

Digital and ICT Strategy 2021 to 2024

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1. Foreword by Executive Member for Digital & ICT – Councillor John Harrison

I am delighted to be recommending this new strategy for adoption, which takes us to the next phase of our digitalisation journey.

There has never before been a time when technology has been more important to us as a Council. The challenges of 2020 have been on a scale we have never previously experienced, and could never have predicted. The residents of Bracknell Forest have relied on the Council to continue delivering services, to ensure the borough remains economically prosperous, vibrant, and safe, and partly thanks to our technology, we have continued to meet their expectations.

The world has changed significantly. The public have adapted to the use of technology, both for keeping in touch with their families and friends and for their interactions with us. The move to mainly working from home has been implemented at a speed that nobody could have imagined or planned for. The technology available to the workforce has meant that most council activity has continued virtually uninterrupted. And this at a time when we have experienced a higher level of cyber-attack than ever before.

Where we haven't been able to continue delivering services in the usual ways, technology and digital design have been instrumental in enabling us to develop new models of operation.

Our ability to adapt so quickly is testament to the achievements and progress made under previous ICT and Digital Strategies. This new strategy builds on that success, and sets the direction for the coming years. Our ambition is to move further towards being a digitally mature organisation, maximising the opportunities provided by technology and maintaining the highest levels of security and reliability. Our focus on digital services is underpinned by a commitment to complete accessibility for all customers, irrespective of their ability. The work programme is challenging, but achievable, and will ensure we remain connected, effective and safe.

Councillor John Harrison
Executive Member for Digital & ICT

2. Introduction

Purpose

This document provides a comprehensive overview of how Digital and ICT will support the delivery of Bracknell Forest Council's strategic objectives for the period January 2021 to December 2024.

Providing **Digital** services that internal and external users and customers can have confidence in is critically reliant on a robust and reliable **ICT** infrastructure. The Digital and ICT Strategy is produced as a combined approach to ensure that BFC has truly digital capabilities considering culture, practices, processes and technologies.

Scope

The objectives of the document are to:

- Set out the strategic themes for Digital and ICT to deliver corporate priorities.
- Explain the rationale for the components of the Digital and ICT Strategy
- Describe the technical direction for Digital and ICT to support the achievement of corporate priorities and to maintain business usual in a way that is both agile and secure.
- Set out an outline programme of Digital and ICT projects to deliver the Digital and ICT strategy 2021 - 2024.
- Set down a clear marker to review the quality of the software applications that support key services to determine if they are still fit for purpose and provide value or money in terms of the support provided by the supplier and the overhead required to maintain them.
- Help to inform the organisational format and structure of Digital and ICT Services to deliver the Digital and ICT Strategy for 2021 to 2024 and to ensure that effective support is provided to maintain business as usual and agility across the organisation.

3. Executive Summary

The strategy has been developed over the last year, taking account of the challenges facing the Council and the aspirations of stakeholders from across the organisation. It can be summarised into 11 themes, under five main headings:

- **Foundations –**
 - Robust and reliable ICT,
 - Cloud computing,
 - Information assets and data

- **Core Activities (work) –**
 - Location-independent working,
 - Collaborative working,
 - Digital skills

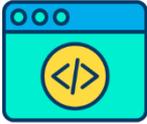
- **Core Activities (customers) –**
 - Digital customer engagement,
 - Cloud-based telephony

- **Digital development –**
 - Internet of Things,
 - Low-code development and automation

- **Continuous improvement –**
 - Review of applications, processes, and team structure and skills

Digital and ICT Strategy – Summary

	Logo	Strategic Theme	Context	Benefits
Foundations		Robust and reliable ICT	The ICT Infrastructure (hardware, software and networks) offer high levels of security, availability and performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robust cyber security in place and a cyber aware workforce • Good response times from applications • Minimal downtime • Fast recovery and restoration
		Moving into the next phase of cloud-based computing, including Software as a Service	ICT applications and infrastructure moving from on-premise to cloud-based hosting using Software as a Service (SaaS) and Microsoft Azure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choice of operating environments – the best solution for each requirement • Reduced data centre footprint and consumption • Cloud-based application support • Support property optimisation
		Information assets and data management	Maintain quality, confidentiality, integrity and availability of data and enable use of comprehensive and powerful data analysis and manipulation tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurate, timely reporting to make informed decisions about resource allocation • Analysis giving intelligence and enabling predictions, to aid decision making and policy shaping
Core activities – work		Location-independent, home and mobile working	Employees and other agents working from home or other locations (work is what you do and not where you are based)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agile workforce, technically enabled • Reduced commuting and travel for work • Building improved inter-agency working • Better use of council properties
		Further enable collaborative working	Expand collaborative working within BFC, with partners in the voluntary and community sectors using collaborative systems and fit for purpose premises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enables more cohesive working with the community, staff and members • Enables development of Community Hubs • Improved efficiency • Better customer experience
		Increasing digital skills in the workforce	Actively enhancing the digital skills and cyber awareness of the workforce and the digital leaderships skills of senior managers to make optimal use of Digital and ICT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive use of a wide range of digital solutions available by capable staff, members and the community •
Core activities - customers		Digital customer engagement (internal and external)	Providing self- service access to information and services at a time and via a range of access channels that are convenient for the customer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring digital services and content are accessible to all • A consistent experience across all channels • More effective and efficient customer engagement
		Fully featured, cloud-based telephone system	A telephone system with call management, self-service and chat capabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simplified telephony for services and residents • Multi-channel contact centre • Improved resilience and business continuity

Digital Development		Internet of Things	Automate everyday tasks using technology chips and sensors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactive asset management • Reduced costs • Improved safety • Reduction in avoidable contact
		Low-code development and automation	Developing low-code applications that allow BFC to implement new processes quickly and at lower cost than third party software application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimise costs of expensive to run applications • Possible projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated and ongoing tracking of employee health and wellbeing • Dynamic office opening checklists and task management • Employee, Visitor and event attendee management
Continuous improvement		Reviewing Digital and ICT Services Systems, Support and Processes	Review of quality of services delivered and update Digital and ICT systems, support and processes to reflect new ways of working and to ensure, economy, efficiency and effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic, effective and efficient services • Optimised quality of services to customers • Rationalised estate

4. What does Digital and ICT Mean?

The Assistant Director of Customer Experience, Digital and ICT has merged the formerly separate departments of Digital Services and ICT Services together to promote synergy and more collaborative working. This recent change is already showing the benefits of working together, e.g. the new intranet system was built using agile project management, went live one month ahead of schedule and feedback on the new system has been very positive.

Digital is about mindset and culture. It means working to a set of principles, focusing on user needs, and a commitment to making services digital by default, so that they are simpler, clearer and faster for users.

The Council is a signatory to the Local Digital Declaration. That means we are committed to:

- redesigning our services around the needs of the people using them
- breaking our dependence on inflexible and expensive technology that doesn't join up effectively, in favour of modular common components and open data standards
- designing safe, secure and useful ways of sharing information to build trust among our partners and citizens
- demonstrating digital leadership, creating the conditions for genuine organisational transformation
- embedding an open culture that values, incentivises and expects working in the open wherever we can, sharing our plans and experience, working collaboratively with other organisations, and reusing good practice.

The Digital Services function in BFC is tasked with ensuring that BFC utilises up-to-date digital solutions and systems to provide information and services. The team manages internet-based services and content, ensuring they meet accessibility and usability standards and work effectively for all users and on all devices.

One way to appreciate the importance of a Digital perspective in the Digital and ICT strategy is to consider the ever-growing network of physical objects that feature an IP address for internet connectivity, and the communication that occurs between these objects and other internet enabled devices and systems. This group of IP enabled objects is collectively referred to as the Internet of Things (IoT). IoT extends internal connectivity beyond traditional devices like desktop and laptop computers, smartphones and tablets to a diverse range of everyday things that utilise embedded technology to communicate and interact with the external environment via the internet, e.g. thermostats, vehicles, lights in households, parking systems and much more. This "digital" pool of resource gives local authorities the ability to automate tasks such as inspections and safety maintenance, for example.

Some examples of delivery using digital services:

Technology	Application examples
Accessible web-based services to enable customer self service	Bookings, applications, consultation, reporting, payments and recruitment.
Internet of Things (IoT)	Telecare for Vulnerable Adults, Fleet Maintenance.
Robotic Process Automation / Artificial Intelligence	Automation of repetitive processes and analysis of data using virtual agents.

The ICT Services function covers the provision, development and support for laptops, servers, storage devices, applications software, telephony, voice and data communications, network and other security systems. It is the responsibility of ICT Services to ensure that data is protected and available when required.

Components of ICT Services:

Information Security Framework such as ICT Security Policies and Technical Standards
Technical Support and Development resources for the overall ICT environment; hardware, software and services.
Collaborative systems such as TEAMS and SharePoint.
Business Software Applications such as <i>Agresso Business World</i> and <i>Northgate Revenues and Benefits</i> .
Voice and Data Communications Network Infrastructure (e.g. Internet connectivity, wide and Local Area Networks (including Wi-Fi))
Voice or Telephone Platforms that support remote working and customer self service
Servers, Storage Devices, Backup and Disaster Recovery (e.g. On-Premise Data Centre with second site for Backup and DR)

As a service, we are gradually moving from a traditional ICT function, to develop into a digitally mature team. We want to extend this digital maturity to the whole organisation, to ensure we are always delivering the best digital services for our customers. Over the lifetime of the Strategy we aim to measure the Council's digital maturity and benchmark ourselves against other organisations.

5. The Key Issues and Challenges for BFC

The Corporate Priorities for BFC are set out in the Corporate Plan 2019. They are subject to some revision due the Coronavirus Pandemic and a fresh commitment to review our approach to equalities and racism.

The Council Plan

To deliver on all our objectives and make sure that Bracknell Forest stays prosperous and remains a good place to live, work and play, we have focused our Council Plan on 6 strategic themes:

- value for money
- economic resilience
- education and skills
- caring for you and your family
- protecting and enhancing our environment
- communities

Strategic themes

The borough of opportunity



Since the adoption of the Council Plan following the 2019 local election, the landscape we operate in has changed dramatically, leading to further development of the Council's strategic direction. Major events have influenced the direction of this strategy, including:

- the Coronavirus pandemic
- the Black Lives Matter campaign
- the financial challenges faced by the public sector

A Strategy for Renewal

In response to the Coronavirus crisis the Council has produced a Strategy for Renewal. It has been titled as a "Renewal" as opposed to "Recovery Strategy" to make it clear that we are not striving to get back to how everything was in February, before the pandemic struck.

There are four important pieces of context that shape the strategy for renewal:

- **The Council and its partners have a clear community leadership role**
- **We will continue to adapt to the impact of the pandemic on our communities and may need to re-prioritise some objectives in the Council Plan 2019**
- **Pre-COVID-19 financial pressures are likely to increase, and decision making must reflect this**
- **The overarching priority is the health and economic well-being of residents**

Against this context (which shapes the approach) there are seven principles (or pillars) to BFC's approach:

1. **Work with partners and communities to protect and promote the physical and mental health of our population**
2. **Support town and neighbourhood centre vitality and look to support our local economy by retaining businesses within the borough**
3. **Provide short term support and refocus some activities to deal with post COVID-19 spikes in demand**
4. **Integrate services with partners and locate them wherever possible within the community that use them**
5. **Look to involve the community and voluntary sector in supporting people and services wherever possible**
6. **Containing/reducing expenditure in the long term (including refocussing/delivering differently/stopping some services)**
7. **Maximising the opportunities to address carbon reduction across all our activities**

It is recognised that one of the major challenges will relate to workplace accommodation and working practices. A Ways of Working (WoW) sub-group has been established to define the new approach to where and how we work, and to look for opportunities to integrate with partners and locate services in the community. The principles developed by this group will need Digital and ICT input to support their delivery and have informed the Digital and ICT Strategy.

Changing the way we work at Time Square and other council buildings, by reducing the number of Council staff using the buildings at any given time, because we can now work in more agile ways, offers a real and exciting opportunity to create genuine “Community Hubs” in which Council, health, voluntary and community sector and, maybe, other partners are located in a space that encourages collaboration. For our residents, of course, the opening of front-line services will be more in their minds than our office space. The Community Hub approach places services closer to the communities they serve.

Equalities and Racism

Equalities and Racism have attracted national attention in recent months, through the *Black Lives Matter* campaign. This campaign has given a renewed impetus to the need to maintain and promote social justice and equality of opportunity. CMT are reviewing how we look at discrimination and equality in all its guises and have challenged themselves to ensure that they genuinely lead the organisation in a way that leaves no room or hiding place for racism or discrimination of any kind. The answers may not be simple and there may be no quick fixes to some issues but CMT want to work with all staff to address them, and not just whilst BLM is in the news.

We need to look at how Digital and ICT can support this drive. We can ensure our data and information is of the highest quality. We supply the tools, technologies and training to enable expert analysis, delivering knowledge and insight about our customers and services and to enable evidence-based decision making. A key priority for this Strategy, and a theme cutting across all objectives, is the continued commitment to ensure accessibility of all content, applications and services provided for the public, internal colleagues, and other stakeholders.

The Public Sector Financial Position

Even before the Coronavirus Pandemic hit, the financial position for the public sector was challenging. In the face of a growing and aging population and increased demand for council services, we need to be ever more efficient. The impact of the pandemic has been enormous, with spiralling costs in some areas where demand has increased, or we have had to adapt services to continue to deliver. At the same time our income from services has reduced. The result of this, and the ongoing uncertainty of the impact of the pandemic, means that our financial position is even more challenging. Digital and ICT can play a role in reducing costs by facilitating self-service and automating administrative tasks whilst also ensuring we use the most cost-effective infrastructure and applications to deliver our services.

These priorities, together with the information gathered in stakeholder workshops, the outputs of the WoW sub-group and the new Customer Experience Strategy, have informed the strategic objectives, themes, and projects, shaping the ICT Strategy for 2021 – 2024.

6. A Digital and ICT Strategy for Renewal and Positive Change in Bracknell Forest

Coping with the Coronavirus pandemic has been the council's top priority for the short term and the implications of the pandemic will need to be planned for and managed for the medium and longer term. The Renewal Strategy will have an impact on how the council is to deliver services in the future. Across the country, councils are building on a greater acceptance of using Digital and ICT solutions to access and provide services. In the period following the first lockdown (from March 2020) there began a rapid take up of digital and IT tools to maintain life as normal for people, and business as usual for commerce.

A few examples of the day to day activities that have been transformed into the "new normal" included:

Quarter One 2020	Quarter Two 2020
Commuting	<i>Working at home</i>
Using Email	<i>Collaboration using TEAMS</i>
Meetings in the office	<i>Meetings using Teams</i>
Visiting friends occasionally	<i>Using Zoom every weekend</i>
Going shopping	<i>Buying online</i>
Visiting the doctor	<i>Online consultations</i>
Employees being in the office	<i>Employees being in their office</i>
Meetings in the Council Chamber	<i>Council Meetings with Teams or Zoom</i>

The Digital and ICT Strategy needs to focus on supporting a programme of renewal and change by enabling the adaptation of existing, or development of new, services to meet new needs, building on a greater acceptance of using Digital and ICT by our key stakeholder groups:

- Citizens
- Businesses
- Employees
- Elected Members
- Partners and Other Agencies
- Schools

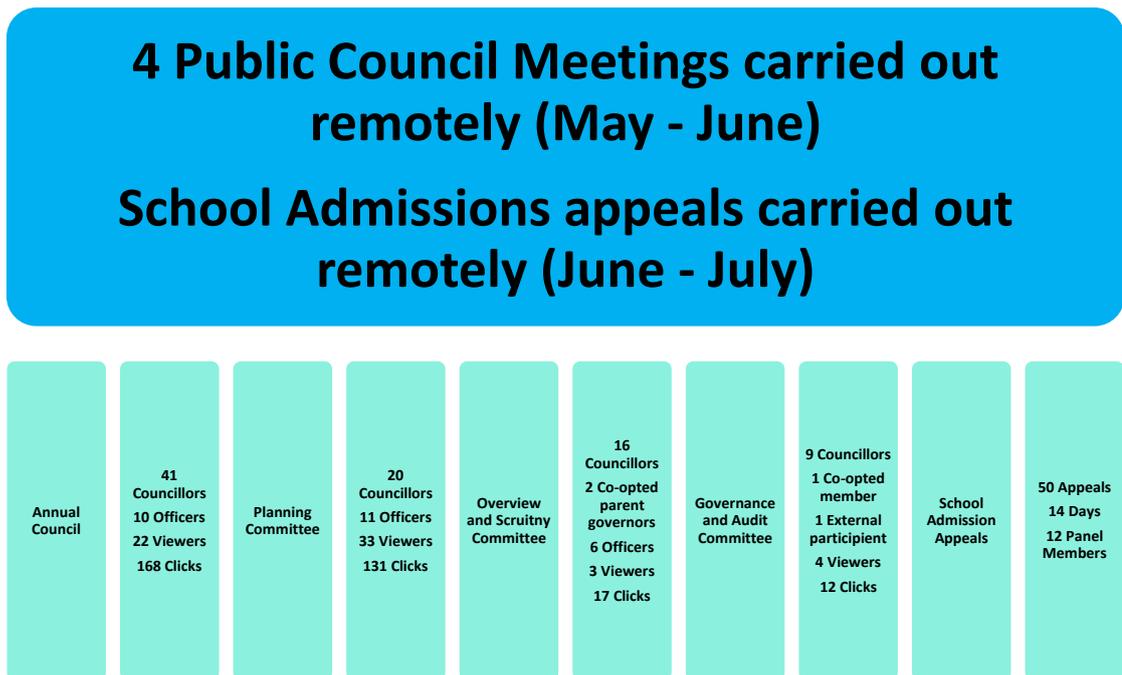
CMT has already established an important sub-group of the Coronavirus Recovery Cell. The Ways of Working (WoW) sub-group is specifically tasked with refreshing our views on the ways in which we work and utilise our buildings. A key question concerns the level of home and remote working that is acceptable to maintain excellent service delivery, which could offer entirely new options for how we work in a community partnership with other organisations, sharing the Time Square, and other, offices.

The Renewal Strategy will also provide a chance to reflect on the establishment of a range of innovative and agile "emergency" measures implemented to help to cope with the Coronavirus crisis, that could be designed to leave a lasting legacy on a number of the functions of the Council, for example:

a) Supporting local democracy

Almost overnight elected members and staff have had to gain a level of comfort with online collaboration and video conferencing tools that previously seemed years away. This is likely to leave a lasting impact and there is scope to refine what has already been achieved using Microsoft Teams and Live Events, alongside other online platforms.

Some statistics about our approach to local democracy during the early days of the pandemic:



b) Working from home and remotely

Although the majority of council staff were classed as “home-flex,” meaning they would work from home up to 40% of the week, with the remainder of their time hot-desking in Time Square or another council office, in practice most staff worked most of their time at the same desk, and worked from home only one day per week, if they didn’t need to attend the office for meetings. The Coronavirus pandemic meant that overnight most staff moved to working most of their time in their homes. This ability to adjust rapidly to new requirements meant that the vast majority of the Council’s services were able to continue operating either fully, or with some modifications. The impact on customers has therefore been kept to a minimum, and this is a testament to the robustness and resilience of the ICT infrastructure in place, and the team supporting it.

c) Meeting needs quickly and flexibly

The traditional model for local authorities to address needs has been to deliver a top-down service and make incremental improvements. But in recent months a new order of things has emerged. This includes:

- A rapid reconnection with the local voluntary and community sector (VCS), quickly building or strengthening relationships into solid delivery partnerships for meeting the needs of vulnerable people.
- Mass citizen participation in community responses, notably in NHS, councils and local VCS organisations rapidly recruiting and deploying thousands of volunteers.
- Extensive development and use of “match-making” platforms to connect vulnerable people with those able to help.
- A re-evaluation of vulnerability and need. Some groups are becoming vulnerable for the first time and others are now vulnerable in new ways. Local authorities are now quickly trying to ascertain who may need help and how best to reach them.
- Different demographic groups experience inadequacies in some service models (e.g. some new groups of people having to apply for universal credit).
- Rapid adaptation of existing services, or development of new services to meet new needs.

c) Making better use of data

During the pandemic, the negative consequences of data silos, the lack of data standards and other barriers have gained fresh attention. The Coronavirus response is creating an environment in which breaking down those barriers has become a political priority and organisations can see first-hand what can be done at speed. For example, based on a request from boroughs, the Information Governance Group for London has been able to create a data sharing agreement for boroughs to share data between themselves on vulnerable children who depend on free school meals, in less than a week. At Bracknell Forest Council, regular reporting on key services impacted by the pandemic has enabled CMT to quickly and easily see and monitor trends and impacts, enabling quicker decision-making and clarity of direction.

A table illustrating the potential “digital” legacy for positive change after we emerge from the Coronavirus pandemic, based on some shared experience of local authorities is shown at Appendix B.

7. Building on the Completed ICT and Digital Strategy (2017 - 2020)

The implementation of the Digital and ICT Strategy 2017- 2020 has been completed. This Strategy set out an aspiration to position BFC to embrace cloud technologies, to re-balance the ICT security culture to become more enabling and to encourage innovation.

A re-positioning of ICT Services began under this strategy timeframe, and despite a period of management instability in ICT Services, a great deal has been achieved (especially in the last eighteen months), including:

- The adoption of Microsoft technologies via a thorough procurement process to provide the primary platform to move into a cloud-based operation, offering access to a full suite of applications and security features to modernise the ICT estate.
- Introducing a cloud-based, ICT Service Management System (TOTO), subsequently extended to HR and Facilities.
- Migrating to Microsoft Exchange Online from an on-premise version.
- Implementing the Office 365 suite, including One Drive, TEAMS and SharePoint.
- Implementing a council-wide Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS) using SharePoint and retiring some “legacy” document management systems, that were not GDPR compliant.
- Implementing a new Intranet system using SharePoint.
- Upgrading the Council’s web site.
- The establishment of a new role of ICT Business Partners to pro-actively maintain the relationship between Digital and ICT Services and their customers.
- Implementing a range of corporate applications to meet the needs for common requirements arising across all functions

Corporate Applications



Moving to Cloud Based Computing and Software as a Service (SaaS)

The Council is on schedule to complete the implementation of the Office 365 suite of applications including the SharePoint EDRMS by early 2021. These applications are hosted in the Cloud at secure facilities making up the Microsoft Azure service.

BFC has also invested in Microsoft security products and services such as the Security Compliance Package to enable a secure and agile environment for Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) and working with other agencies. This close strategic alignment with Microsoft's products and services makes the adoption of Microsoft Azure the logical choice for hosting BFC's cloud-based applications.

Many of the software applications in use at BFC are still located (hosted) on physical and virtual servers in Time Square (an operating environment known as "on premise" or "on-prem"). Working from servers located securely in the Cloud is now a mature operating model, across all industry sectors.

A project to review and migrate the software applications in use at BFC to a cloud-based model, to improve resilience and significantly reduce ICT facilities on premise, was approved in July 2020, and is currently in progress.

This project which will organise the hosting of information systems between Microsoft's Azure facility, or directly with the application suppliers (providing a cloud hosting facility) represents an important bridge from the previous strategy to the new Digital and ICT Strategy 2021 to 2024.

Software as a Service

Where there is a good tactical, operational or financial reason to have business applications or other software "hosted" by the software provider, the opportunity will be taken. This commercial model is known as Software as a Service (SaaS) and it can have several advantages, e.g.

- The cost includes all the physical costs (physical servers and storage).
- Refresh costs are avoided, so the customer does not have to worry about paying any future server upgrade costs.
- Licence costs, such as operating systems and monitoring tools are included.
- Running costs i.e. power and core infrastructure provision are avoided.

Depending on the service / customer requirements, the SaaS model often includes:

- Application management, i.e. maintaining the application, out of hours support, upgrades and year end support,
- Database administration, including:
 - pro-active management of database performance,
 - upgrades and licences,
 - provision of test databases in line with application upgrade,

- Provision and testing of disaster recovery,
- Penetration testing and vulnerability assessments,
- Full out of hours service, including installation, patching and upgrades of operating systems.

An important consideration around which applications could or should be hosted in MS Azure or with suppliers based on SaaS models, is the sustainability of current business applications (e.g. MOSAIC, Agresso Business World, Midland HR, Uniform or LAS). Generally, older (legacy) applications can be expensive to maintain, with high levels of third party and “in-house” support resources being required to achieve basic outputs such as reports.

High maintenance applications requiring dedicated support, frequent upgrades or even those with limited development and insufficient upgrades to keep pace with requirements will be identified for early attention. The aim is to produce a plan in Digital and ICT Services to assess fitness for purpose and value for money of all software applications supporting services. A quality improvement action plan will then prioritise moving, upgrading or replacing applications, based on their relative effectiveness.

Where there is an opportunity to rationalise and reduce the size of the estate we are supporting, this will be taken. For example, we will look to use a single document management system across the organisation, a single CRM, a single contact centre solution, etc. When applications are due for contract renewal or retendering, we will always look for another application in our service catalogue that might meet the need.

8. Developing a Digital and ICT Strategy for Renewal and Change in BFC

Taking account of the pandemic and its major unplanned impact on our corporate priorities requires a different approach to producing the Digital and ICT Strategy than in previous versions, where the strategy was encapsulated in a single, all-purpose vision or mission statement. This current strategic cycle requires a more agile approach based on a clear expression of the ambitions (e.g. introducing technologies or systems) and the structural and process changes that that would be required to support the strategy for renewal and positive change.

To develop the Digital and ICT Strategy 2021 to 2024 we have undertaken the following activities:

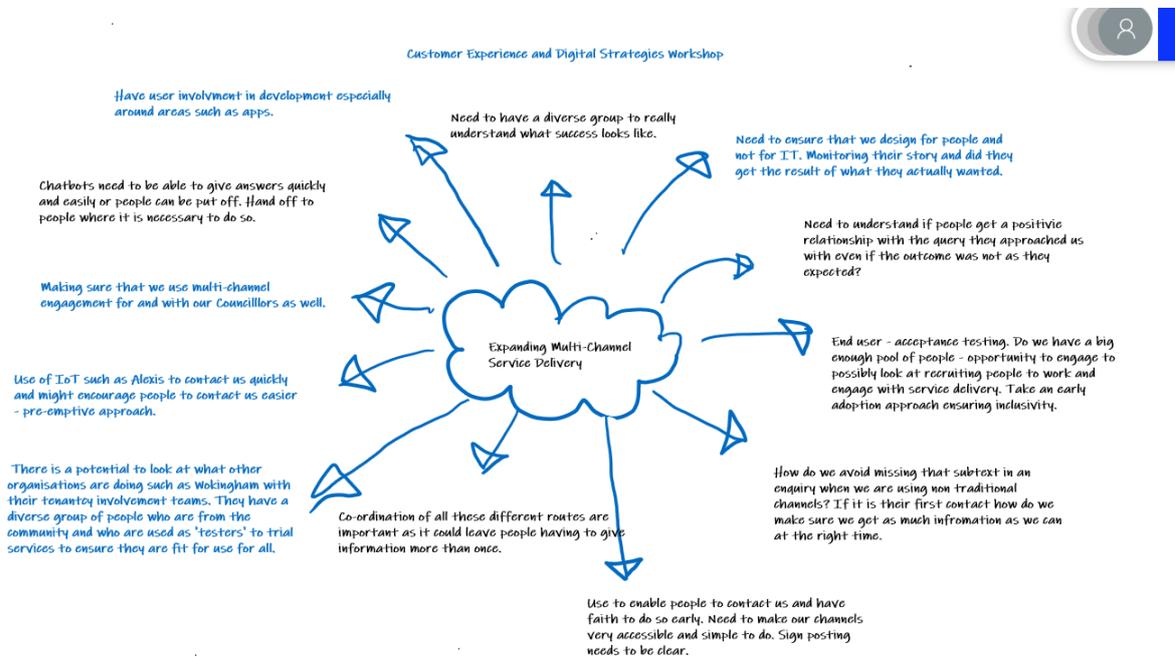
- Reviewing the strategic programme delivered as part of the ICT Strategy 2017 to 2020 as a baseline for developing ideas.
- Alignment with the council's priorities as set out in the Corporate Plan 2019 and updated by the objectives of the Renewal strategy.
- Consultation with stakeholder groups to identify the key **strategic objectives** and specific **strategic themes** for 2021 - 2024.
- Each key strategic theme is then used to classify (or group) a programme of projects
- Each project must support the strategic objectives identified in the stakeholder workshops
- The strategic themes and supporting change programmes (e.g. restructuring the ICT and Digital Services department, moving the ICT Data Centre to the Cloud, boosting digital skills and responding to the Cyber threat) are reflected in an initial programme, shown at Appendix C. Inevitably further projects will emerge throughout the lifetime of the strategy.
- Costs and benefits of all projects proposed and emerging projects through the lifetime of the strategy will be articulated and assessed before any project begins.

Beginning in the autumn of 2019 a small team comprising the Assistant Director Customer Experience, Digital and ICT and two ICT Business Partners facilitated several workshops with key stakeholders to develop the Digital and ICT strategy including:

- Corporate Management Team
- Elected members, through the Executive and Overview and Scrutiny meetings
- Senior Leadership Group
- Directorate Management Teams
- The ICT and Digital Teams
- ICT Steering Group

- Ways of Working Group

Due to the pandemic, many of these workshops were delivered online. This was a concrete example of the difference digital makes to the success of the organisation. An activity that would have traditionally been held in a meeting room in Time Square moved easily online, ensuring wide consultation with, and participation of, key stakeholders.



Example of on-line whiteboard from workshops

We used these workshops to elicit the strategic **Objectives** and **Themes** around which to develop the Digital and ICT Strategy for 2021 to 2024.

9. Strategic Objectives

The following strategic objectives for the ICT and Digital Strategy were also derived from the stakeholder workshops:

1. To deliver the ambitions of the new Customer Experience Strategy by:
 - embracing innovation to deliver improvements for customers
 - expanding multi-channel service delivery
2. To develop a well-trained, Digital workforce
3. To enable a Digital Community Partnership to support services
4. To maintain a cost-effective, resilient and secure Digital and ICT infrastructure
5. To support climate change and sustainability
6. To protect information and data with a robust Information Governance framework
7. To use data and business intelligence to support decision-making and service design

These strategic objectives set out at a high level, some key performance indicators against which the overall success of the ICT strategy can be measured. For example, moving to a Cloud based operation would enable strategic objectives (5) to maintain a cost effective, resilient and secure Digital and ICT infrastructure, by moving to a pay as you use model, and (6) support climate change and sustainability by reducing the consumption of heating, lighting and other utilities at Time Square.

Alignment with the strategic objectives provides a clear focus when determining the priorities Digital and ICT Strategy - Work Programme of Projects.

10. Strategic Themes 2021 - 2024

Eleven Strategic Themes were identified through the stakeholder workshops:



Robust and reliable ICT; resilience and security

As our reliance on Digital and ICT services increases, the ICT infrastructure (e.g. servers, networks and data storage) must be maintained to be fully available, robust and reliable. Linked to the Cloud hosting programme of projects, this strategic theme will cover the required networking infrastructure and security framework to facilitate more remote and flexible working and at the same time, mitigate the increasing threat posed by cyber criminals.

With the role of councils being instrumental to the COVID-19 response, and digital communications and services being so critical to their efforts, cyber threats remain very real. Remote working, new partnerships and an increased reliance on digital services means that the risk associated with a cyber incident is greater than ever.

The Digital and ICT Strategy must ensure that appropriate systems and employee awareness measures are put in place to protect the council and its employees, customers and partners, to work securely with these new working opportunities. Moving from an On-Premise data centre to a Cloud based model will ensure a good degree of resilience as a baseline, e.g., maintaining uninterruptable power suppliers or local storage and backup solutions will be provided under the service level agreement with Microsoft Azure, which has highly contingent technical resources.

The Digital and ICT strategy must ensure that the fundamental infrastructure to engage with Cloud Hosting such as internet connectivity and capacity is sufficiently capable to support the new working arrangements. The capabilities of hosting providers (especially under a SaaS model) must be properly evaluated and the service levels must be actively monitored.

Business as Usual (BAU) need not be any more difficult to achieve using a Cloud based model and indeed it may be somewhat easier, but the need to maintain BAU becomes even more critical as our reliance on Digital and ICT continues to grow.



Moving into the next phase of cloud-based hosting, including Software as a Service

The Council is scheduled to complete the implementation of the O365 suite of applications including the SharePoint EDRMS by spring 2021. These applications are hosted in the Cloud at secure facilities making up the Microsoft Azure service. The vast majority of other software applications in use at BFC are still located (hosted) on servers at Time Square, in an operating environment known as “on-premise” or “on-prem”.

Working from servers located securely in the Cloud is now a mature operating model, across all industry sectors.

Several servers in use at BFC are approaching the end of life and will not be supportable

from autumn 2021. These servers must be replaced, or the applications hosted elsewhere. Cloud hosting is the preferred option. The migration of servers and applications to the Cloud was signalled in the ICT and Digital Strategy 2017 to 2020. The Office 365 Programme of projects (including the SharePoint EDRMS and the new intranet) has been the first phase of this overall migration plan.

Moving to a Cloud based hosting model is a fundamental building block for secure and resilient location independent working. The “mainstream” availability of cloud-based services for infrastructure such as servers, or software hosting, provides a choice of operating environments for organisations with a high dependency upon ICT.

Software suppliers are in the process of upgrading their applications to Cloud-based versions only. They will eventually offer less advantages to customers maintaining software applications on premise. The new service model is known as Software as a Service (SaaS)

Having successfully implemented Office 365, BFC could now begin to exploit the growing range of services and facilities enabled by an expanding range of innovative technology, known collectively as the Internet of Things (IOT), and build on an operating model even more capable of supporting secure mobile working, e.g. employees using their own devices to access BFC systems. This is termed “Bring Your Own Device” (BYOD).

Hosting software and services in the Cloud would reduce the consumption of electricity, cooling and other environmental resources of physical servers, currently on-premise but which are selected to be hosted in the Cloud. However, the energy and other resources used in the Azure data centre(s) would be shared more efficiently over many other customers and that would represent a net environmental benefit. Microsoft have made a commitment to be “carbon negative” by 2030, and this includes the running of their Azure premises.

The footprint required by Digital and ICT Services Time Square would be reduced by a significant shift to Cloud hosting and could assist in any property optimisation scenarios being considered for the Ways of Working (WOW) Sub-Group.



Information Assets and Data Management

This strategic theme is about making the most of the data that we collect and hold. The Council’s data is one of its most important assets.

We need to know exactly what information we hold and the value that we gain from it, identifying core central data sets for the council. We must improve and maintain the quality of our information, ensuring we keep it appropriately, lawfully and securely, and we need to continue to archive and dispose of it in line with appropriate retention policies. This will underpin an improved capability to develop business intelligence and produce reports to aid evidence-based decision making and service shaping or re-design.



Location independent, home and mobile working

Research carried out by the public sector IT association, SOCITM during May and June 2020, has identified that the proportion of local authority staff working from home during the coronavirus pandemic reached 82% compared with 5% previously.

One contributor to the report commented *“We have catapulted staff into the digital age,”* *What is happening is probably the most seismic change in modernising the public sector any of us have experienced, and after months staff will not want to go back to how they worked before. When we emerge from this, from an IT, modernisation and transformation perspective, things will be better.”*

This is a very likely scenario and so the Digital and ICT Strategy must be directed at enabling the expansion of new work styles and service delivery opportunities (e.g. workplace accommodation and the utilisation of buildings for increased inter-agency working) further boosted by the Renewal Strategy.

In addition to the growth in location independent, home and mobile working, there are several options to be considered about how BFC and its community-based partners could utilise the accommodation made free by the upsurge in homeworking. BFC is already making modifications to business premises to enable the recommended standards for hygiene, sanitisation and social distancing.

Examples of the considerations around a full re-opening of council buildings include:

- **Physical access controls** such as pin pads or biometrics should be assessed especially where direct contact is concerned.
- Unlike the work environment prior to COVID-19, BFC may **need to collate data to enable contact tracing** by authorities should this be required. This may involve recording of identities, movements, times and durations. Similarly, it will be important to consider local privacy legislation and to prepare an appropriate policy, declaring how this information will be managed.
- In returning to the office, or continuing remote working, BFC must ensure that a facility is provided for staff to either **return or securely destroy any physical hard copy media or electronic media storage devices** that may have been in use during the work from home period.
- **To ensure social distancing rules**, The WoW sub-group has been re-thinking desk positioning to ensure that employees' wellbeing is protected.
- Public health guidance and BFC will not want people to present for work if they are symptomatic of COVID-19. We may see employers choosing to **take and record the temperature of employees before entering the work premises**.



Further Enable Collaborative Working Within BFC and With Community Partners

The timely implementation of O365 enabled collaborative and agile working both inside and outside of the organisation, just in time to help cope with the Coronavirus crisis. The work of community partners and voluntary services organisations has already been recognised in general terms and it is a key pillar of the Renewal Strategy.

We must now build on this cooperative model with enabling technology, processes, culture change and supporting policies (e.g. data sharing) to work with our community partners on shared services or projects and in shared accommodation.

The Ways of Working Sub-Group is tasked with enabling premises, technologies and culture to be adapted to assist in this objective. Work will need to be done to identify the opportunities to add capacity, by working more collaboratively with health partners and the Citizens Advice Bureau, for example. This could mean providing expertise or technical support, developing data sharing agreements, enabling access to BFC systems and networks (in strict compliance with GDPR) and assistance in developing web sites.



Increasing Digital Skills

Responding to the greater take up of Digital Services by our customers and the heightened reliance on using Digital to connect us to our customers and one another, it is essential to develop and implement a programme to improve digital skills, in the workforce, in our democratic representatives and in our communities. Developing demonstrable digital leadership at the senior management level will be crucial in promoting a Digital culture, to maximise return on investment and encourage agility in how BFC works and delivers services. Elected Members will increasingly be expected to undertake their work in the digital world, with online meetings and member surgeries becoming the norm. And to ensure we don't exclude anyone in our society from our democratic processes or our services, we will need a Digital Inclusion programme to support the development of skills in our community.



Digital Customer Engagement (internal and external)

This strategic theme builds on a greater acceptance of using digital solutions to provide services, as evidenced in the period following the national "lock down" (from 23rd March 2020) where there began a rapid take up of digital tools to maintain life as normal for people and business as usual for commerce.

The related programme of projects linked to the Customer Engagement theme would include;

- A fit for purpose customer relationship management system (CRM)
- A fit for purpose telephone call handling system to ensure that customers can complete enquiries and transactions quickly and conveniently, and for service

providers, where time is not wasted on low value transactions and call back to customers.

- A Community based platform for citizens and customers to support the new community partnerships emerging from the response to the Pandemic.
- A drive to develop more customer self-service through accessible web portals, telephony, and other channels, reducing the requirement to visit council buildings.



Fully featured, Cloud based telephone system to enable more customer self-service and collaborative working

This theme covers options to consolidate current telephone systems and call centre operations in use, with a single Cloud based system for telephony, replacing the current on-prem PBX with a complete VOIP solution. The key objectives of this strategic theme are to:

- Simplify, through consolidation, the current systems in use.
- To leverage where possible the investment made in 0365 (Teams) as a video conferencing and telephony platform.
- To clarify and improve support arrangements with clearly identified fault escalation and resolution responsibilities and targets.
- To maintain a transparency over costs.



Internet of Things

One of the biggest opportunities for local authorities is presented by the emergence of the Internet of Things. This theme is about using the connectivity supporting the Internet of Things (IoT) to leverage applications to automate everyday tasks e.g. in health and social care environments.

IOT-connected devices and sensor and control elements that are connected to their operational software platforms can give councils the power to remotely control, monitor the condition of their assets, issue work orders, track workflow, and optimise resource usage.

There is a raft of possible applications for IoT across BFC's operations. Like BFC, many local authorities began using IoT a few years ago by placing sensors on streetlights. Utilising data or communication networks, they focus on getting these assets to self-report to new central management systems (CMSs) installed at their headquarters.

It's an approach that has the potential to turn asset maintenance and management into a more proactive process for councils. An alert is sent over the network to the CMS when a bulb blows, providing the council with an immediate update on the situation rather than having to wait for a monthly inspection or rely on a member of the public to report the

problem. The result is that the council can be more energy-efficient and provide a better service.

One of the biggest potential benefits of IoT is the opportunity to achieve reduced cost of service delivery. For example, sensors strategically placed in litter or commercial waste bins could allow BFC to develop more efficient routing and collections and even review, based on fill levels, whether bins are really required in certain locations. Operational efficiencies could be achieved by using sensors on bin lorries to monitor potholes and road conditions while waste collection teams go about their daily operations rather than a separate team having to be sent out to investigate, or relying on members of the public to report issues.

Sensor-based technology can also enable councils to make safety improvements. They could, for example, be used to measure the lean of a dangerous tree and alert the authorities to any worsening of it. They could be deployed to measure water or silt levels, and give early warning about potential flooding, enabling the council to take proactive action to resolve the problem rather than waiting until an incident occurs and infrastructure assets and the public, are at risk.

Added to this, there are future opportunities to use IoT-connected devices to measure air quality especially with a growing number of low emissions zones now being introduced across the UK.

Sensors can also help improve decision-making. Collecting all this data across IoT networks puts councils in a good position to make more informed decisions about their infrastructure and how to manage it in an efficient and cost-effective way.



Low-code development and automation

Low code is a visual approach to application development that enables professional and non-professional developers to collaborate and rapidly build and deploy applications. According to Gartner, “By 2024, low-code application development will be responsible for more than 65% of application development activity.”

Developing low code applications (i.e. software that can rapidly create new forms, services, apps and systems without coding) could allow BFC to implement systems quickly and at less cost than third party software applications. To use current examples of where low code has been used to good effect by other local authorities, to enable new working arrangements to be introduced, including:

- Integrated and ongoing tracking of employee health and wellbeing
- Dynamic office opening checklists and task management
- Employee, Visitor and event attendee management
- Automating business operations to optimise digital and remote working
- Resource management to support emergency responses for public sector organisations and partners.
- Digitising for the future by automating the work that requires face to face contacts, or mandates office working and causes bottlenecks if team members are not present.

Using Low Code development is one way to minimise the cost of failing third party applications and expensive “traditional” in-house software applications development.



Reviewing Digital and ICT Services Systems, Support and Processes to ensure, economy, efficiency and effectiveness

There is no doubt that Digital and ICT Services is a very busy service area. Even before the pandemic, resources were stretched, for a service supporting all employees, services and by implication, partners and external customers.

Being in a continual busy state leaves little time to reflect on the quality of the services delivered. In an ideal world, the efficiency of current processes and service delivery models would be kept under constant review in order to achieve continuous improvement.

Pressure on our customers' resources can also result in a less than satisfactory experience with their information systems. For example, a very high proportion of calls to the service desk concern problems being experienced by just one software application. Internal and external customers of Digital and ICT Services should be assured that the software applications in use are fit for purpose and well supported.

Other ICT support systems must also be efficient and effective if the user experience of Digital and ICT is to be positive **and** productive, for example;

- the operation ICT Service Desk must co-ordinate resolutions to reported problems and minimise disruption for customers
- the change control process must ensure that all potential changes to the ICT estate are scrutinised to prevent the introduction of problems
- ICT third party supplier management should be regular and challenging to ensure that customers are being well supported in the use of their applications
- ICT security processes need to be robust but at the same time they must not stifle innovation.

The Digital and ICT Strategy 2021 to 2024 brings significant changes to how Digital and ICT services will be provided in the future. Current ICT processes are therefore in need of updating to reflect new ways of working, based on new commercial and operational models, such as Cloud based hosting. This strategic theme is concerned with a thorough review of key Digital and ICT Services Systems, Support and Processes to ensure economy, efficiency and effectiveness, whilst providing the best possible service to customers.

These eleven strategic themes can be viewed as individual **programmes** of work comprising one or more projects. All eleven themes (programmes) make up the Digital and ICT strategic work programme from January 2021 to December 2024. This programme will continue to develop over the life of the strategy, as work progresses, and new opportunities emerge

Converting the strategic themes into programmes of work, enables interdependencies and resource needs to be identified, and projects to be grouped and scheduled for implementation.

Maintaining a high level of awareness of the Digital and ICT Strategy is essential for new ways of working and corresponding changes to policies and processes to be adopted.

Ensuring that the strategic themes are known and understood by employees, customers and partners will require simple messaging and signage throughout.

One output that can be taken forward in advance of a wider communications programme is to describe the Digital and ICT Strategy on a single page. An example of what that might look like is set out in the Exec Summary (Page 5-6).

11. Measuring progress against the objectives

The Digital and ICT teams have a number of key performance indicators that reflect the strategic themes. These include:



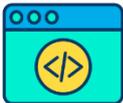
Network performance – internet capacity
Number of major systems with downtime
Percentage of cyber incidents with no major impact
Number of ICT service desk calls



Percentage of ICT estate delivered from the cloud



Percentage of projects completed on time and on budget
Percentage of projects rated good or excellent
Staff satisfaction with ICT

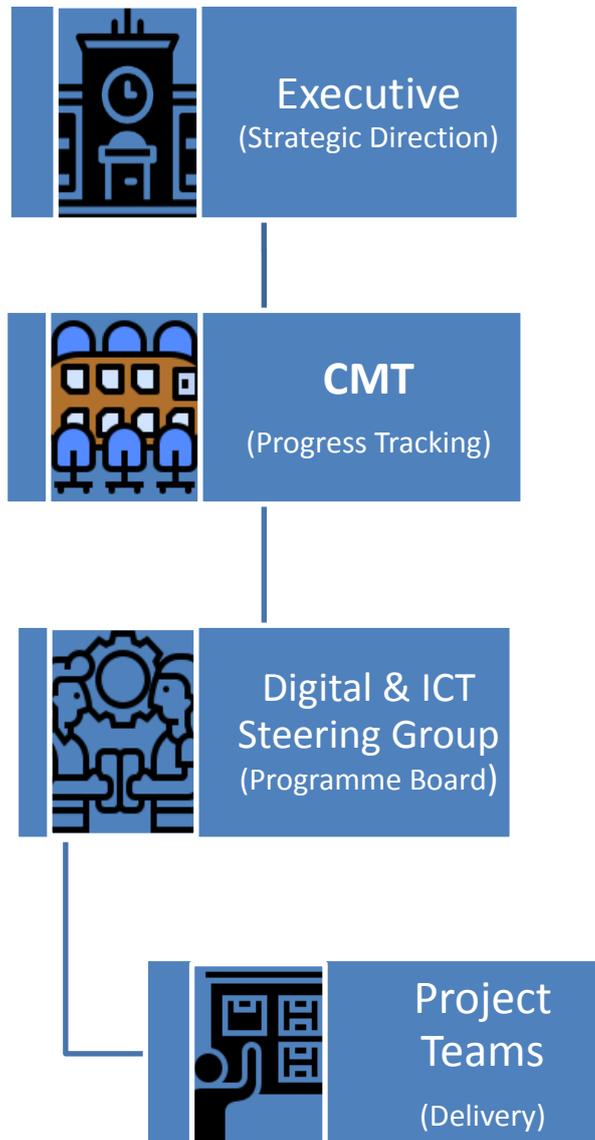


Number of hours of staff time saved by utilising RPA
Number of transactions delivered via self-service

Further indicators will be developed during the first year of the strategy, to reflect the emerging programme of work. These are likely to include indicators around data maturity, channel shift, application rationalisation and optimisation of our Azure estate.

Governance structure for the implementation of agreed programmes

Oversight of the delivery of the strategy will sit with the ICT Steering Group, reporting regularly to CMT. Individual projects will have their own Project Team structure, with representation from service areas in the council impacted by the project. Where a project has significant impact across the whole organisation, such as the Cloud / SaaS project, the Digital & ICT Steering Group will act as the Board.



12. The work programme

Keeping up to date with Digital and ICT is vital for most modern organisations, but it is not an end in itself. The Digital and ICT strategy sets out how the ICT infrastructure and Digital opportunities will be developed to support the Council's priorities from January 2021 to December 2024. For the Digital and ICT Strategy to deliver the maximum benefits then it must be properly aligned with the Council's Plan and the Renewal Strategy following the Coronavirus pandemic.

The programme of work for the first year of the strategy is reasonably well defined. We will continue to improve our infrastructure by renewing our network; the project to move our estate to the cloud should conclude in year one, and maximising our return on investment in the Microsoft 365 suite of applications by developing skills in the Power Apps and rolling these out to the organisation. Further projects will include the move to cloud-based telephony using Microsoft Teams and a cloud hosted contact centre, as well as the development of applications using low-code and automation platforms.

Further projects will emerge during year one, to be approved by the Executive and delivered in subsequent years. A timeline for the work programme is included at Appendix C.

13. Improving the customer experience and managing change

Improving processes and customer experience through service design

It is important to acknowledge that “shifting” a process online is not a matter of simply doing the same thing but through a browser: it also requires changes to policies, processes and practices. It should be noted that technology is only one component of technology enabled change which can only deliver expected organisational benefits and savings in conjunction with:

- Business processes that are efficient and fit for purpose, and
- The adoption of new ways of working by the end user and not simply automating poor processes.

We should always bear in mind the following pitfall with mis-directed ICT investment, expressed in a formula as: “**OP + NT = EOP**”

Where OP = Old Processes, NT = New Technology and EOP = Expensive Old Processes.

The organisation must recognise the need for business transformation and be supportive of the Digital and ICT, Customer Services and Renewal strategies.

It has been said that most of our services were not designed for the digital age. But the reality is that most of them simply were not designed. They have developed, grown, altered and expanded over the years, as new requirements emerge, or resourcing constraints come into play. Moving to a more digital model of delivery gives us the opportunity to design these services anew. Service redesign will be at the heart of our digital development work, and will be delivered using the Government Digital Service design principles:

1. Start with user needs

Service design starts with identifying user needs. If you don't know what the user needs are, you won't build the right thing. Do research, analyse data, talk to users. Don't make assumptions. Have empathy for users and remember that what they ask for isn't always what they need.

2. Do less

Government should only do what only government can do. If we've found a way of doing something that works, we should make it reusable and shareable instead of reinventing the wheel every time. This means building platforms and registers others can build upon, providing resources (like APIs) that others can use, and linking to the work of others. We should concentrate on the irreducible core.

3. Design with data

In most cases, we can learn from real world behaviour by looking at how existing services are used. Let data drive decision-making, not hunches or guesswork. Keep doing that after taking your service live, prototyping and testing with users then iterating in response. Analytics should be built-in, always on and easy to read. They're an essential tool.

4. Do the hard work to make it simple

Making something look simple is easy. Making something simple to use is much harder - especially when the underlying systems are complex - but that's what we should be doing.

Don't take "It's always been that way" for an answer. It's usually more and harder work to make things simple, but it's the right thing to do.

5. Iterate. Then iterate again

The best way to build good services is to start small and iterate wildly. Release minimum viable products early, test them with actual users, move from alpha to beta to live adding features, deleting things that don't work and making refinements based on feedback. Iteration reduces risk. It makes big failures unlikely and turns small failures into lessons. If a prototype isn't working, don't be afraid to scrap it and start again.

6. This is for everyone

Accessible design is good design. Everything we build should be as inclusive, legible and readable as possible. If we have to sacrifice elegance - so be it. We're building for needs, not audiences. We're designing for the whole country, not just the ones who are used to using the web. The people who most need our services are often the people who find them hardest to use. Let's think about those people from the start.

7. Understand context

We're not designing for a screen; we're designing for people. We need to think hard about the context in which they're using our services. Are they in a library? Are they on a phone? Are they only really familiar with Facebook? Have they never used the web before?

8. Build digital services, not websites

A service is something that helps people to do something. Our job is to uncover user needs and build the service that meets those needs. Of course, much of that will be pages on the web, but we're not here to build websites. The digital world has to connect to the real world, so we have to think about all aspects of a service, and make sure they add up to something that meets user needs.

9. Be consistent, not uniform

We should use the same language and the same design patterns wherever possible. This helps people get familiar with our services, but when this isn't possible, we should make sure our approach is consistent.

This isn't a straitjacket or a rule book. Every circumstance is different. When we find patterns that work, we should share them, and talk about why we use them. But that shouldn't stop us from improving or changing them in the future when we find better ways of doing things or the needs of users change.

10. Make things open: it makes things better

We should share what we're doing whenever we can. With colleagues, with users, with the world. Share code, share designs, share ideas, share intentions, share failures. The more eyes there are on a service the better it gets - howlers are spotted, better alternatives are pointed out, the bar is raised.

Much of what we're doing is only possible because of open source code and the generosity of the web design community. We should pay that back.

Change management approach

As much as we can, we want to involve users in designing, testing, and implementing the changes we introduce. By developing newly designed services in the open, and testing with real users, we can ensure that they are engaged throughout the process, and this helps to ensure effective adoption of new services.

For changes to internal services we will continue use a “model office” approach as we did in the delivery of our previous strategy. This way of working delivered excellent results with the initial roll out of the Microsoft 365 applications. In addition, we will continue to deliver our monthly “Show and Tell” sessions to the whole organisation and use the ICT Newsletter to keep everyone up to date.

14. Conclusion

Digital transformation is a public sector imperative. Delivering this strategy will enable Bracknell Forest Council to:

- Understand our residents better and achieve better outcomes for them
- Provide services more effectively and efficiently
- Find new solutions to policy and demand challenges
- Engage more with our partners to develop new, customer-centric, delivery models
- Take a commercial approach to our services by driving down costs and maximising revenue-generating opportunities

Delivery of the strategy will help to ensure that Bracknell Forest remains the borough of opportunity.

About Bracknell Forest

Bracknell Forest lies 28 miles west of London, at the heart of the Thames Valley and within the county of Berkshire.

Our economy is of above average size and productivity, compared to the county and nationally. Good access links, a well-educated labour force and the quality of the environment are key attractors to the companies that have and continue to locate here, including a number of multi-national organisations.

The borough has experienced pressures on housing, infrastructure services and environmental assets including sites designated as being important for nature conservation at an international, national and local level.

A thriving population

The borough's population is 121,676 (Mid-2018 Estimates, based on Census 2011). The demand for an increased number of households still causes pressure for more housing. The population is relatively young (median age 38.7 years). 14.5% of the population is aged 65 or over, compared to 17.7% nationally, although this is expected to grow.

Health

The health of people in Bracknell Forest is generally better than the England average. Life expectancy is increasing and is currently 81.3 years for men and 85.1 years for women. These are higher than the England averages which are 79.5 years and 83.1 years respectively. Smoking related deaths (272 per 100,000 population) and deaths from heart disease (31.7 per 100,000) and strokes (59.29 per 100,000) are below national levels.

Schools

Bracknell Forest has 36 primary schools, 7 secondary schools (including 8 academies), 1 special school and 1 Pupil Referral Unit. 83% of schools are rated good or better.

Under new reporting measures from the Department for Education (DfE), all secondary schools in England have their average examination results reported using numerical rather than alphabetical grades. For 2019, a standard pass has been set at a Grade 4, and a good pass at Grade 5.

Bracknell Forest young people continue to perform in line with the national picture. Provisional results show that, 76% achieved 4+ in English Language or Literature, 73% achieved 4+ in mathematics, 67% achieved combined English and mathematics 4+, the average attainment 8 score across the borough was 47.2

A desirable place

Bracknell Forest covers 109 sq km of central Berkshire and includes the town of Bracknell, together with Sandhurst town and the villages of Crowthorne and Binfield, along with Warfield and Winkfield. Close to London, the area has easy access to the motorway network (M3, M4, M40 and M25), Heathrow, and direct train links into London.

The north and east of the borough form part of the Metropolitan Green Belt, whilst land south of Bracknell and east of Crowthorne is internationally important for nature conservation. The

borough is proud and protective of its green character, with a third of our area comprising woodland. The borough also has one of the highest ratios of publicly accessible open space to its population, and much of this open space is maintained at a high standard.

Housing

The average house price has remained well above the national average for many years. As of May 2020, the average house price in Bracknell Forest was £336,871 compared with a South East average of £319,108 and a national average of £245,385.

Finding acceptable locations for new housing and providing appropriate infrastructure continue to be major challenges for partners and residents.

The council's Core Strategy Development Plan Document requires approximately 11,000 new dwellings between 2006 and 2026 to be built. The number of dwellings in the borough stands at 53,335.

Cohesive communities

The 2011 Census showed that 84.9% of the population was 'White British' and 15.1% of the population was BME and 'white other'.

The proportion of school pupils from Minority Ethnic Groups has increased steadily over the past few years rising from 16.1% in 2011 to 21.9% in 2018. 12% of pupils in Bracknell Forest schools have English as an Additional Language (EAL).

The 2011 Census data showed the percentages of the population who identify with the major religious groups are as follows:

- Christian: 60.5%
- No religion: 31.9%
- Hindu: 1.61%
- Muslim: 1.13%
- Buddhist: 0.73%
- other religion: 0.43%
- Sikh: 0.40%
- Jewish: 0.16%

Despite the steady change in the composition of the population, the area is generally a cohesive community where people get on well together.

Deprivation

Bracknell Forest is one of the least deprived areas of the country (ranked 284 out of 317 local authorities in England on the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019).

Bracknell Forest is within the economically buoyant Thames Valley and already a premier business location. But the aspiration is to make the local economy even more successful throughout the borough.

Town centre

The £240m Lexicon opened on 7 September 2017. The Lexicon has created a new social and cultural heart for the area - bringing a high-quality mix of shops, restaurants and entertainment within vibrant public spaces to the Town Centre.

There are a number of stores in The Lexicon including a three-storey Fenwick department store, M&S and Primark. Furthermore, there are restaurants, bars and a 12-screen Cineworld cinema. The scheme has brought life back into the Town Centre both day and night.

The Lexicon has been ranked as the 33rd best shopping destination in the UK, according to authoritative industry commentator Trevor Wood Associates. This compares with 255th position the previous year.

The regeneration of Bracknell Town Centre is continuing with the development of The Deck, based around the former Bentalls store in the High Street and work to develop Princess Square. The council is also reviewing plans for the civic quarter, Market Square and the southern gateway together with other sites both within and on the edge of the Town Centre.

Benefits

The number of people claiming out-of-work benefits has been increasing since January 2018 alongside the national trend. As of March 2020 the percentage of the population aged 16+ stands at 1.6%. This represents 1,240 people. The figure remains lower than both the South East and national averages (2.2% and 3.1% respectively).

Crime

Crime is low in the borough and decreasing. In 2019/20 overall crime decreased by 1.8% compared to 2018/19. Decreasing from 6,406 recorded crimes in the borough to 6,289 recorded crimes.

The digital legacy of Coronavirus

Pre-Coronavirus	Coronavirus Response	Potential Legacy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online collaboration / video conferencing tools used extensively by ICT/Digital teams but little adoption elsewhere, particularly by elected members • Limited digital element to democratic functions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greatly increased comfort level with using online, collaborative (digital) tools by all staff and elected members. • Committee meetings being held online for the first time • Recognition that moving processes online involves changes to processes as well as tools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition of hurdles to action due to data collaboration barriers (e.g. SILOs, lack of data standards) • New Information Governance agreements being set up on record time. • Data rapidly demanded by resilience groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councils' traditional model for addressing local needs is to deliver a top down service • Little widespread innovation on fundamental service model. • Variable quality of relationships between local authorities and local VCS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid connection with local voluntary sector • Mass citizen participation in community responses • Extensive development and use of "match making" platforms • Rapid adaptation of existing and development of new services to meet new needs • Different demographics experience inadequacies in some service models 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serious consideration of new operating models based on recognition that councils can play roles other than service deliverer (e.g. match maker or convenor) • More strategic partnerships with local VSC and private sector organisations based on detailed understanding of each other's strengths.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small number of councils have fully developed digital capabilities as many have more traditional ICT departments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three different approaches to use of technology became evident: Buy it, Lo Code it, Build it. • Recognition of need for Digital not just ICT capabilities • Importance of collaboration and working in the open made apparent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many more councils invest in genuine digital capabilities • Communication teams engaged in sharing service design work as it happens • Strategic collaboration goes mainstream
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical, data, legal, organisational and cultural barriers to data collaboration known about but insufficiently addressed • Little common data infrastructure • Information Sharing Agreements take months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition of hurdles to action due to data collaboration barriers (e.g. SILOs, lack of data standards) • New Information Governance agreements being set up on record time. • Data rapidly demanded by resilience groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barriers to data collaboration addressed • Information governance approaches standardised • Wider number of datasets become permanent data infrastructure • Data recognised as a core pillar of resilience response

APPENDIX C

The Digital and ICT Work Programme January 2021 – December 2024

Theme / Programme Project	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	Benefit: Savings	Benefit: Security	Benefit: Efficiency	Benefit: Supports WoW
Robust and Reliable ICT									
Cloud Backup & Disaster Recovery							Y		Y
Migrate from Citrix to MS							Y	Y	Y
Enable MS AIP							Y		
Network optimisation									
Cloud Hosting and Support and Software as a Service									
Cloud Hosting in Azure						Y	Y	Y	Y
Applications to SaaS Model						Y	Y	Y	Y
Infrastructure as a Service						Y	Y	Y	Y
Information Assets and Data Management									
Data Strategy								Y	
Data Sharing & Security Protocols							Y	Y	
Business Intelligence Reporting								Y	
Location independent/ home and Mobile Working									
Expand Home Working						Y		Y	Y
Enable Information Partnerships								Y	Y
Expand BYOD						Y		Y	Y
Digital Customer Engagement									
CRM System review								Y	
Extend Self						Y		Y	Y

Theme / Programme Project	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	Benefit: Savings	Benefit: Security	Benefit: Efficiency	Benefit: Supports WoW
Service Portals									
Cloud Based Telephony									
New Telephone System							Y	Y	
Set Up Customer Call Handling								Y	Y
Collaborative Working									
ICT Enabling Community Hubs									Y
Community Web Platform								Y	Y
Resource Booking / Sharing System						Y			Y
Increasing Digital Skills									
Roll-out all other 0365 Application								Y	Y
Workforce Cyber Awareness							Y		
Training Needs Analysis							Y	Y	
Culture Change Project								Y	Y
Internet of Things									
Explore opportunities									
Deliver IoT Projects						Y		Y	Y
Low Code & Automation									
Implement low code platform						Y	Y	Y	Y
Develop low code applications						Y	Y	Y	Y
Review low code platform									
Review of Applications and Support									
Legacy Software Applications						Y		Y	Y
Applications						Y		Y	Y

Theme / Programme Project	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	Benefit: Savings	Benefit: Security	Benefit: Efficiency	Benefit: Supports WoW
Support									
Desktop Support						Y		Y	Y



Business Systems Cloud Migration Roadmap

	System Name	Supplier	Q3 20/21	Q4 20/21	Q1 21/22	Q2 21/22	Q3 21/22
1	Abritas	Abritas			Azure	Azure	
2	ACR Cashiers	Capita			SaaS		
3	AIM Income Management	Capita			SaaS		
4	APTS and Fleetman	Cleric				Azure	
5	Agresso	Unit 4		SaaS			
6	Agresso Forensic AP CSI	Fiscal Tech		SaaS			
7	BACAS	Clear Skies			Azure		
8	Bibliotheca	BiblioTheca			SaaS		
9	Bracknell Alert	AMTEvolve	Azure				
10	C Series (BACS)	Bottomline	Azure				
11	Capita Hosted Payments	Capita		SaaS			
12	Childview	CACI	Azure			Azure	
13	CM2000?	CM2000	Azure				
14	CM2000 Interface	CM2000	Azure				
15	Cognos (in Payroll)	Cognos					
16	Confirm	Precisely				SaaS	
17	Connected Care	Care Centric			Azure		
18	ContrOCC	Liquid Logic			Azure		
19	Deepfreeze	Faronics	NIS				
20	DigiLock	IQ Security		Azure			
21	EDS MIS Database	DCSL SW		SaaS			
22	Estart	Capita CS					
23	Express	Xpress SW			SaaS		
24	Figtree	NTTData		Azure			
25	Firmstep	Granicus			SaaS	SaaS	
26	Fostercare Softbox	SoftBox Ltd				Azure	
27	Softbox	SoftBox Ltd				SaaS	
28	ICAM	InsightMedia		SaaS			
29	IDOX EDRMS ECC	IDOX			SaaS	SaaS	
30	IDOX EDRMS HR	IDOX					
31	IDOX Ferret	IDOX			SaaS	SaaS	
32	Planning Portal	Planning P.			SaaS	SaaS	
33	IDOX Public Access	IDOX			SaaS	SaaS	
34	IDOX TLC	IDOX			SaaS	SaaS	
35	IDOX Uniform	IDOX			SaaS	SaaS	
36	IDOX Build Inspect	IDOX			SaaS	SaaS	
37	IKEN	IKEN		S/Point			
38	Interface Mgt Server?	BFC			Azure		
39	CCTV System	IVMS				SaaS	
40	Kalamazoo	Hague CSL			SaaS		
41	LAS	Liquid Logic			Azure		
42	LAS Business Objects	Eden House			Azure		

43	LAS Smart Office	Open Text			Azure		
44	Mayflower (Street L)	LMS	SaaS				
45	Midland HR Bus Obj	Midland HR			SaaS		
46	iTrent	Midland HR			SaaS		
47	Modern.Gov	Modern.Gov				SaaS	
48	Mosaic ICS	Servelec			Azure		
49	Mosaic ICS Bus Objects	Eden House			Azure		
50	Mosaic Smart Office	Open Text			S/Point		
51	C Tax and Benefits	Northgate			SaaS		
52	Business Objects	Northgate			SaaS		
53	<i>ICLipse</i>	<i>Northgate</i>	S/Point				
54	XL Print	Northgate				SaaS	
55	<i>(Northgate) vs IEG4</i>	<i>TBA</i>				SaaS	
56	ONE	Capita			SaaS		
57	ONE EMS Web Box	Capita			SaaS		
58	ONE Hosts V3 and V4	Capita			SaaS		
59	PARIS 10	Hitech		SaaS			
60	Payroll PS Enterprise	Northgate/A.		Azure			
61	People Counters	Kwik Count			SaaS		
62	Public Health (SQL) DB	Pub Hlth DB		Azure			
63	RegDiary (Registrars)	Stopford					
64	SIMS incl. FMS	Capita		SaaS			
65	Smart Office	Open Text				S/Point	
66	Smart Office	Open Text				S/Point	
67	Talis/Alto Assure	Capita Talis		Azure			
68	Tell Us Once				Azure		

Notes / Comments for Future Discussion on Agreeing the Migration Schedule.

(5) **Agresso** and (46) iTrent being considered for possible new ERP implementation that would be SaaS - DV/SMac/TB

(16) **Confirm** extended for 12 months (on prem) with possibilities for extended functionality and move to SaaS (e.g. to replace BACAS) under review by DV.

(18) **ContrOCC** synched for now with LAS

(21) and (25) adjusted for probable **Netcall Low Code** Development (SaaS)

(29) to (36) **IDOX Uniform Applications** are being proposed for review with view to replace – DV producing options report but replacement likely to be SaaS.

Not Currently On Premise

13	CM2000?	CM2000	Azure				
14	CM2000 Interface?	CM2000	Azure				

Glossary of Terms

Term	Description
Business continuity	A management process which identifies potential impacts that threaten an organisation and provides a framework for building resilience and the capability for an effective response which safeguards the interest of the organisation.
BYOD	Bring your own device – enabling employees and elected members to access council systems and networks using their own digital devices – phones, laptops, tablets, etc.
Cloud-based hosting	The delivery of computing resources as a service rather than a product, whereby shared resources, software and information are provided to computers and other devices as a utility over the internet.
Cyber threat	The possibility of a malicious attempt to gain unauthorised access to a computer network or system, to damage or disrupt the activities of an organisation, or to steal information or technology assets
Location independent, home and mobile working	Employees and other agents working from home or other locations (e.g. work is what you do and not where you are based)
Fully featured, cloud-based telephone system	A telephone system with call management, self-service and chat capabilities, all routed through the internet.
Information asset	Either the information itself or an asset that contains or processes the information.
Infrastructure as a Service (IAAS)	The process of delivering computer infrastructure as a service such as storage and networking.
Internet of Things	The Internet of things is a system of interrelated computing devices, mechanical and digital machines provided with unique identifiers and the ability to transfer data over a network without requiring human-to-human or human-to-computer interaction. Examples of objects that can fall into the scope of Internet of Things include connected security systems, thermostats, cars, electronic appliances, lights in household and commercial environments, alarm clocks, speaker systems, vending machines and more.
IT Governance	A collection of processes and procedures which monitors and manages the decision-making process within IT.
Low Code	Low code is a software development approach that requires little to no coding in order to build applications and processes. A low-code development platform uses visual interfaces with simple logic and drag-and-drop features instead of extensive coding languages. Low-code development aims to make it easier to build applications by removing as much of the hand-coding as possible. Such initiatives become even more important as companies must build applications to work across a wider range of devices, including smartphones.
Private Branch Exchange (PBX)	A telephone Exchange (PBX) that serves an organisation or office, as opposed to one that a telephone company operates for many organisations, or for the general public.
Robotic Process Automation	Software platform that can be configured to mimic the activities of people and used to transfer data between systems, analyse information and manage infrastructure.

Software as a Service (SaaS)	A software delivery model in which software and its associated data are hosted centrally, typically in the Cloud and are typically accessed by users using a web browser over the internet. The software service is typically charged for on a monthly subscription basis
Virtual Private Network	A “tunnelled” connection through a wide area network such as the internet. By using encryption and other security measures, a VPN can scramble all the data sent so the network is “virtually” private.
Voice over IP (VoIP)	The delivery of voice communications and multimedia sessions over Internet Protocol (IP) and networks, such as the internet.