

# Powys Cultural Services Digital Strategy: Connect and Collaborate – *Search the Assets* Case Study

## Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has made Cultural Services re-evaluate the way services are delivered to users, and in 2020 it was recognised that a lack of strategy and understanding around the benefits of using digital technologies was preventing the service meet its wider strategic objectives. In response to this in 2021 Powys Cultural Services developed a Digital Strategy which has a roadmap of three stages:

- Embark
- Connect and Collaborate
- Sustain

Each phase will see differing degrees of activity across four delivery strands, underpinned by the two support strands:

**Digital Presence** A focused, coherent, consistent and coordinated approach to communicating with our audiences – across all the channels of website, social media, emails, google.

**Learn and Educate** Transform and translate staff expertise and knowledge into digital information and offers.

**Search the Assets** Open up access to assets and collections from across the service. Produce metadata to aid search and ultimately income generation.

**Going Smart** Connect the buildings with the digital experience - extending self-service; introducing immersive technologies; integrating technology to track and understand usage of the building and ultimately drive savings.

Support Strands:

**Sharing the Load** Learn from the best and what has worked well elsewhere. Build partnerships to support digital service delivery.

**Building our Knowledge** A centralised strategy for capturing all user data - using analysis to refine and develop new services based on user need and intelligence.

Through this grant funding we commissioned the assistance of an external specialist to help us develop work around the delivery strand *Search the Assets*.

## Challenge

The ambition to look across the archive, museum collections, and local library collections, to develop a common and sustainable approach to prepare collections materials for online use is core to realising the objectives of the recently formed Digital Strategy. During the development of the Digital Strategy, it became clear that maximising the efficient use of platforms and harmonising the exposure of collections and assets is an important area of development for Powys Cultural Services.

The 'Search the Assets' delivery strand of the Digital Strategy focuses on achieving this goal. Ultimately, this will support the service as we work towards achieving our digital aim to reach and engage with new and wider audiences, as well as seek to become more commercially sustainable as an organisation.

The feasibility study engages with the curators and archivists who work across the archive, museum collections, and local studies collections, to understand how the assets might be brought together and presented through a single interface.

## Solution

The feasibility report details the findings of the study, looking at how Powys Cultural Services can bring together the archive, museum collections, and local studies collections, to present the assets through a single collections platform and front-end interface to online users.

The research sought to understand the current landscape of the archive and collections, including what metadata is available from previous digitisation and cataloguing; what thematic connections can be made across the archive and collections; what are the options for a single collections platform for Powys Cultural Services; and how these findings need to inform digitisation of the collections and metadata generation in the future.

The report provides the findings and details an implementation plan for working towards a searchable online collection platform for Cultural Services, both to encourage community engagement with the collections, but also attract a wider national and international audience to access the heritage and cultural offer from Powys.

## Benefit

There are a number of key benefits which underpin the drive towards the development of a single collections platform and front-end interface:

- Showcase Powys Collections as one and engage both local people and those further afield to look at and interact with assets in the collections, for example to rate, share and comment

- Develop a common approach to keywording and generating metadata for front end search
- Explore commercialisation opportunities

## Result

This feasibility study has achieved the following:

- A baseline study of the current metadata approach across museums, the archive, and the local studies collections
- Identified relevant existing catalogue data that can be used to support front end online search
- Achieved an understanding of how additional keywording and emotional metadata might enhance searching across the assets
- Investigated how the archive and collections can be presented as one
- Developed a sustainable implementation activity plan for developing a searchable database with information and images of items from across the range of collections and archives held by Powys Cultural Services

## Project Outputs/Outcomes

Output (Case Level Indicator)	Achieved
No. of feasibility studies	1
No. of networks established	
No. of jobs safeguarded	
No. of pilot activities undertaken / supported	
No. of community hubs created	
No. of stakeholders engaged	31
No. of participants supported (awareness raising events only)	

## Project Contact Details

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## Partners/Match Funders Logos



## Project Details

Key Data	Project Specifics
Delivered by:	Cultural Services Powys County Council
Start Date:	January 2022
End Date:	April 2022
LEADER Theme:	Theme 1 – Adding Value to local identity and natural and cultural resources Theme 3 – Exploring new ways of providing non-statutory local services Theme 5 – Exploitation of digital technology

## Financial Details

Description	Amount	%
Total Expenditure:	£8,000	100%
RDP Funding:	£6,400	80%
Match funding:	£1,600	20%

Case study completed on: 18 May 2022