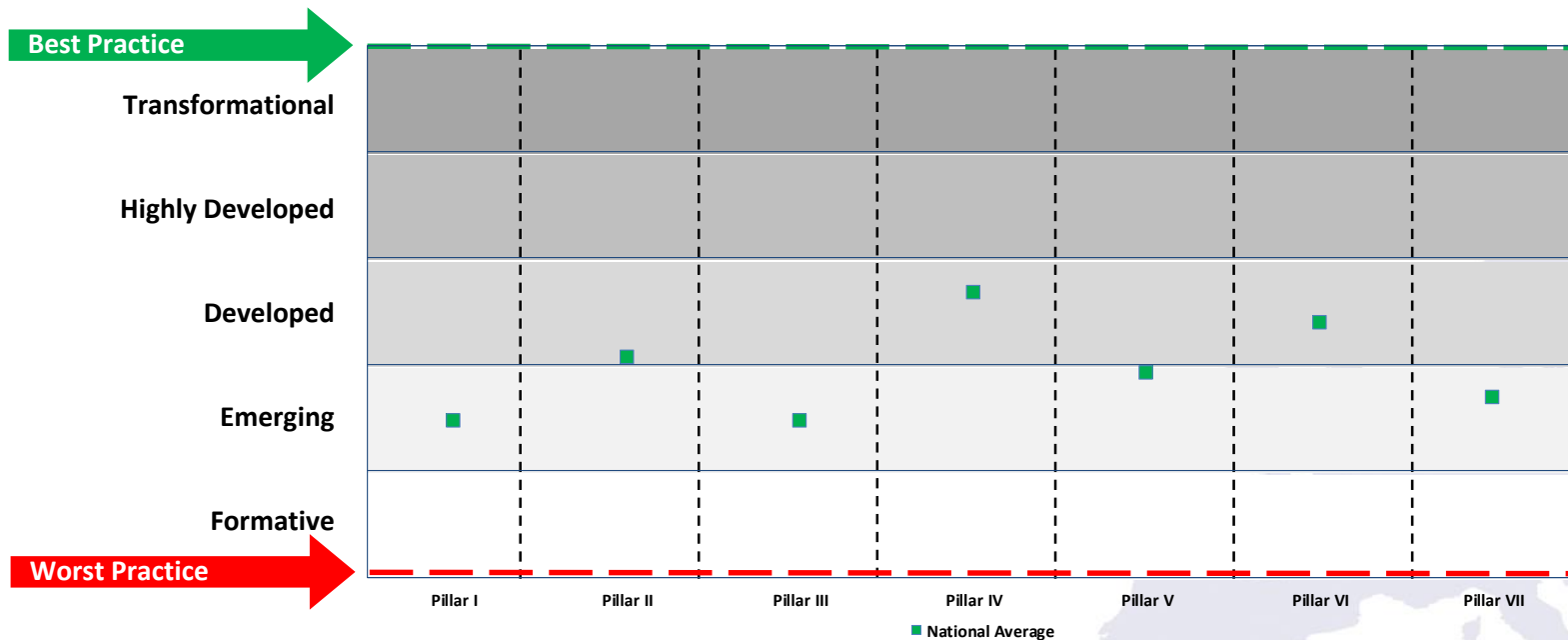
4. Approach

- ❑ DRA reports individual measures of digital progress and provides an individual 'score' for each of the 7 pillars, against which each LA is compared
- ❑ Methodological approach is to compare Local Authority to best practice, and also to compare to the national position and to Peer Groups
- ❑ Peer Groups based on level of urbanisation in each Local Authority. In particular, we classify Local Authorities into:
 - **Group 1 (Purple):** Urban areas where % of rural population < 30%
 - **Group 2 (Green):** Mixed areas where % of rural population > 30% but < 45%
 - **Group 3 (Yellow):** Mixed areas where % of rural population > 45% but < 60%
 - **Group 4 (Red):** Areas where the rural population is > 60%.



5. Digital Maturity Assessment Dashboard

- ❑ The national average of the score of each of the 31 Local Authorities across the 7 pillars is illustrated below
- ❑ Irish Local Authorities are typically classed as ‘Emerging’ or ‘Developed’ across the 7 pillars



6. DRA Conclusions

Pillar I: Transitioning to Digital

National Average – Emerging

- ❑ Best practice is for each LA to have published and commenced implementation of a digital strategy. The national best practice is aligned with this. As of Q1 2018, 78% of Local Authorities had not yet commenced preparation of a strategy, or initial panning had taken place.
- ❑ Best practice is to have a sufficiently well resourced team and a multi-disciplinary team from different divisions in developing and delivering a digital strategy. About one in four Local Authorities already had a well-resourced team in Q1 2018, while over half had a multidisciplinary team from different divisions within Local Authority.
- ❑ International best practice is to have an external digital champion to support the development and delivery of the digital strategy. Only one in five Irish Local Authorities had identified an external digital champion as of Q1 2018.
- ❑ Best practice is to have extensive publishing of data on Open Data website and an up to date record of digital infrastructure, though 45% and 23% of Irish Local Authorities had this.
- ❑ Best practice is for LAs to have implemented a paperless office strategy, though most Irish Local Authorities do not have one.

6. DRA Conclusions

Pillar II: Digital Economy and Employment

National Average – Developed

- ❑ There are very substantial divergence among Local Authorities in terms of workforce in an IT Occupation, ranging from less than 0.5% to greater than 4%.
- ❑ Best practice is that LA's should have active strategies for engaging and promoting digital engagement with enterprises. Many Local Authorities already provide a range of supports to business in this regard.

Pillar III: Digital Skills

National Average – Emerging

- ❑ International best evidence is that LAs have access to a gap analysis to identify digital skill gaps, though no Local Authorities in Ireland have undertaken such analysis. Around two in three Local Authorities in Ireland provide digital training to the public.
- ❑ 2%-4% of population with Computer Science Qualification in most regions, though there is a significant spread between different regions. The spread of 3rd Level qualification in computer use less pronounced, though still significant.

6. DRA Conclusions

Pillar IV: Digital Services **National Average – Developed**

- ❑ Indecon surveyed Local Authorities across a wide range of service provision to citizens and business. While in some cases some services were not able to be conducted digitally, where services were provided, Local Authorities generally experienced extensive usage.
- ❑ Most Local Authorities already provide websites which capture a wide range of information, for example a listing of services and public interactions which can be provided by the Local Authority online; opening hours; contact information for office; and a design that allows viewing on smartphone and tablets.

Pillar V: Infrastructure **National Average – Emerging/Developed**

- ❑ Around two in three households in Ireland own a PC according to the CSO, though in a number of Local Authority areas, particularly in urban areas, this is significantly higher.
- ❑ This can in part be explained by the difficulties in getting access to Broadband in many rural areas, though many of these areas are being targeted as part of the National Broadband Plan.
- ❑ Currently, the High-Speed Broadband coverage rate by commercial operators ranges from a low of 38% to a high of 98%.

6. DRA Conclusions

Pillar VI: Innovation and Entrepreneurship

National Average – Developed

- ❑ A large majority of Irish Local Authorities have formalised partnerships with universities/educational institutions.
- ❑ Irish Local Authorities provide targeted supports to start-up enterprises to develop innovation led businesses, often through the Local Enterprise Offices.
- ❑ The stock of registered '.ie' domains per household shows a high rate of dispersion, indicating that digital innovation is regionally focussed on a small number of areas.

Pillar VII: Community and Culture

National Average – Emerging

- ❑ Most Local Authorities either didn't as of Q1 2018 have a digitally focussed Community Engagement Strategy, or used existing channels to achieve this.
- ❑ In practice, only a minority of Local Authorities have conducted research on vulnerable social groups, though they do use other means to capture citizen feedback.