



DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION SCRUTINY PANEL

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To: Councillors Brookes (Chair), Charles, Gerrard, Hamilton, Needham and Seaton (For attention)

All other members of the Council
(For information)

You are requested to attend the meeting of the Digital Transformation Scrutiny Panel to be held in Committee Room 1, at the Council Offices, Southfields, Loughborough on Monday, 28th February 2022 at 6.00 pm for the following business.

Chief Executive

Southfields
Loughborough

18th February 2022

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES
2. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY AND PERSONAL INTEREST
3. DECLARATIONS - PARTY WHIP
4. QUESTIONS UNDER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE PROCEDURE 11.16
5. SCRUTINY SCOPING DOCUMENT

3 - 5

To note the scrutiny scoping document for the panel, agreed by the Scrutiny Commission at its meeting on 10th January 2022 and updated to list panel membership and meeting dates.

6. CHARNWOOD BOROUGH COUNCIL CORPORATE STRATEGY 2020-24 6 - 11

To enable the panel to review the Charnwood Borough Council Corporate Strategy 2020-24 prior to commencing work on the panel.

7. CURRENT AND FUTURE PROJECTS 12 - 70

A report of the Head of Customer Experience to inform the panel of current and future projects demonstrating the approach to delivering services as outlined in the ICT Strategy and the Customer Services Strategy and how technology will support this.

8. WORK PROGRAMME AND KEY TASK PLANNING 71 - 72

To schedule the key tasks in the scrutiny scoping document to be considered at the next meeting of the panel and to consider any work to be allocated to members of the panel in advance of the next meeting.

Further scheduled meetings of the panel are:

29th March 2022

27th April 2022

30th May 2022

27th June 2022 (to be rescheduled)

25th July 2022 (provisional)



REVIEW TITLE: Digital Transformation Panel

SCOPE OF ITEM / TERMS OF REFERENCE

This panel will:

- Identify which forms were most used throughout lockdown and whether more forms should be created to support our customers
- Identify whether there is a need to create a personalised front-end login portal
- If there is a need, would this be for:
 - All customers
 - Council tenants only
 - Another key customer group
- If a front end portal is required, what information should be displayed and how will this integrate with existing software.
- Identify economies of scale and potential savings for the Council and/ or service.

REASON FOR SCRUTINY

The panel will also ensure that any current projects connected to the IT Strategy and Customer Services Strategy are progressing in a timely and effective manner as well as providing further ideas for how to transform services.

Increase accessibility to the council services helping to raise customer satisfaction levels.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE GROUP

Councillor Brookes (Chair)
 Councillor Seaton
 Councillor Gerrard
 Councillor Charles
 Councillor Needham
 Councillor Hamilton

WHAT WILL BE INCLUDED
<p>Comparison research gained from other Council's. Officer statements on current projects. Private sector examples</p>
WHAT WILL BE EXCLUDED
KEY TASKS ** including consideration of efficiency savings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate existing Council transformation projects • Make recommendations on future strategy or processes • Review other Local Authority digitalisation and transformation strategies and processes to learn best practice • Review other Private Sector digitalisation and transformation strategies and processes to learn best practice • Provide input into the Council's Transformation Strategy • Interviewing witnesses and Council officers • Identify services that are most challenging to integrate or quite simple to integrate • Develop an outline cost plan • Send out a survey to our customers for ideas/feedback and to help identify key areas for integration.
STAKEHOLDERS, OUTSIDE AGENCIES, OTHER ORGANISATIONS *
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outside bodies/ agencies who already have this facility. • Other councils who have this facility. • IT and CRM (Customer Relationship Management) companies. • Individuals with skills in this area. • Our current key partners such as Capita and Serco to understand how they will integrate their services. • Relevant Borough Council departments.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS
<p>Is an impact needs assessment required? – to be considered at the Panel's penultimate meeting</p>
LINKS/OVERLAPS TO OTHER REVIEWS
<p>The Council is already working on improving online forms and there is a project underway</p>

Commercialisation Panel	
RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS	
Lead Officer: Karey Barnshaw, Head of Customer Experience Support from Democratic Services (Sally Watson)	
REPORT REQUIREMENTS (Officer information)	
Current Projects (meeting 1) Survey Results (meeting 4)	
REVIEW COMMENCEMENT DATE	COMPLETION DATE FOR DRAFT REPORT
28 February 2022	June/July 2022

* Key tasks and stakeholders may be subject to change as the review progresses.

PROGRESS OF PANEL WORK

MEETING DATE	PROGRESS TO DATE
<p>NOTES:</p> <p>To facilitate witness attendance it is anticipated that times of the meetings will be a mix of daytime and early evening.</p> <p>Panel meetings can be run online apart from the final meeting where recommendations are agreed upon.</p>	

REPORT SUBMITTED TO SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD
The Panel should aim to complete its work and submit its report to the Scrutiny Commission meeting on 8th August 2022 .

Corporate Strategy 2020 – 2024



Leader's introduction

Welcome to Charnwood Borough Council's Corporate Strategy 2020-24.

This strategy sets out what the Council will be doing over the next four years to make Charnwood a stronger and more vibrant place for people to live, work, visit and invest in.

The priorities and aims have been shaped by Members, employees and residents whose views in our latest residents' survey have helped identify what is important to them.

The strategy is ambitious yet realistic as there are challenges ahead for local government finances. However, we are prepared.

We recognise that any future success will rely on closer collaboration with partners, other organisations and our communities.

The corporate strategy outlines what the Council wants to achieve and is supported by a more detailed business plan which will be rigorously monitored to ensure we are on track.

I am confident that in four years' time Charnwood will be a stronger, more vibrant and a more prosperous place.

Cllr Jonathan Morgan, leader of Charnwood Borough Council

The vision

Charnwood is a borough for innovation and growth, delivering high-quality living in urban and rural settings, with a range of jobs and services to suit all skills and abilities and meet the needs of our diverse community.

With a highly-acclaimed university, thriving towns and a network of vibrant villages, and within easy reach of national and international markets, Charnwood provides everything a business needs to succeed.

At the forefront of technology while protecting our beautiful environment for future generations, Charnwood is a borough of contrasts, and provides a world of opportunity.

Our values

Employees and members will work together as one council, living and breathing our core values:



Pride in Charnwood

We take pride in our work and our borough and are ambitious for the future



Customer Focused

We listen to our customers and are focused on delivering excellent services



Working Together

We work together with pace and positivity as one council and in partnership with others



... We will ensure 100,000 trees are planted in the borough ...

... We have pledged to become a carbon neutral organisation by 2030 ...



Caring for the environment

We care deeply about the environment and we are committed to looking after it for future generations.

We have already reduced our carbon footprint and we have pledged to become a carbon neutral organisation by 2030 to help tackle climate change.

Our parks and open spaces are award-winning and treasured by our communities and we will continue to care for them so they can be enjoyed by everyone. We will also continue to develop and improve our open spaces, supported by our pledge to ensure 100,000 trees are planted.

We will help protect our environment by using all powers available to tackle those who threaten it, such as the fly-tippers and litterers.

We will improve and develop our outstanding waste and recycling service to make it more efficient, more resilient and better for the environment.



Healthy communities

We will continue to work with partners to make our towns and villages safer places to live, work and visit.

We will support our communities by delivering a range of services which not only help residents, but also empower them to make a positive difference in their local areas. Community cohesion will remain a priority.

We want healthy and happy residents and therefore we are committed to providing high-quality leisure facilities and sports activities for people and offer services to improve wellbeing, either directly or with our partners.

We are passionate about improving housing in the social and private sector and helping those in need of accommodation. We will continue to invest in our council homes and work with developers and the privately-rented sector to ensure high-quality homes are available to residents.

... We will support our communities by delivering a range of services which not only help residents, but also empower them ...



A thriving economy



We will continue to support and foster strong economic growth in Charnwood.

Our draft Charnwood Local Plan sets out a vision of future growth up until 2036 and this will drive the local economy while delivering millions of pounds of improvements for local infrastructure and services.

The borough's economic strength will be further supported by the regeneration and growth taking place across Charnwood. From the Enterprise Zone to our rapidly-changing town centres, we are committed to leading, supporting and collaborating with partners and the private sector to ensure future generations have access to high-quality jobs. We want to grow Charnwood's reputation as a place where businesses thrive, particularly those in the innovation sector.

And while high streets are facing enormous challenges, we will help them become more diverse places, filled with homes and services as well as successful retail businesses. We will also respect the heritage of our town centres.

We will continue to use both business regulation and business support to help local companies.

The tourism sector will continue to play an important role in our local economy and we will help make Charnwood and its beautiful open countryside and thriving market towns a key destination for local, national and international visitors.

... We are committed to leading, supporting and collaborating with partners and the private sector to ensure future generations have access to high-quality jobs





Your Council

We will continue to improve customer service and develop our staff to help them deliver outstanding services.

Our services will be increasingly available at the fingertips of residents through our digital channels. However, the opportunity to talk to our staff in person will always be there for people who need it.

We will build our digital services using technology that will help us be more effective, efficient and flexible to meet customers' needs.

We will continue to carefully manage our budgets, particularly by using effective procurement and well-managed contracts.

We recognise there are financial challenges ahead for local government and we will use them as an opportunity to transform into a more efficient, effective and innovative organisation.

The Council will be more commercial in the future and invest in commercial property to generate income. This will support the delivery of frontline services and help offset reductions in funding from other sources.

We will collaborate with partners, in the public and private sector, in a variety of ways to bring improvements to our services and the borough of Charnwood.



Our employees and elected members will work together as one council to bring positive change to Charnwood.

And we commit strongly to listening, talking and engaging with residents as we work together to create a more vibrant and prosperous Charnwood.

Charnwood Borough Council: Southfield Road,
Loughborough, Leicestershire LE11 2TR

W: www.charnwood.gov.uk

E: customer.services@charnwood.gov.uk

 [@CharnwoodBC](https://twitter.com/CharnwoodBC)  facebook.com/charnwoodbc

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DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION SCRUTINY PANEL – 28TH FEBRUARY 2022

Report of the Head of Customer Experience

ITEM 7 CURRENT AND FUTURE PROJECTS

Purpose of the Report

To inform the panel of current and future projects demonstrating the approach to delivering services outlined in the ICT Strategy and the Customer Services Strategy and how technology will support this.

Action Requested

That the panel notes the contents of the report.

Reason

To ensure the panel are informed about the current and future projects being undertaken which will support the ICT Strategy and the Customer Services Strategy, and to develop ideas about how the work of the panel will support this.

Background

The Council has been developing its digital offering over the last 5+ years. Through a range of projects, the Council is now able to offer over 50 online forms, an online booking system for school holiday activities and market holders and access to multiple different social media platforms. There have been further improvements to our website to make navigation and information finding easier.

The Pandemic has seen even more customer choosing to access our services digitally. Over the last year we have seen over 40,000 forms submitted through our website an increase of 160% whilst at the same time visits to our website have increased by 33%. Furthermore, our engagement through social media channels has also increase with our followers of Facebook increasing by 88%.

In 2021 a new ICT Strategy and Customer Service Strategy were approved setting our approach to delivering our services but also how technology will support and enable us to do so. A clear mandate of the scheme is to rationalise the number of ICT software system and maximise the use of existing system. All projects from these strategies are monitored through the SWaP Board. In addition, there are also additional projects in progress at this stage.

Current and future projects

Details of all projects currently underway or in the planning stages that will support the digital aspiration of the Council for customer facing services can be seen here:

Project	Reason	Timescale
Replacement Website	The current website contract is due to come to an end and a procurement process must be completed to procure a new website	12-18 months
Replacement CRM system	The current CRM and forms system has been in place for many years and has limited capability. This provides an opportunity to replace the system with a system which meets the future needs of the organisation. This project has already commenced and is currently in the investigation phase we are working with suppliers to understand the art if the possible	Initial investigation work currently underway. Project completion expected to be end of summer 2023
Single system (Planning, Licencing, public protection and Strategic and Private Sector House)	The new system replaces several departmental systems and introduces the opportunity for directly integrated eforms in these areas that customer could access through our website	Project in progress completion Nov 2022
Replacement Telephone system	The current contract was coming to end and with no further opportunities to extend. A procurement exercise was undertaken a a new supplier confirmed, the new system provides opportunity to integrate social media responses in the contact centre.	Project in progress phase 1 completion April 2022, remaining phases TBC
Housing Online Portal	The Head of Landlordervice has engaged with IT to consider the implementation of an online portal to enable our tenants to be able to access a range of services including view their own rent account and reporting repairs etc. This was previously considered however as there was some research being undertaken to consider a single online portal, as the results of this work identify no business case to continue with a corporate online portal, this option is now being revisited.	Currently at the early initial investigation phase
Transformation Service Reviews	In line with the Service Transformation programme all departments will undergo a review of their services to identify opportunity to increase customer accessibility and digitisation and identify efficiency savings.	Underway and ongoing likely over 3-4 year period
Document Management System	The aim is to provide a solution for all users to scan/digitise and electronically	Currently at the early

	tag and store current and future incoming paper documents using the existing printers/multi-functional devices and the Office 365 applications (SharePoint/OneDrive).	initial investigation phase
Robotic Process Automation and Artificial Intelligence	Looking at technology solutions that would further support the efficient delivery of our service, improving customer experience and reducing costs	Not yet commenced.
Review of corporate email inboxes	A review will be undertaken to identify a more consistent and efficient way to handle customer emails coming into corporate inbox.	Not yet commence due to start March/Apr 2022

Current customer facing technology systems already in place:

Corporate Website – providing information and transactional services to customers. This also includes My Charnwood (<https://my.charnwood.gov.uk/>) which provide personalised information based on location/post codes

Online payments – secure online payment facility for all areas, which is also combined with face to face and telephony payment channels.

Verint Online Forms/CRM system – CRM system is used to record customer interactions that come in through a range of channels including our online forms

Capita Revs and Bens Customer Portal – Online portal allowing customer to access their Council Tax and Housing benefits information, Includes being able to report changes, make arrangement, request discount etc through online forms

Housing Connections – online system to allow customer to bid on homes

Planning Portal – national system that allows the submission and viewing of planning applications.

The online Planning Explorer system supports this further by allowing users to access information on current and historical planning applications, application plans, associated document and status details

Online Registers (<https://data.charnwood.gov.uk/>); queries back-office databases to provide information on;

- Licensing; https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/public_register_of_licences
- Building Control; Competent Person Database
- Contract register; searches for active and archived procurement contracts

Online submission for job vacancies (www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/jobs) - this integrates with the HR application (iTrent)

Modern.Gov; online paperless systems for Committee administration, Member profiles, and also used for accessing and sharing committee documents.

Digital Considerations

When considering customer facing digital services, we must be mindful of several factors.

- **New Technology** - The impact of introducing any new technology on both back-office services and IT. The Council operates and supports many different IT systems, in line with the ICT Strategy is actively working to rationalise the number of systems. When considering the implementation of a new system it's important not to introduce inefficiencies such as 'double keying' into a process. Our current eforms package currently integrates seamlessly into several services e.g Whitespace (refuse and recycling) this means the customer information is only inputted once by the customer and then integrates seamlessly from one system to another with no officer intervention. However, this is by no means an easy task to complete and can be extremely costly, complex and time consuming to achieve. It was this level of complexity, costs and also the customer demand that previously determine a single online corporate portal would not meet business case requirements.
- **Customer demand** – is there customer demand for this service, there have been many discussions about introducing a Council App or online portal but what's important to understand is, is there a customer need for it that would justify the required investment. We would need to understand what would make a customer download a Council app or are there customers that access our services regularly enough to mean they would want to set up a council online account and access it regularly.
- **Customer capability** – we need to ensure any digital services introduced can be utilised by most of our customers and we are not providing different levels of service or discriminating against those customers that don't have sufficient digital capability to interact with us in this way. We must also ensure that any new technology that is introduced meets the full accessibility standards again, so we are not at risk of discrimination.
- **Costs** – All IT/improvement projects must consider any return-on-investment implications to ensure any investment will deliver:
 - Savings through reduced system costs
 - Increase in capacity of officers, this is not just within the service department this also must take into account support services such as ICT, Customer Services etc.
- **Resources** – do we have the right skills to develop and support the project, what capacity is there available to support the delivery of any projects. What will be the future support requirements.

Appendices: Annex 1 – Customer Service Strategy 2022 - 2025
 Annex 2 – Information and Communication Technology
 Strategy 2021 - 2023

Background Papers: None

Officer to Contact: Karey Barnshaw
 Head of Customer Experience
 01509 634923
 karey.barnshaw@charnwood.gov.uk

Charnwood Borough Council

Customer Service Strategy 2022 – 2025

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Foreword

Charnwood Borough Council is committed to providing exceptional customer service. This strategy sets out how that will be achieved over the next four years. Our ambitious programme of transformation will see the very latest technology utilised to help us provide the exceptional service we constantly strive to achieve.

The COVID-19 Pandemic has seen a clear shift in the way customers wish to engage with the Council. Our online presence is critical to capturing this shift and ensuring we are available when customers need us.

This strategy commits to further invest in our website and online forms to ensure we are as accessible as possible whilst recognising the need to be physically available to deal with the needs of some customers.

Every customer interaction matters, and it requires a whole organisation approach to achieve exceptional customer service.

Our strategy is bold, ambitious, but most of all, achievable.



Cllr. Roy Rollings

Lead Member for Transformation

1.Executive Summary

Charnwood Borough Council is transforming the way that it interacts with its customers. This strategy provides the vision and principles for this transformation and in doing so, outlines our ambition and appetite to meet our customers' needs.

This strategy sets out our vision to achieve the best possible experience for our customer, whoever they are (residents, businesses, partners, or suppliers) and whenever they deal with us.

Effective management of a customer relationship is not only about how responsive, efficient, and technologically advanced services are, but is also equally about the emotion, feeling and impression that an individual experiences when interacting with an organisation.

This strategy enables the authority to move away from a view that customer service is the responsibility of a team or department, but instead recognises that it is a cross cutting theme that spans the whole organisation and links intrinsically with our wider plans. It enables customer experience to become part of our core vision and values framework that each and every officer subscribes too. This strategy raises the profile of the customer ensuring that our plans, decisions, and business actions, are customer centric.

We are aware that both the technology landscape and our customers' preferences are changing at an ever-accelerating pace. This is at a time when the resources available to Local Government are decreasing. We now need to harness digital technology to find new, innovative, and efficient ways of enabling our customers to interact with the Council, whilst at the same time releasing our capacity to support those customers that really need us.

The strategy outlines how we will deliver this change and reinforces our commitment to providing fair and open access to our services. This strategy provides the mandate to mobilise an ambitious change programme that will transform the authority's approach to customers.

2.Introduction

The way most people do business and communicate is changing rapidly. We use cash less and pay by card more, we go to the shops less and order things online more, we write letters less and use email more. Many of us contact organisations through social media now, rather than give them a call, email or visit in person. And, increasingly, we're doing all these things from just one device, be it a smartphone, laptop, or tablet.

Charnwood Borough Council, like other councils and central government, has made more and more of its services available over the internet, and this move to online will continue. Most people find it more convenient to get information or to access services in this way. For those who find this difficult, we will provide help to support the online transition. Where this isn't possible, we will continue to provide a support to customers to make all of our services inclusive.

The new ways of doing business also save us money, which is now more important than ever. We have far less to spend than we had a few years ago. Charnwood has been very successful in maintaining front-line services while Government funding has been falling. We need to keep striving to make the most of every pound we get. Every time customers access Council services online they are helping us save the money we need to maintain the public services on which thousands of people rely and enjoy every day.

This Customer Services Strategy places our customers at the heart of the organisation. It seeks to modernise and improve the authority's approach to customer service, through investing in material, human and technological resources, in response to a rapidly changing customer expectation.

To date the authority has made targeted attempts at improving customer experience through various programmes and initiatives; significant investment has been made in developing digitalisation and the online customer experience. The strategy builds upon this previous work, to deliver the systemic change required to transform customer experience and realise the benefit of previous investment.

This Strategy outlines the underlying principles, foundation, design, and recommended approach to transforming the way in which we interact with our customers. Its adoption will enable the systemic change required to transform the organisation's customer service offering over the period 2022 – 2025.

3. Customer Service – Our journey so far

Over the past four years we have strived to improve the way we work to meet the needs of our customers. We have implemented some key improvements to the way customers interact with us and we communicate with them, this includes:

A refreshed website where you can access a range of online services

A new telephony system offering greater functionality and reliability

Reaccreditation under the Customer Service Excellence scheme

Introduction of a new online booking system for school holiday activity schemes

Our telephone services

Over the last four years we have introduced a new telephony system ensuring our systems are modern, resilient, and reliable. We have introduced new services and updated and improved others to ensure customers receive an efficient, effective, and friendly service when contacting us.

In 2019/20 the contact centre dealt with 130,000 telephone calls

Our face-to-face service

Our Customer Service team deal with a wide range of face-to-face enquiries, they provide digital support to customers when required as well as answering enquiries of topics ranging from waste services to elections and housing benefits.

In 2019/20 42,500 customers visited our Customer Service Centre

Our online and digital services

We have improved our website which is now fully mobile, and work is well underway to ensure accessibility standards are met. Our website is available 24 hours a day, 365 days per year and provides easy access to a wealth of information and over 55 digital forms.

In 2019/20 we had over one million visits to the corporate website

In addition, we also introduced sharing information through a range of social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Linked in to widen our accessibility. By March 2020, we had over 12,745 followers across all of these platforms.

Our customer care commitments

In 2019 we reviewed our previous Customer Service Standards which were outdated and replaced them with a new Customer Promise which sets out what our customer can expect when interacting with us and equally what our employees can expect from our customers, this promise aims to create an environment of mutual respect.

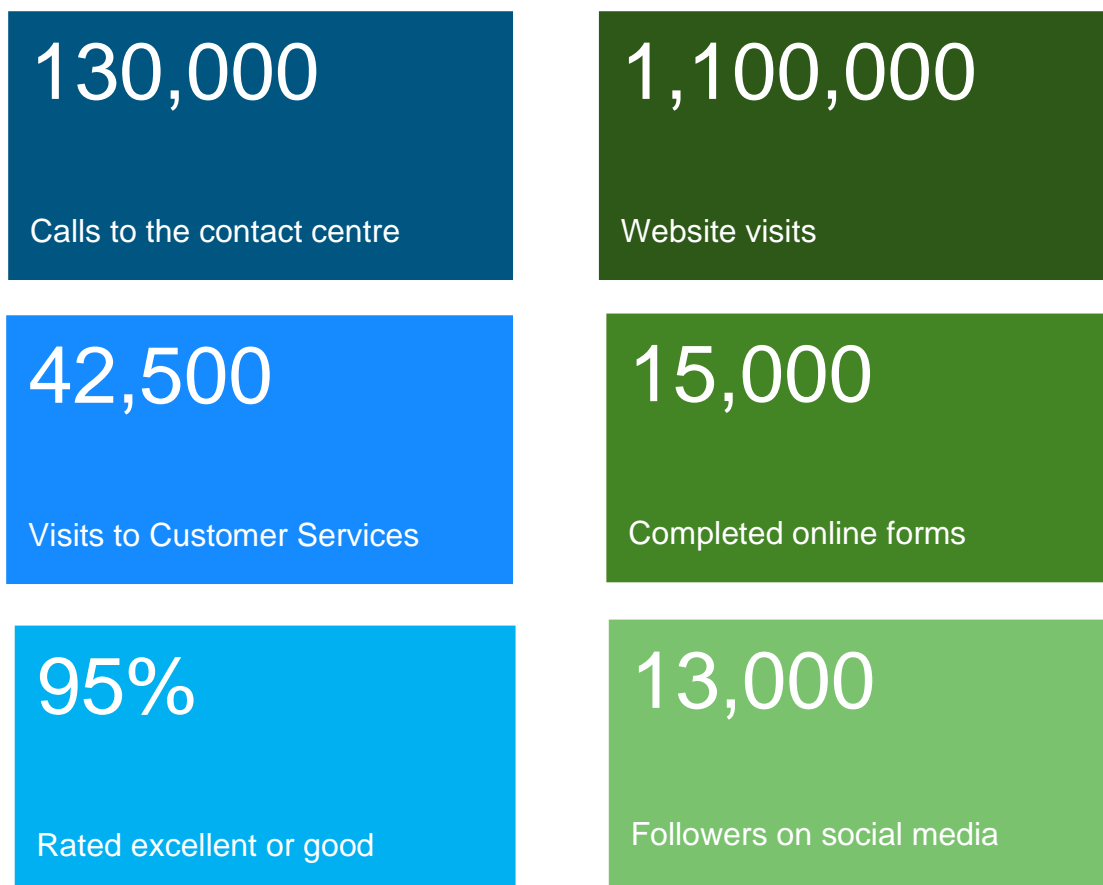
In 2020 we retained our Customer Service Excellence accreditation showing that Charnwood Borough Council is committed to delivering high quality customer centric services.

Our customer satisfaction

As a Council, we have consistently maintained high levels of customers satisfaction. In 2019/20 over 90% of our customers rated us as good or excellent both on the phones and face to face. However, there is always more we can do to improve and so we will consider how we can make this easier and simpler for our customer to give us feedback.

4. Customer Service in numbers

The diagram below shows the number of interactions our customers have had with us in 2019/20:



The 2019/20-year data has been used as this provides a useful pre pandemic baseline for comparison against the most recent figures shown later in this document.

This data does not tell us about other key areas of customer service we deliver across the council, or about the interactions our customers have with other back-office teams.

5. Current challenges and opportunities for change

The Council faces a number of challenges enhanced by the Covid-19 pandemic, whilst they may be a challenge they also present us with an opportunity to change the way we do things.

Financial

The Council is facing a significant financial challenge with reduced grants from central government and significant reductions in income as a result of the Covid-19 Pandemic. In the past the Council has been able to use reserves to support the budget gap, this is no longer possible, and savings need to be made in order to deliver a balanced and sustainable budget for the future. This means we need to find more efficient ways to do things, utilising our resources in the most effective ways.

Technology

As an organisation we must harness the opportunity that digital technology provides us. Technology is advancing at a significant pace, providing exciting opportunities to streamline the ways we work and enabling customers to self-service at a time and place that meets their needs.

The adoption of new technology such as Zoom and online shopping over the course of the pandemic has shown how customers behaviours and attitudes can change significantly in a short space of time. A report by McKinsey has shown that customers appetite and ability for transacting online has jumped 5 years over the period of less than 12 months, creating a unique environment to maximise the opportunities created by this speed of change.

Artificial intelligence (AI) is increasingly entering people's homes and now provides a new channel to access services. With Voice Recognition technology becoming part of people everyday lives.

Robotic Process Automation (RPA) provides additional opportunities to free up our employees from repetitive tasks to focus on customer value adding activities by routing and manage customer requests and transactional services, improving accuracy and reducing costs.

Data and processes

As a local authority, we sit in the middle of a web of information. The range and diversity of our services generates a huge quantity of data held about our customers and across a variety of back-office systems. Understanding our data is

hugely beneficial in helping us to; make services more targeted and effective, allocate resources to where we can have the biggest impact; save officer time in front and back-office processes, as well as providing insight into the cause of and solutions to costly social problems.

We must consider ways to utilise this untapped information source when redesigning and developing our processes to delivery to attract the outlined benefits.

Customer needs

Over the past 18 months we have seen a significant change in both customer needs and behaviours. We have been able to identify with greater clarity those customer groups who have more specific support needs compared to other customer groups that are more able and confident to self-serve in a digital way. As a result, we now need to review our current customer service delivery models to reflect change in both customer needs and behaviours and changes to our working methods to maximise these opportunities whilst ensuring that all customers can access our services in a way that meets their needs.

6. Corporate Strategies – the golden thread

‘Charnwood is a borough for innovation and growth, delivering high-quality living in urban and rural settings, with a range of jobs and services to suit all skills and abilities and meet the needs of our diverse community.’

Our Corporate Strategy outlines our four priorities that are central to achieving our vision:

1. **Caring for the environment** – We care deeply about the environment and we are committed to looking after it for future generations
2. **Healthy communities** – We will continue to work with partners to make our towns and villages safer places to live, work and visit
3. **A thriving economy** – We will continue to support and foster strong economic growth in Charnwood
4. **Your Council** – We will continue to improve customer service and develop our staff to help them to deliver outstanding services

Underpinning these priorities are our three values:

Pride in Charnwood – We take pride in our work and our borough and are ambitious for the future

Customer Focused – We listen to our customers and are focused on delivering excellent services

Working Together – We work together with pace and positivity as one council and in partnership with other

The development of Customer Service Strategy will support the Council to achieve its aims under each of these priorities, from becoming a carbon neutral organisation by 2030 helping tackle climate change to building our digital services using technology that will help us be more effective, efficient and flexible to meet customers’ needs.

We recognise there are financial challenges ahead for local government and we will use them as an opportunity to transform into a more efficient, effective, and innovative organisation.

We will use a variety of technology to support current and future collaborations with partners, in both the public and private sector, to bring improvements to our services and the borough of Charnwood.

Strategic Direction (2020-2024)

The Strategic Direction document accompanies the Corporate Strategy 2020-24 and sets out the key operating principles the Council will adopt to achieve its objectives and deliver outstanding services for residents. It identifies the Council's ambition to be one of the most effective, efficient, and influential Councils in the Country

The document also sets out challenges to be addressed in the delivery of the Corporate Strategy including the COVID 19 pandemic, a reduction in funding and increasing costs, increasing demand for council services, climate change and rapid changes in technology

The document identifies how the Council will operate in a number of key areas. The two areas that are most relevant to the Customer Service Strategy are.

1. Customer service

We will:

- maintain a focus on customer experience and put the customer at the centre of our thinking
- increase the number of online services so customers can access them 24/7
- use customer insight and feedback to improve and deliver services
- focus on delivering high customer satisfaction levels

2. Transformation and efficiency

We will:

- invest in transformation to achieve measurable outcomes such as service delivery and/or savings
- review all services to make them more efficient and effective
- work with partners to deliver innovative solutions to challenges and opportunities by aligning and integrating services
- maximise the use of technology to make the Council a more streamlined, efficient, and effective organisation

ICT Strategy (2021 – 2024)

The ICT Strategy sets out the Council's approach to how through the use of technology the organisation will meet its corporate objectives.

The aims of the strategy are:

1. Enabling digital services, transformation and supporting business systems – through channel shift, automation, online and self-service

2. Working with services and partners to improve ICT processes and technologies
3. Modern architecture enabling efficient ICT operation and supporting the new ways of working
4. Robust security and governance arrangements

Each of these aims will support and enable the objectives of the Customer Service Strategy by providing robust, secure, and modern IT systems that will provide customers with the confidence to interact with the Council through a variety of access channels.

People Strategy (2021–2024)

The People Strategy sets out how the organisation will ensure our people have the right, culture, leadership, training, development, and support in order to deliver the vision of the authority. The aims of the People Strategy has been considered in the development of the Customer Service Strategy to ensure alignment and synergies are recognised and acknowledged ensuring both strategies support the delivery of the Corporate Strategy.

By aligning the Customer Service Strategy to the aims and objectives of our corporate strategies we will create a golden thread tying together all aspects of the Council and creating an environment for success.

7. Our Customers

Charnwood Borough Council has over 190,000 residents with a wide and varying range of needs.

1. 17% of our residents are aged 0 to 15
2. 65% are of working age (16-64)
3. Over 18% are aged 65+
4. 18% of working age people are in receipt of benefits
5. Nearly 74% of state pension age people are in receipt of benefits

In our most recent residents survey (2019) customers told us:

- When reporting a problem, eight out of ten (80%) contacted the Council by telephone, half (50%) by email and almost a third (31%) through the website.
- 86% were satisfied with their experience of contacting the council.
- If the Council provided more online services, 71% would use them.

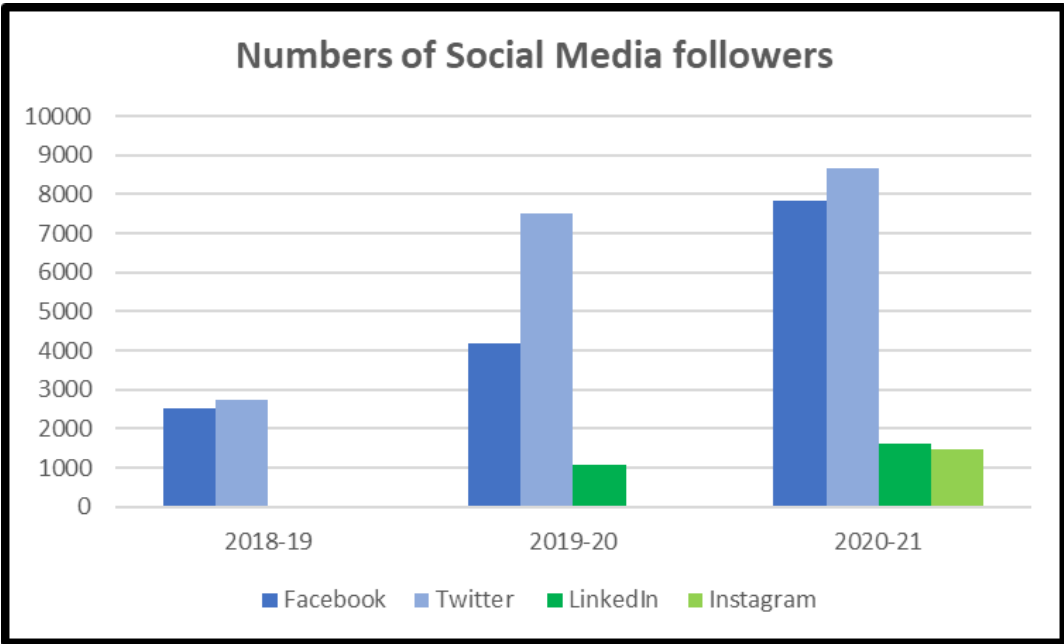
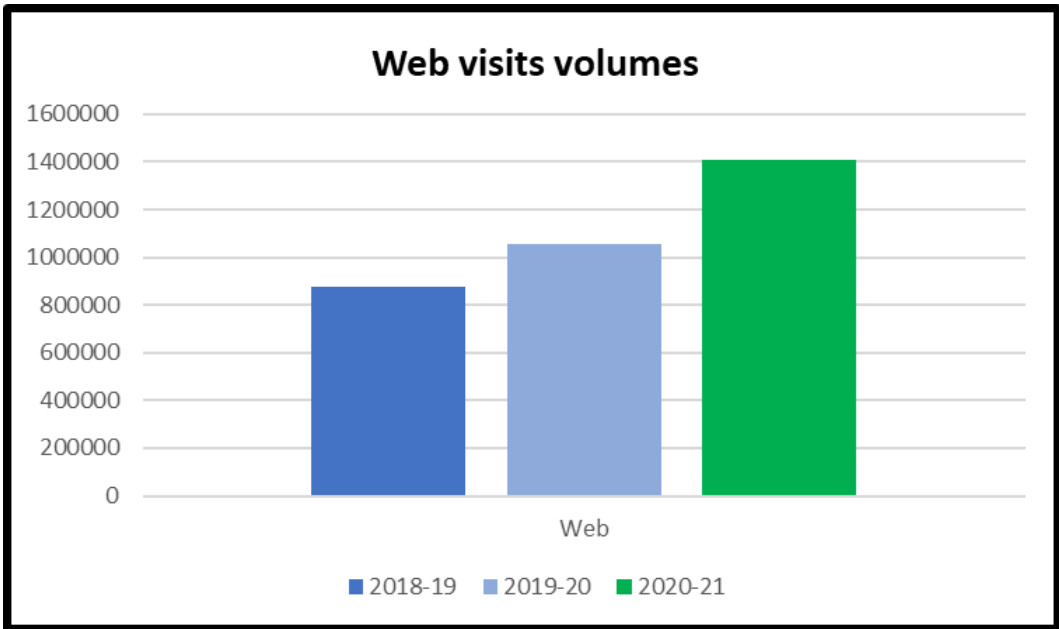
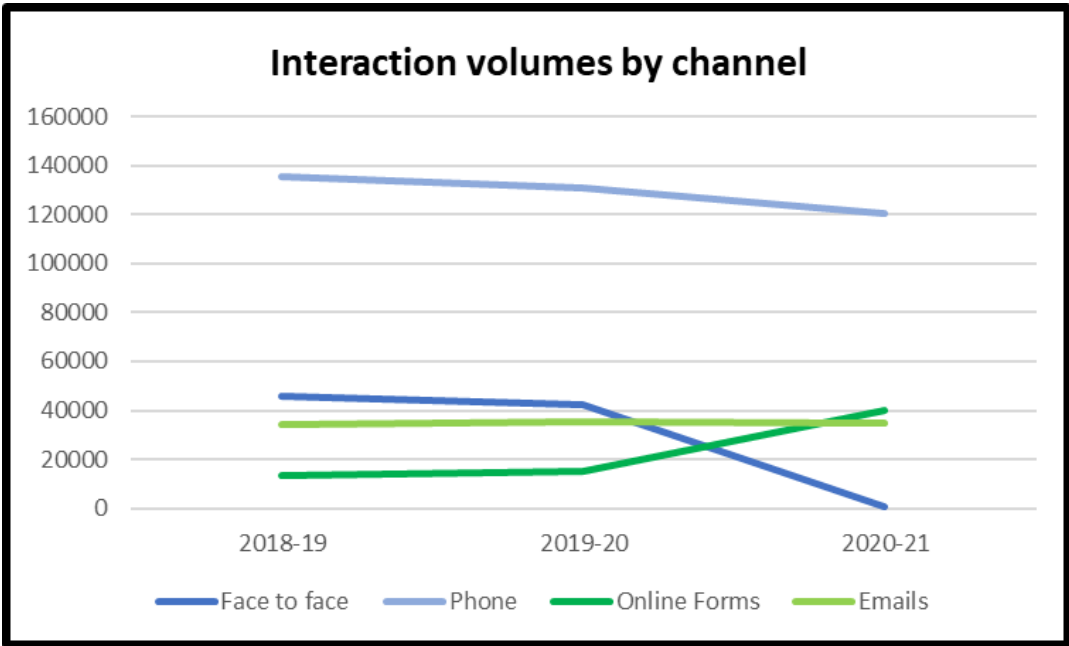
However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic we have seen a significant shift in the way customers are now accessing our services. Although we had seen a steady reduction of customers using the more traditional channels such as face to face and telephone, the restrictions implemented as a result of the pandemic have meant customers have had to use alternative methods to access the services they need.

In 2019/20 Customer Services answered 130,000 calls, served 42,500 visitors to our offices and customers completed 15,200 forms online.

By comparison, in 2020/21, the year of the pandemic, Customer Services answered 120,000 calls (-8%), served only 712 (-98%) visitors to the offices and customers completed 40,000 forms online (+163%).

The diagrams below show a visual representation of:

1. The steady decline in numbers of customers using our phone channel, with a significant reduction in customers using our face-to-face service centre (as a result of the pandemic) and a significant increase in the use of our online forms.
2. A year-on-year increase in customers visiting our website
3. A dramatic increase in followers to our social media channels as well as the introduction of new channels



With the average cost of customer interactions (based on SOCITM data) as follows:

- Face to face interactions - £8.62
- Telephone interactions - £2.83
- Digital (online) interactions - £0.15

The migration to more digital and self-service channels present a sizeable opportunity to increase the accessibility of our services whilst creating efficiencies.

With a significant uptake in digital and online services it would be easy to make the assumption that all of our residents can access our services in this way. However, a digital skills gap analysis was recently undertaken for the Borough which highlighted the following issues:

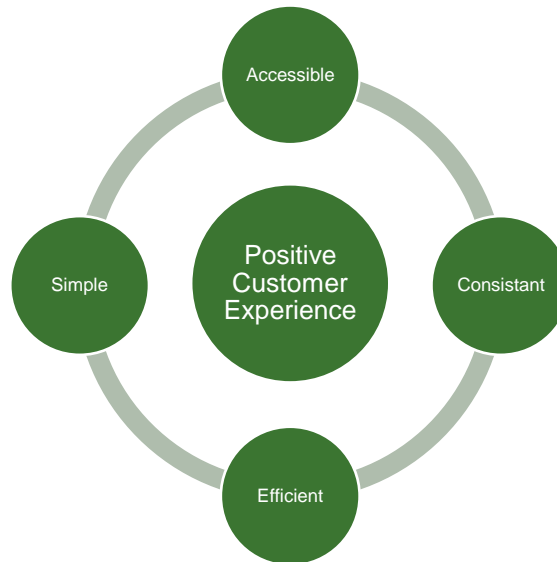
- **20%** of adults in Charnwood have no laptop
- **8.5%** have no internet access at home
- **13,000** (8.8%) of residents of completely offline (11,000 of these are 65+)
- **10%** only use a smartphone to go online
- **21%** don't have the essential digital skills for life
- **12%** have no foundation digital skills

Furthermore, the report highlighted a number of areas within the Borough that are at a risk of digital exclusion. Motivating digitally excluded customers to engage with the digital world can be difficult. To do this successfully requires compelling 'hooks' for each person, and each organisation. Simply 'selling' or presenting a new digital service or technology does not create digital journeys. People and organisations need to understand what is beneficial for them and what an improved life or service might feel like in a digital world. Understanding people's motivations will be key.

8. Our aims, principles, and objectives

Aims

The aim of our strategy is quite simple, we will place our customers at the heart of everything we do, to make every interaction a positive experience: accessible, consistent, efficient, and simple.



Principles

The strategy draws upon the following principles and themes in its design:

Customer First: Placing customers at the heart of the organisation. Empowering our staff to provide their very best customer experience.

Customer Access: A modern, fresh approach to customer experience and spaces, whether physical or digital. Light, clean and welcoming environments.

Digital by Default: Digital experiences so good that they are the channel of choice.

Inclusion: Recognising our customers' unique circumstances and in doing so ensuring that those that need our services are not excluded.

Customer Insight: Establishing our data sources and consistently measuring our customer experiences. Knowing our customers and their needs. Understanding why things go wrong and learning from this to improve our services.

Value for Money, Efficiency and Return on Investment: Recognising the financial climate, benefit focused outcomes, business minded decision making.

Objectives

Putting our customers, the heart of what we do

By putting customer at the heart of what we do we will create a consistent positive customer experience delivering services that meet their needs. We will include our customer when redesigning our services, looking through the lens of our customer to ensure the design meets their needs.

To achieve this, we will:

- ❖ Redesign our processes from end to end, reducing the number of times we transfer customers between teams and focussing on resolving issues at first point of contact

- ❖ Identify appropriate channels for service delivery – while the majority of customers will be encouraged to access services online, we will provide alternative channels for those who need additional channels (e.g. face to face appointments)

- ❖ Increase self-service and automate first (where appropriate)

- ❖ Ensure customers are involved in the development of our services and the redesign process

- ❖ Use the data we hold about our customers to inform the way we improve processes and deliver our services

- ❖ Improve the efficiency of our services which will ultimately reduce costs and increase quality

- ❖ Ensure services are inclusive and respond to equality needs

- ❖ Enable customers to give feedback on processes and services

- ❖ Eliminate paper where possible responding to our responsibilities under the Green Agenda

Digital Inclusion

As more and more services are made available online we must ensure that those customers who have limited digital skills and access to technology are supported and encouraged to develop their skills to take advantage of the numerous benefits associated with being online.

We recognise that addressing the digital skills gap is not the responsibility of one organisation, we will look to work with local and national organisations to play our part in improving the lives of our customers.

To do this we will:

- ❖ Work with partners to create a Digital Inclusion Network, to identify organisations that offer support, skills training, and equipment

- ❖ Increase the number of Digital Champions (DCs) across the borough, providing more opportunities for people to access digital support

- ❖ Create and embed a Charnwood 'Triage and Signposting System' to help identifying customer needs and signpost them to the most appropriate support

- ❖ Target the wards with the highest risk of digital exclusion, looking for opportunities to raise the skills levels in these areas

- ❖ Centralise all information about digital skills in the District in one place, such as CBC Website, making it easier for people to find what they need

- ❖ Our employees will support our customers to self-service in the first instance to help develop their knowledge, skills and confidence in accessing services in digital ways

- ❖ We will offer free access to our Wi-Fi network when on Council premises and will continue to offer free access to our public access computers in our Customer Service Centre

- ❖ We recognise that not all customers will be able to use our digital services and for those customers we will continue to offer telephone and face to face services

Harnessing digital technology

Harnessing the power of digital technology will enable the Council to increase accessibility and flexibility for our customers, delivering efficient and effective low costs services whilst freeing up our resources to support those customers with more specific needs

To do this we will:

- ❖ Make online channels convenient and easy to use so that customers choose this as their preferred method of contact with us

- ❖ Design all online forms to enable system integration and automation

- ❖ Utilise new technology such as artificial intelligence to deliver services in a more efficient way

- ❖ Develop and increase the use of webchat and social media channels

- ❖ Use telephone for supported and complex transactions only, phasing out the use for low need and simple transactions

-
- ❖ Investigate the use of voice recognition to help customers find services more quickly
-
- ❖ Provide face to face service only where needed to meet complex and specific customer needs
-
- ❖ Implement a modern and efficient relationship management system which supports customers to self-serve and manage their transactions online
-
- ❖ Review our current website with a view of improving the mobile accessibility and useability through new technology

Involving the whole organisation

Customer Service goes far beyond the Customer Services Team, as an organisation we recognise that every employee and stakeholder has a part to play in delivering a positive customer experience. Every phone call, email, and face to face interaction provides the ability to shape the perception of the Council and what it is trying to achieve.

To do this we will:

- ❖ Use our customer satisfaction results and complaints feedback to develop and improve our services, sharing learning and development with all employees
-
- ❖ Introduce an organisation wide approach to collecting customer satisfaction through the use of a single satisfaction question
-
- ❖ Embed our Customer Promise across the organisation to provide a consistent experience for all customers
-
- ❖ Ensure employees have access to appropriate support and training to provide them with the tools and skills to deliver positive customer experiences

9. Our journey

This strategy will be delivered over the next 3 years. The diagram below sets out an indicative but ambitious approach to delivering the Customer Service Strategy. Each element of the journey needs to be assessed individually to ensure it is responsive to the fast-changing environment of the digital world and our customer expectations.



Charnwood Borough Council

ICT Strategy

2021 – 2023

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Foreword

The importance of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has never been felt more than over the past 12 months. The world has changed at an extraordinary pace and the Council's ability to adapt largely centres on the ICT infrastructure in place to enable remote working. Previous ICT strategies meant the Council was well placed to move rapidly to a home working model with very limited face to face interactions.



ICT presents opportunities to deliver services in a more efficient way whilst maintaining excellent customer service. Transformation is vital and this strategy evidences this Council's commitment to be a forward thinking, proactive and customer focused organisation. The benefits are not just felt by customers, but by staff and others that engage with the Council. Our ability to be accessible 24/7 is only possible with suitable investment in ICT. In addition to this, ICT further allows us to take strides towards this Council's commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030.

The COVID-19 Pandemic has seen a clear shift in the way customers wish to engage with the Council. Our online presence is critical to capturing this shift and ensuring we are available when customers need us. In addition to this the back-office functions and case management systems are critical tools for staff in their day to day roles delivering vital services for our customers.

Changes in legislation have also seen a shift to online Council meetings and this strategy recognises the additional work and support that is necessary to enable remote participation in local democracy.

This strategy is in parts technical in nature, but the overall message is clear. This Council is committed to investing in ICT and recognises the importance of ICT in its overall ambition to transform the way services are delivered. Huge steps have already been taken but there is much more to come.

Cllr. Roy Rollings

Lead Member for Transformation

1 Introduction

The strategy sets out how the Council intends to develop its Information and Communications Technology (ICT) over the next three years. The role of ICT is essential to the delivery of all of the Council services, both in enabling ongoing day to day business processes and in supporting strategic change, particularly in the drive to 'digitise' services

Charnwood is likely to witness significant challenges and changes in the next three years. The COVID-19 Pandemic has had a significant impact on service delivery and future planning. There will be increasing financial pressure with the ongoing funding reduction from Government. Further pressure will come from changing population and changes in legislation. The shape and size of the Council is likely to change and increase but the need to provide high quality services to our residents will remain. With these new challenges will come new opportunities to use ICT to enable the Council to achieve efficiencies while maintaining and improving service delivery standards.

ICT will be a key contributor to achieving the corporate vision of being an Enterprising Council and keeping pace with residents changing needs and expectations. ICT is no longer just a support service; it has become a critical service. If it is unavailable, the organisation cannot operate. It has the ability to transform the way services are organised and delivered. It has a fundamental role to play in improving efficiency, reducing cost across the organisation, exploiting income generating opportunities and improving the customer experience.

Aligned to the corporate strategies of the Council and the national ICT agenda, this document sets out the vision and outcome the Council wishes to achieve in relation to its use of ICT. The key aims of the ICT Strategy include;

- Enabling digital services and transformation through channel shift, automation, online and self-service, and the Application strategy for supporting the Digital agenda
- Continuing to work with services and partners to improve ICT processes and technologies
- Developing a modern cloud-based hybrid architecture which will enable an efficient ICT operation and supporting the new ways of working
- Supporting and complying with Robust security and governance arrangements

The document also addresses how the key risks such as Cyber security will be managed and the need for effectively resourcing the delivery for the actions identified in the strategy.

2 Current Position

The Council has a customer focused and adaptive in-house ICT function with supporting third party contracts for key parts of the infrastructure. The scope of the ICT service includes the delivery and maintenance of hardware, software, telephones and printing which is provided to all Charnwood staff and partners such as Harborough District Council (under the Shared Services Contact Centre), North West Leicestershire District Council (under agreed Shared Services), Leicestershire County Council (for HR) and Capita Revenue and Benefits service (for Printing and Telephones).

The service meets and exceeds Performance Indicators for Customer Satisfaction (an average of 6.8 out of 7 since January 2020 has been achieved – 7 is classed as an Excellent Service) and resolution of calls within the agreed time period has been 90%. The Performance measurements are based on SOCITM indicators.

Looking back - what has been delivered;

- Migrating Services/Users from Windows 7 and onto Windows 10/Office 365
- Virtual Infrastructure in place for both Desktops (VDI system) and Servers
- Annual compliance with PSN and the outcomes of the IT Health Check
- Implementation of a Cloud based SIP Telephony system supporting Back office users and the Shared Service Contact Centre
- Supporting Field working solutions in Housing for Operatives and Wardens
- Improving Business Continuity arrangements – offsite backup in place with Leicester City Council and improving onsite Power consumption and backup arrangements
- Improved Governance arrangements; IT Steering Group, User Group and SLA's developed with each HoS defining usage, expectations, and future ICT plans
- Corporate Rollout of MS Teams for Staff and Zoom for Public meetings
- Enabling all users to be able to work remotely at the start of the Pandemic

In March 2020, COVID 19 had a sharp impact on users relying heavily on ICT services. All users were setup to work remotely at the start of the pandemic, which had an unanticipated funding increase for remote working equipment and supporting systems. The service also experienced a continued 30% increase of support calls relating to accessing equipment and/or applications and saw a rapid surge in usage of systems such as Office 365, Teams and Zoom (for Video conferencing), including the need to hold online public Council meetings.

As we move into the 'New Normal' way of working, the impact on ICT in the medium term is relatively low as the ICT foundation blocks for remote working are in place. ICT has proven to be even more critical to supporting and delivering Council services. Moving forward this presents new opportunities and a step change in how ICT services should be delivered with focus being on Cloud based solutions (to primarily support remote workers) and the acceleration of Digital/Self Service technology which will also bolster automation and innovation.

This also brings a stronger focus to areas such as Cyber Security, Business Continuity (as not all users and systems are accessed from a single location) and Information Security as we anticipate a more complex landscape for users working and managing data remotely.

As we work towards the strategic aims covered in the document, key projects in development (January 2021), include;

- Migration and increasing use of the O365 environment - with the exception of a couple of areas due to legacy applications, the O365 migration programme was completed in December 2020. The second phase of making better of the O365 tools commenced in January 2021.
- New development approach for using the O365 development tools which includes an amalgamation of migrating legacy applications into the O365 development platform
- Implementing a single unified remote connection solution to enable access to back office applications more effectively
- Cloud migration; defining the scope, approach and implementation plan for delivering a modern ICT architecture (further details are covered in [Section 6.3](#))
- Implementation of the single system for Planning Services, Environment Health, Strategic and Private Sector Housing and Land charges which replaces three existing back office applications
- Hybrid meeting rooms; the hybrid setup will allow multiple users onsite (using the meeting rooms) to safely and securely have a meeting with other users also joining by video conference using either Zoom or Teams. The mixed approach of onsite and remote access has been identified as a benefit for Council meetings such as Cabinet, Full Council, etc

Summary of the key challenges facing ICT;

- Increasing financial pressures - with the ongoing reduction of the general Government funding, the authority will have fewer financial resources and the need to make cost savings
- Supporting the organisation to implement priorities which are reactive or unplanned by ICT
- the requirement to review, develop and in certain areas replace systems to provide online services and improved functionality to meeting meet customer expectation and the Transformation/Digital agenda
- End users and Services focussed on current practices which are dependent on email, printing, manual processes, data creation and maintenance suited on individuals or reactive goals instead of working collaboratively to meeting the outcomes of the customer
- Users have to currently use multiple environments (O365, VDI, etc) in order to access the required applications
- Dual running of Infrastructure as we migrate systems onto the Cloud setup in the next 12 months whilst retaining a production onsite environment
- Data Retention is not in place for all systems which can lead to duplicated, conflicted, and outdated data – this in turn impacts on service delivery, Freedom of information and GDPR.
- Continued and increasing dependency on ICT (almost 24/7) and the end user expectation to have increased working hours Service Desk support and access to systems from any device and any location
- To secure and protect devices and data from the continual threat of Cybercrime which is more prevalent in the current remote working environment

In order to address the key challenges, a future approach needs to;

Demonstrate value for money	Key areas include; <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrating a measurement for ROI for new IT developments• Reviewing and improving the current spend on systems/applications• Aligning the investment for future upgrades and projects – 12-month plan?
Include, Digital by Choice	Supporting the objectives of the future Transformation Programme by enabling and developing solutions that will add value and be easy for customers to use. In addition to online services, this will also support services that are accessed face to face or by phone.
Continuously improve the delivery of IT Services	The ICT service is accountable to its customers and aims to improve service delivery by; <ul style="list-style-type: none">• continuing to achieve high levels of customer satisfaction.• communication; keeping services and management informed of current performance and developments.• Providing an effective IT Service Desk which adds value and allows customers to contact us in a variety of ways.• Providing Innovative and Agile solutions; working with services, partners, and suppliers to deliver ICT solutions that are quick, secure and can transform service delivery.
Support Flexible and Agile working	Support the objectives and delivery of the People Strategy, in key areas such as remote working. This will also include supporting the future onsite accommodation which is currently under review and may include co-location (sharing accommodation space).
Availability – anytime, anyplace, anywhere	Staff have the equipment, systems, and facilities to work efficiently and securely access council systems from any location, at any time, using any chosen device.

Technology is one of the key components of change, it can only deliver expected organisation benefits and savings in conjunction with;

- Business processes that are efficient and fit for purpose
- Adoption of new ways of working by end users (which includes employees and customers)
- Commitment from Senior management and the organisation to deliver the agreed actions

The ICT, Digital Transformation, Customer Service and People strategies and approach therefore must be aligned in order to deliver the required outcomes

3 ICT Vision, Aims and Values;

Vision Statement

To support and underpin the aims and aspirations of the Council, it's residents and businesses by enabling digital services and improving ICT processes that will drive innovation, transformation, and efficiencies by working with users, services, and partners

Aims

- Enabling digital services, transformation and supporting business systems – through channel shift, automation, online and self-service
- Working with services and partners to improve ICT processes and technologies
- Modern architecture enabling efficient ICT operation and supporting the new ways of working
- Robust security and governance arrangements

Values

Our Values are;

- a strong, caring focus on the needs of communities
- continuous improvement and delivering value for money
- valuing employees and enabling the active involvement of everyone
- innovation and readiness for change
- Integrity and professional competence

The ICT Strategy is an essential aspect in assisting the Council in achieving its vision.

4 Overarching technology principles

Add Value and Innovation	Where investments are made, it will yield demonstrable benefit to the organisation and our residents Innovation; embrace the latest technology and opportunities to deliver real improvements and change
Digital by Choice	Develop or implement systems that are 'so good that users would prefer to use them'. Design and deliver joined -up, end to end services
Focus on Customer outcomes	Engage/inform the customer from project inception to completion Use the Agile methodology, which focuses of users, provides transparency, and allows for incremental change
Improve Information, Assets and Data	Use data and information to improve services (Business Intelligence) Look at the big picture – how does it fit into the organisation and technically within the systems architecture Do not develop or procure systems in isolation.

Cloud First	Where possible, practical, and financially viable, cloud solutions will be implemented. This will allow us to take advantage of greater accommodation benefits, technical resources, scalability, and resilience.
Secure by Design	Data and information security will be at the heart of everything we do along with our ever evolving and advancing strategies and activities to protect us from cyber threats.
Keep it simple	Understand the requirements. Challenge unnecessary complication and intricacy. Ensure return on investment and don't implement intricate technology to deliver infrequent processes or low-complexity cases.

5 How does it all hang together - links to other Strategies and Policies.

5.1 Corporate documents.

Corporate Strategy (2020 – 2024)

The Corporate Strategy sets out the Council's main strategic priorities over the next four years. There are four key themes within the strategy:

1. Caring for the environment
2. Healthy communities
3. A thriving economy
4. Your council

The development of IT services will be a critical enabler across all departments to help the Council to achieve its aims under each of these priorities, from becoming a carbon neutral organisation by 2030 helping tackle climate change to building our digital services using technology that will help us be more effective, efficient and flexible to meet customers' needs.

We recognise there are financial challenges ahead for local government and we will use them as an opportunity to transform into a more efficient, effective, and innovative organisation.

We will use a variety of technology to support current and future collaborations with partners, in both the public and private sector, to bring improvements to our services and the borough of Charnwood.

Strategic Direction (2020-2024)

The Strategic Direction document accompanies the Corporate Strategy 2020-24 and sets out the key operating principles the Council will adopt to achieve its objectives and deliver outstanding services for residents. It identifies the Council's ambition to be one of the most effective, efficient, and influential Councils in the Country

The document also sets out challenges to be addressed in the delivery of the Corporate Strategy including the COVID 19 pandemic, a reduction in funding and increasing costs, increasing demand for council services, climate change and rapid changes in technology

The Strategic Direction document identifies how the Council will operate in a number of key areas. The four areas that are most relevant to the ICT Strategy are.

1. The Council - We will:
 - become a leaner, more streamlined organisation which delivers positive outcomes and achieves excellent value for money
 - increasingly work together across teams and services and with partners to achieve outcome
2. Customer service – We will:
 - maintain a focus on customer experience and put the customer at the centre of our thinking
 - increase the number of online services so customers can access them 24/7
3. Our people - We will:
 - create an agile and flexible workforce which is focused on improving the lives of residents and achieving outcomes
 - provide our employees with the systems and equipment they need to deliver outstanding, effective, and efficient service
4. Transformation and Efficiency – We will:
 - review all services to make them more efficient and effective
 - work with partners to deliver innovative solutions to the challenges and opportunities ahead
 - maximise the use of technology to make the Council a more streamlined, efficient, and effective organisation
 - invest in transformation to achieve measurable outcomes such as service delivery or savings

Customer Service Strategy (2021 – 2024)

The Customer Service Strategy sets out the Council’s approach to how it will enable customers to access our services as well as the service standards they can expect when dealing with the Council. The Council will take a ‘digital by preference’ approach, optimising online services making them the channel of choice for most of our customers. This will require the support of ICS in the development of innovative and intuitive easy to use online forms, as such these requirements have been considered in the development of the ICS Strategy.

People Strategy (2021 –2024)

The newly developed People Strategy and specifically the Agile Working Policy have been considered in the development of the ICT Strategy to ensure alignment and synergies are recognised and acknowledged ensuring both strategies support the delivery of the aims. The Agile Working Policy relies of the use of modern technologies such as Office 365 and Cloud based technologies as such these requirements have been considered and included within the development of the ICT Strategy.

5.2 National Picture

The [Government's IT Strategy](#) approach to technology is to provide better public services for less costs through disaggregating, re-using, optimising, sharing and modernising technology, with the aim of improving productivity, efficiency, reducing waste and the likelihood of project failure. The strategy is based on three separate sub-stands;

- [Greening Government ICT](#); this sub section outlines the Government's commitment to reducing carbon and cost, increasing resilience, responsibility, accountability, transparency, and collaboration by engaging with suppliers, proactively reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and reusing redundant ICT within the Public Sector
- [End user device Strategy](#); provides broad guidance on areas such as avoiding vendor lock in, security controls, devices should be used as commodities and not customised, software/services should be designed for the web and therefore not be device agnostic and finally software and data on end user devices should be minimised;
- [G-Cloud](#); in line with the [Cloud First Policy](#), this strand defines the vision, scope, benefits, Governance structure and services intended to be on the G-cloud. Services can be purchased as commodities covering three areas - Infrastructure, Platform and Applications

The Government's [Transformation Strategy 2017 - 2020](#) which is based on the vision of;

- Better understanding what citizens need
- Assembling services more quickly and at lower cost
- Continuously improving services, based on data and evidence

The blueprint of meeting the vision and objectives of the Transformation strategy is based on;

- the [10 Design principles](#) based on the user requirement and delivering service in an agile manner
- [Digital Service Standard](#); 14 steps to help create, manage, and develop a digital service
- and the [Technology Code of Practice](#) which is set of criteria to assist in the design, building and purchasing of technology, which reinforces the approach of making IT products and services; based on the user needs, accessible, inclusive, open source, open standards, Cloud first, secure and reliable, include privacy by design, shareable, reusable and collaborative, making use of data, choosing the right tools and technology and having a clear vision of what success would look like delivered by a multidisciplinary team.

On Security, the [National Cyber Security Strategy 2016-2021](#) is based on the "DEFEND, DETER, DEVELOP" for managing Cyber Security and the [National Cyber Security Centre \(NCSC\)](#) provides key guidance and tools for protection the IT Infrastructure and data against unauthorised access, harm or misuse.

The Charnwood ICT Strategy has been developed with the areas mentioned above in mind and its objectives are considered to align with the Government IT, Digital and Security Strategies.

6 Strategic Aims

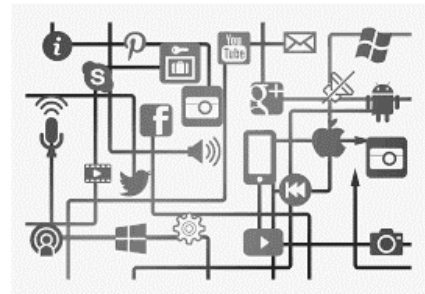
6.1 Enabling digital services, transformation and supporting business systems

A digital platform is an essential foundation to support and develop online services and the delivery of the Transformation programme. The platform will be an integrated communication environment defined below which offers significant benefits;

Council services will be accessible seamlessly in the real world (telephone, face to face, etc) and online, with fully digital (and where possible automated) back office processes, knowledge-driven services, undertaking data led decisions, a genuine mobile workforce and services that are responsive in real-time

The technology principles of the digital platform will include;

- Designing digital services around the needs of the people using them
- Creating new, simple, and secure ways for customers to use online services
- Building digital services, not just websites – think about all aspects of the service to make sure it adds up to something that meets users’ needs.
- This is for everyone; understand the context, the design should be inclusive, legible, readable, and accessible. We recognise the services we build may be accessed by users who are not familiar with online services and may also be assisted by alternative contact channels (telephone and face to face).
- Do less and make it simple; make the processes and technology reusable and shareable
- Breaking our dependence on inflexible and expensive technology that doesn’t join up effectively, in favour of modular common components and open data standards
- Digitise and automate back office process by working with services to transform the ways of working and integrating online processes into day to day service delivery
- Effective mobile and field working - enabling and supporting staff at all levels with effective tools for communication and accessing the required data and systems
- Developing the right skills and training programmes to support the delivery of the digital platform



We will deliver this by;

- Following the [Design Principles](#), the [Digital Service standard](#) and [Technology code of Practice](#) defined as a development approach by GOV.UK and the Government Digital Service (GDS), which always start with user needs
- Implementing online tools/systems that support transactional process such as intelligent e-forms, workflow and process management, automation, secure and seamless integration with back office data and corporate systems such as payment portals, bookings, etc.
- The core of the Digital platform would be an integrated self-service online Contact Management system which would interface with online tools such as web chat, customer accounts, social media, email (for campaigns and notifications) and the telephony system. This approach will be based on the principle of ‘Capture once and reuse’, giving the customer a seamless experience regardless of the access channel they use

- Introduce tools in the medium/longer term improve the features of the Contact Management system to engage further with customers (e.g. webchat) and provide personalised content and transaction information based on Customer accounts

Applications Strategy;

The second essential area to enable effective digital services and transformation includes improving the functionality of Applications to meet end user and customer requirements. There are a number of systems used across the Authority which can be categorised into the three following areas;

- Customer facing systems; these are systems are used directly to interface with customers and support self-service. Examples include - website, eforms, online payments, online bookings, etc.
- Back office corporate systems; this includes applications used internal by most staff across the Council. Examples include - Customer Relation Management system, HR, Finance, Intranet, etc
- Back office specific; used to support specific services. Examples include – Housing system, Planning and Building Control system, Environmental Health, Electoral Registration, etc.

Some applications have multiple modules which can belong to more than one category e.g. the Payment system which includes a customer facing and an internal module, etc.

The larger back office applications (for both corporate and specific categorises) have historically been purchased as third party ‘best of breed’ systems to support specific services or functions. There are also some medium sized or smaller systems which are developed in-house to meet specific service requirements.

The Council currently has a mixed landscape in the maturity and use of applications which need to be co-ordinated, resourced adequately and have clear lines of responsibility. In certain areas, applications are used to support semi-manual processes which are seen as operationally convenient. These processes bring the potential for duplication (e.g. data entry), inconsistency, inefficiency and are a barrier to joined up digital services.

The development of larger applications is heavily dependent on the functionality and software releases provided by suppliers. As a result of the pandemic, there has been a substantial increase to access applications remotely by all users, the need to provide self-service options for customers and the availability of mobile/field working functionality in Back office systems.

The overall strategy for applications will be to provide fewer, more integrated, flexible, and online focussed modern systems with the support of the following actions;

- Use the [Digital Service standard](#) and [Technology code of Practice](#) approach for adhering to open standards and common technology components such as application programming interfaces (APIs), web services, etc. This provides guidance for both in-house developed and third-party systems
- As covered in [Section 6.2](#), engage with services to ensure the application systems requirements and priorities are understood by both services and ICT. This also identifies the required application landscape (i.e. what information and data does the service and users require?)
- Identify a roadmap for all key applications, that will keep the system on supported versions and not allow the application’s performance to deteriorate to a level that is

detrimental to business outcomes. This will require clear lines of responsibility, funding, supporting resources and approval by the Authority

- Where appropriate, consolidate systems to improve integration and reduce costs. For certain areas this may involve moving away from the established 'best of breed' approach which was used to acquire applications for specific purposes
- For new applications or the upgrade of existing systems, first consider if other existing systems can meet the requirements
- For any key system changes, look at the big picture – how does it fit into the organisation and technically within the systems architecture. Do not develop or procure systems in isolation
- Use Microsoft's [Common Data Service \(CDS\)](#) for the development and amalgamation of internal systems. This can also encapsulate certain existing third-party applications. This approach is part of the O365 environment and uses the **(low code, no code)** approach by providing visual tools that can be configured to build applications rapidly.



The CDS approach will also be used to identify common;

- Data set Entities e.g. people, property, codes, etc which will be used as foundation blocks for all applications.
 - Standardisation of Processes into areas such as Apply, Request, Report, Provide, Book, Pay, etc
 - Standardisation of Workflow and Business rules e.g. for authorisations, notifications, etc
- Use [Agile Software development](#) approach for delivering the solution to the end users as soon as possible which supports the iterative process of testing, learning, adapting and improving solutions. Developers will use a collaborate approach by sharing development environments, code, data repositories, files, plans, and tasks, etc

Strategic Aim Deliverables

Summary of actions covered in this section;

- Support the delivery of the Transformation programme by covering the principles and actions outlined to develop the Digital platform
- As part of the Digital platform, review the system options for developing an integrated self-service online Contact Management system
- Develop a systems portfolio which identified the use of systems within the different services and the potential for consolidating systems
- Identify a roadmap of all key applications, including clear lines of responsibility and any supporting resources
- Apply the CDS approach for reviewing, developing, and amalgamating applications

6.2 Working with Services and Partners to improve ICT processes and technologies;

ICT is critical for most if not all Council services – its required operationally for daily communication and access to systems by end users. It also supports the development and improvement of services by helping to deliver efficiencies and enable new ways of working.

The ICT Service supports approximately 560 users which include; all Charnwood staff, Councillors and Shared Services Partners such as Harborough District Council, North West District Council, Leicestershire County Council, and Capita for the Revenue and Benefits service.

Service requirements, expectations, development needs and operational issues are identified and agreed as part of regular Service Level Agreements (SLA) meetings with Head of Service/Managers, which cover;

- ICT Performance and Service Profile; the profile aspect covers the current equipment used by staff and requirements to support new ways of working
- Applications; defining what is currently being used, how it can be improved and future applications/ system requirement
- Planned developments; any changes/Projects that will require input from ICT, any improvements that can be made using ICT

The table below lists the key development actions agreed with Services from the recent SLA meetings (December 2020);

Head of Service Area/ Managers	Key ICS Future developments
Cleansing and Open spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate systems and data requirements for users that will be mobile/field working e.g. Enforcement officers, Contract Officers, etc. • Requirements to exchange data with other systems such as the Agresso (Finance system) and the Contract Management application (Whitespaces)
Financial Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope the O365 Teams migration which will include migration of Shared network drives, SharePoint areas, e-Forms, processes using Power automate and potential applications using Power apps • Include the Agresso Finance system in the Cloud/Hybrid migration (see Section 7.3) • Continue with the Cloud migration of the iTrent (HR/Payroll system) - to be completed by end of February 2021
Procurement and Property Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of the online Procurement/Contracts register using the O365 Power apps • Provide ICT input into the Office accommodation review to support an onsite shared environment with Partners and the update/possible relocation of the onsite Data Centre

Head of Service Area/ Managers	Key ICS Future developments
Planning and Regeneration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation (from January 2021) of the single system for Planning Services, Environment Health, Strategic and Private Sector Housing and Land charges, this will replace three existing back office applications and reduce the existing issues (with VDI, pdf documents, etc) being encountered with users accessing multiple environments Printing/scanning requirements for digitise documents and distributing incoming post
Building Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead on the ICT aspects of setting up the joint service with North West Leicestershire District Council (from January 2021) Implementation of the single system with Planning, Environment Health, Strategic and Private Sector Housing and Land charges, which includes the Building Control module
Regulatory Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide general training (across all services) on O365, new systems such as Teams, Forms, SharePoint online, and awareness on IT access and guidance procedures Migration of the Care parking system (WPS) onto the Cloud Improve remote access for the Noise and Air protection systems As mentioned above, Implementation (from January 2021) of the single system for Planning Services, Environment Health, Strategic and Private Sector Housing and Land charges, this will replace three existing back office applications
Leisure and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the implementation of the online booking system for Markets and Fairs, including payment integration and the use of mobile/tablet devices Agreement on the priority of O365 Teams migration Support the update on the Town Hall website
Customer Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete the O365 migration for Customer Services Support the implementation of the upgrade Contact Centre Telephone module Review the potential of the O365 Bookings system to replace the Bookings Live application
Neighbourhood Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist in the CCTV system upgrade and relocation to the onsite Data Centre Investigate systems, data and equipment requirements for users that will be mobile/field working
Strategic Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With input from Democratic Services, implement hybrid meeting rooms facilities which will allow multiple users onsite and users with remote access to video conferencing facilities.

Head of Service Area/ Managers	Key ICS Future developments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Legal Service to review and implement a replacement Case Management system
Strategic and Private Sector Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation (from January 2021) of the single system for Planning Services, Environment Health, Strategic and Private Sector Housing and Land charges, this will replace three existing back office applications
Landlord Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate, scope and if approved implement online services (as part of the Transformation programme) for Tenant information, Rent statements and Repairs Investigate and implement a Document management system for the current paper-based Tenant files Provide Intranet access that will enable mobile operatives to share and update the required documentation
Organisational Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Migration and development of HR information for the new SharePoint/Intranet site Migration of HR paper files into digital files Replacement of the Performance Management system

Common areas, identified from the SLA meetings;

- Services have confirmed that the IT equipment is suitable for remote working but have reported the lack of flexibility of accessing multiple environments
- Linked to above, the need to access Applications more seamlessly – without logging into the VDI environment
- Some Services have identified staff which would need to use Field working/mobile equipment and systems e.g. Enforcement Officers, Wardens, Housing Repair Operatives, etc
- All areas identified a requirement for making better use of O365 and Teams by migrating shared files, developing workflows ([Power Automate](#)), e-Forms, Bookings, Planner, etc
- As covered in [Section 6.1, Applications Strategy](#) - with Services, review the ownership, roadmap, and development of Applications. The development aspect will include (where appropriate) consolidation or building applications using [Power Apps](#) and the CDS approach
- Develop a Governance process for assessing, prioritising, and implementing new ICT projects or developments
- Services expressed the need for an online Training facility which will enable services to make effective use of applications
- Support remote and agile working by reviewing and agreeing the hours ICT Services will be available

Strategic Aim Deliverable;

Continue to work with Services to progress and implement the Future Development and Common areas listed in the table above

6.3 Delivering a Modern ICT Architecture;

The ICT architecture is the underlying foundation and building block of all ICT services, required to support daily operational use of ICT and the delivery of all the actions/objectives covered in this Strategy. The objective of the ICT architecture is to provide;

A technology Infrastructure that is efficient, resilient, reliable, responsive, secure, supports innovation and agile working, allows users to make maximum use of technology with ease of use and provides seamless access to required services and systems

Currently a single purpose-built onsite Data Centre is in place with appropriate environmental, physical and security controls supporting access to both onsite and remote workers. The Data Centre hosts virtual environments (for Desktops and Servers) which has seen substantial reduction in physical space and power consumption. The onsite fibre network is designed to be resilient and avoids single points of failure. The Server environment is segregated and designed on the guidance of the National Cyber Security Centre and PSN requirements.

The Council has a stable and resilient IT Infrastructure but needs to review and further improve the architecture for the following reasons;

- Refresh of IT Infrastructure; upgrades are required to the Virtual Server environment and key aspects of the onsite Data Centre are approaching 'end of life'.
- Efficiency costs - covering two areas;
 - the migration of the CCTV recording and connection equipment to the Data Centre is being recommended to ensure the CCTV infrastructure has the required level of resilience
 - Server room power consumption – improvements are required to ensure we make the most effective use of cooling and power consumption technologies in the Data Centre, as less than half of the physical allocated space is used
- Smart working – increasing requirements for the infrastructure to support onsite and remote access (including mobile access to systems). User expectation is to have a single environment/method of access regardless of the device or location.
- [Government's Cloud First policy](#) - the policy states that “when procuring new or existing services, public sector organisations should consider and fully evaluate potential cloud solutions first before considering any other option. This approach is mandatory for central government and strongly recommended to the wider public sector.” Services are encouraged to initially consider Software as a Service (SaaS), particularly for enterprise IT and back office functions
- Review our options periodically - is there something better that can be used to reduce costs and improve IT service delivery?

The Authority has 'sweated its IT Assets' over the last 10 years. Although the development of the IT Infrastructure overall has been positive, it has also been piecemeal and undertaken on a project-by-project basis. Due to the 'end of life' of some of the Infrastructure, continuing with the AS-IS approach is not a sustainable solution. Recent changes/upgrades within areas such as O365, the Telephone system and applications such as the Payment system, HR/Payroll application have resulted in the implementation of Cloud based or SaaS solutions.

After comparison with a number of different options, including; on Premise, Private Cloud, and Public Cloud. The Hybrid Cloud approach (which uses a combination of Public Cloud installation and an on-premise Data Centre) was selected for the following reasons;

- There is a requirement to host Servers/Applications onsite, this includes; CCTV, Doors access system, network management and security systems, etc. For certain systems, a cloud solution either isn't available or isn't cost effective and would therefore need to be hosted onsite until an effective cloud solution is available
- There will be a period of migration as not all applications can be transferred simultaneously and may involve third-party suppliers. For some systems this may change how the application is accessed, costed, or used
- The Hybrid approach has the potential to transform IT service delivery and provides easy access to back office applications (without needing to log-in to the internal network).
- Provides Agility by ensuring we are not locked into a supplier-based Cloud model and only migrate applications that will provide an added benefit - 'best of both worlds'
- Not a 'one size fits all' approach - this setup also gives the opportunity to 'mix' different Cloud models which is suitable in our environment where several different applications are in use
- The on-premises installation, allows a phased implementation/migration to the Cloud which provides added benefits in testing, migration, assessing platform suitability and avoiding unforeseen costs
- Capacity expansion – allows incremental expansion of the network by allowing existing technologies, tools, and techniques to be reused without impacting on the business or end users. Additional Hardware can be easily scalable (Storage, Servers, etc)

The Hybrid migration approach in the next 12 months will be to assess and simplify the IT architecture, moving away from incremental refresh and develop a single secure network that will be accessible internally (when users are onsite) and remotely. The following factors will be used to measure the suitability and location of different applications;

- Costs; This will involve understanding the Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) and the operating cost model – what will be included as 'standard' and what will be classed as 'additional' cost and how will this compare to the existing costs?
- Benefits; How will Cloud adoption provide added value and transformation for the Business/services and technical delivery? How will the benefits be achieved and measured?
- Performance; this will include identifying what needs to be measured (supplier's SLA), the metrics of measurement as well as setting achievable targets
- Compatibility; will there be any loss of functionality in access the cloud-based solution? Including access to download or report on data
- Security; what security controls will be covered by the supplier? How will data resilience be covered? How will the backup and disaster recovery process work? And what assurances will be included in the event of a cyber-attack or in resolving major vulnerabilities?
- Complexity; how will this change the access, management, and maintenance of the systems/infrastructure? Will the management of systems therefore need more or less resources?

As shown in Figure 1 below, the Hybrid environment will be based on [Microsoft Azure](#) which allows the authority to make increased usage of the ‘Enterprise Agreement’, benefiting from software licencing and the CDS software development environment covered in [Section 6.1](#).

In the next 12 months, the migration of the Server environment will be based on the [Azure Migration Programme \(AMP\)](#) to develop a cost effective, secure and scalable extension of the existing network

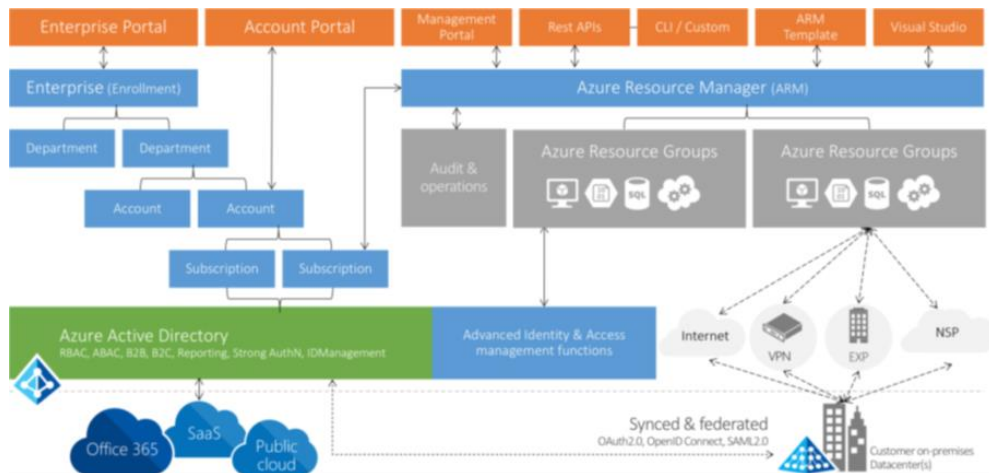


Figure 1: Azure migration Framework

The onsite Data Centre will be redesigned following the scoping of services and applications to be migrated onto Azure. The location of the Data Centre is dependent on the onsite accommodation which is under review.

The development of the ICT infrastructure will be based on common technologies and platforms, consolidating where possible and allowing resources to concentrate on value added activities striving for an “always on” ICT infrastructure

The other two areas within ICT Infrastructure which are being developed include;

Unified Communications (UC):

UC refers to a central platform or communication tool used for the phone system, instant messaging, video collaboration, etc.

The authority already has a cloud based VOIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol – *uses data/ Internet instead of traditional analogue lines*) for supporting all users including the Shared Service Contact Centre.



Since March 2020, the Council has made substantial use of Microsoft Teams as a video conferencing, collaboration, and installation messaging system. The next key development is to enable voice within Teams – this would allow users to access their phone extensions within Teams, providing users with an all in one cloud solution which would also increase the access (including using mobiles) and methods of contact between users and customers.

There has also been a sustained increase in use of mobile devices (smartphone, tables, etc) for both Android and iOS environments. The O365 Microsoft investment is utilised further with [Endpoint Manager](#) for managing access to mobile devices, including BYOD devices.

Printing and Document Management;

The Council uses standard multi-function device (MFD) for printing, scanning, faxing etc, with a central 'follow-me' printing queue where users 'pull' their print jobs from any MFD regardless of the printer location, by using their ID card or pin.

Printing statistics/usage are shared as part of the regular SLA meeting with Services (covered in [Section 7.2](#)) . The requirement for reducing print volumes vary in different service areas.

Services will be required to print less in support of the Environmental, Transformation and accommodation agendas. Key developments to support this, include;

- Printing to MFDs from mobile devices (including BYOD devices)
- Digitising (scanning and distributing) incoming mail to services using Microsoft One Drive and SharePoint online
- Enabling users to scan directly to and from One Drive
- Delegated printing – where approved users can print jobs on behalf of other users
- Hybrid mail – in support of agile working, developing a business case and (if approved) implement a solution for staff to send print batch jobs from anywhere which will result in reducing existing printing costs, centralised printing rules and provide transparency of print jobs undertaken by services.

Our intended approach for a corporate Document Management solution is to use Microsoft SharePoint, which will make use of the existing O365 environment and provides a familiar user interface for staff. This requirement is currently being investigated as a solution in Housing (for managing Tenant files) and Customer Services for scanning, indexing, and retrieving customer documents provided for verification. Both areas will make use of O365 workflow (e.g. approving documents) and use the existing MFDs for scanning paper-based documents.

Strategic Aim Deliverables;

- As part of the Azure Migration Programme, complete the migration of identified Servers and Applications in the next 12 months - commencing in January 2021
- Redesign the onsite Data Centre – the location and timescales are linked to the ongoing review of Accommodation
- Unified Communication; enable Voice (Users' Direct Dial Numbers) within Microsoft Teams
- Printing; Once scoped and approved, enable and support development areas listed above – digitising incoming mail and Hybrid mail
- Document Management System (DMS); investigate and if approved implement SharePoint as the corporate DMS solution

6.4 Robust Security and Compliance;

The increased reliance and dependency on ICT systems to support the redesign/ transformation of council services, enable the delivery of efficiency savings, meet customer needs as well as the expectation to access systems remotely and on any device and location requires the ICT Infrastructure and systems to be protected continuously from a variety of sources without compromising access and functionality.



Our approach is to maintain a resilient and robust Infrastructure and have Security built by Design into all ICT products and services

In accordance with the [National Cyber Security Strategy 2016-2021](#) and the guidance, tools and partnership services provided by the [National Cyber Security Centre \(NCSC\)](#), the Council will take the necessary “DEFEND, DETER, DEVELOP” measures to protect the Hardware, Software and associated infrastructure, the data on them and the services they provide, from unauthorised access, harm or misuse.

List of key ICT Security threats facing the authority and our approach for mitigating the risk are listed below;

Key threats	Mitigations
Expanding range of devices accessing the Network from different locations (remote working)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only compliant devices access the required systems, this also includes users’ own devices (BYOD) • The Unified Threat Management system (UTM) secures all incoming and outgoing Gateway traffic (between the network and the outside world) • Strong Passwords and two factor authentications are in place for required systems • Latest anti-virus, malware and ransomware protection, email and web filtering and encryption software are in place
Poor Cyber hygiene and compliance <i>“Cyber-attacks are not necessarily sophisticated or inevitable and are often the result of exploited - but easily rectifiable and, often, preventable - vulnerabilities”¹</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A periodic cycle of vulnerability scans protecting new and existing aspects of the Infrastructure and Client devices. • Separate Firewalls protect the different network layers (web facing traffic, internal network, etc). All Client machines have Firewalls activated • Port level security standards are in place which only allows approved users and devices onto the Network • Only approved System Administrators have access to Servers • Standard protocols are in place and continue to be developed for Hardening of new builds (Infrastructure, Software, and end points) • Patching ‘Important’ and ‘Critical’ Software are installed promptly. We plan to introduce more regular maintenance windows for software upgrades • Develop real time monitoring and clear escalation points for network traffic and suspicious activity • Continue to undertake and implement actions from Penetration assessment and vulnerability assessments

¹ [National Cyber Security Strategy](#)

Key threats	Mitigations
Legacy and unpatched systems	<p>All hardware and software eventually become out of date, after which point, ideally – it should not be used.</p> <p>The cycle of Vulnerability scans, independent IT Health check, and regular patches and system upgrades are in place to identify and keep systems up to date. Back office application should not be more than two versions behind. The NCSC guidance will be used if we are in the unlikely situation of using obsolete platforms</p>
Vulnerabilities associated with the Cloud Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a clear, committed, and documented plan for how the cloud infrastructure will be used and its associated connections • Get assurances on the security and privacy protection, controls, and accreditation of suppliers – use tried and tested platforms which have been approved for Public Sector use. • Confirm the availability, resilience and business continuity procedures and the assurances on the location and storage of data, • Test access, application security, functionality, permissions, etc. Any changes should follow the Change Management process
Increasing threats from Cyber Criminals, Hacktivism, etc	<p>Cyber security risks can be best mitigated using a combination of the controls covered with the areas in this table and the - IDENTIFY, PROTECT, RESPOND, RECOVER - approach with particular emphasis on the areas listed below;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using the NCSC guidance and tools; Cyber Assessment Framework, https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/cyberessentials/overview, 10 steps to Cyber Security, Active Cyber Defence Hub, ‘Exercise in a Box’, etc • Keeping software and infrastructure patched and up to date • Robust End Point Security to protect user devices • Implement Multi-factor authentication which clearly separates external access • Effective and tested backup and restores processes • Clear and documented recovery plan
Insufficient training, skills and resources for end users and ICT staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous awareness and education on the threats/risks, mitigations and best practice for IT Security and Cyber Security • Promote User responsibility - Acceptable usage policies are signed prior to access for key IT services. Communicate updates and resign of Policies at regular intervals • Educate and ensure users are aware of the Reporting processes for incidents/vulnerabilities • Work in partnership to access resources, including training and awareness programmes offered by NCSC
Lack of a recovery Plan	<p>Our Recovery plan is based on the Council’s Business Continuity Plan and NCSC’s Cyber Assessment Framework (CAF) D.1 Response and Recovery Planning which provide a comprehensive plan for incident management and steps for managing responses, containment (block and isolate the issue) and recovery (restore the required service/system).</p> <p>The recovery plan also involves working with Partners such as the (NCSC, CiSP (Cyber Security Information Sharing Partnership) and the EMWARP (East Midlands Warning, Advice and Reporting Point) Group</p>

Key threats	Mitigations
Constantly evolving risks	<p>The impact of an IT security attack can be critical for the organisation, the challenge is to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • keep users aware of the risks and the controls in place • apply the controls covered in this table • Secure buy in and resources from Senior Leadership • And apply the guidance and advice provide by the NCSC • And continue work in partnership with (NCSC, CISP (Cyber Security Information Sharing Partnership) and the EMWARP (East Midlands Warning, Advice and Reporting Point) Group

In addition to the actions above, the authority uses the principles of, complies with or is in the process of meeting the following standards;

- [Cyber Essentials Plus certification](#); provides assurance and confirms that a clear approach for security measures in place
- [PSN \(Public Services Network\)](#); the annual compliance demonstrates the organisation’s security arrangements, policies and controls are sufficiently rigorous to allow users to connect to the secure PSN network. The process also includes the need for an annual independent [IT Health Check](#)
- [Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard \(PCI DSS\)](#); requirements ensure that the processing, storage, and transmission of payment information for face to face, telephone, Internet, and Self-Service payment are handled securely
- [Information Technology Infrastructure Library \(ITIL\)](#); the framework places importance on improving customer satisfaction by providing effective service delivery while being cost effective
- [Network Access Standard \(802.1X\)](#); is used to control access to the network using policies for approved users and devices

Working with services and suppliers, the Strategy will comply with principles in areas such as information security, data classification, storage, and integration/interoperability. In line with best practice these standards could relate to an ISO Management ([ISO 27001](#)) or Open data standards. BS7666 (standard for spatial datasets) will continue to be complied with for the Council’s corporate addressing system

Data Backup and Recovery:

An effective backup and restore system is a key component for managing security.

A central corporate backup solution is in place, which is integrated with the virtual and storage environment. The solution uses a combination of disk and tape media for effective restores and to reduce storage on servers by including features such as deduplication and offsite storage.

Backup data is retained for a full year, Incremental backups are undertaken during the week and a full back up at the end of the week. Details of the Backup cycle and supporting infrastructure are covered in the ICS Infrastructure Policy.

The Hybrid ICT Architecture (covered in [Section 6.3](#)) for future systems will change the location (Cloud based) and method of system backups which will either be included as a managed service with Suppliers (this is in place with certain system and the existing Telephony infrastructure) or be integrated into the existing corporate backup solution.

The main backup and recovery areas moving forward will include;

- Resourcing, agreeing, and investing in new cloud-based backup and recovery systems which in line would see a reduction in the data volume for the existing onsite corporate system
- Reviewing and setting effective policies for archiving and deletion of information
- Continue to develop and undertake tests the integrity of restores

The backup and recovery policy will continue to be reviewed and tested in line with the Council's Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity arrangement and guidance from the NCSC.

Strategic Aim Deliverables;

IT Security does not include a set of fixed 'start and finish' tasks but instead requires ongoing and proactive awareness of Network, Software, Cyber and Operational security. Key principles and deliverables, covered in this section include;

- Achieving compliance of Cyber Essential Plus Accreditation and any other agreed standards covered in the above section
- Review and implement effective defences to the network, data and systems and have in place cyber incident reporting measures and be able to respond effectively to cyber-attack, maintaining functions and recovering quickly through appropriate service and business continuity arrangements.
- Implement "Security by Design" by carrying out IT Security risk assessments when selecting new systems, on-line services or implementing digital processes.
- Ensure that cyber security skills and awareness within the Council are maintained to mitigate the cyber security threats including the monitoring and reporting of incidents.
- As covered above, develop the Backup and Recovery processes to;
 - invest in new cloud-based systems which in line would see a reduction in the data volume for the existing onsite system. This will also include undertaking regular integrity restore tests
 - in line with GDPR, review and set policies for archiving and deleting information
- Continue to work in partnership with NCSC, East Midlands WARP and the Cyber Security Information Sharing Partnership (CiSP) to implement approved programmes, resources, and schemes

7 Risks

The delivery of the Strategy will be structured through a series of programmes and projects linked to the strategic components within the Authority and will be subject to establishing ICT Governance arrangements (covered in [Section 8](#)). The key risks and planned mitigations associated with the delivery of the Strategy include;

Key risks	Mitigations
Future funding constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As covered in Section 6.2, work with Services and Senior Management to demonstrate the dependency, value and improvements that are being achieved by using ICT Undertake regular market test of ICT products and services to ensure value for money For new initiatives or changes to existing ICT infrastructure; as part of the Business Case or the Project Mandate - provide clear details of the costings and benefits (including payback)
Important and urgent organisational business priorities emerging which require significant ICT resourcing (possibly on concurrent projects), necessitating the redeployment of ICT resources as priorities dictate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Section 8 - SWAP Board to monitoring the progress and agree on corporate priorities and resources on ICT developments Work with Services (as covered in Section 6.2) to identify future development which will require ICT input
Cultural challenges associated with new ways of working, the use of technology and the desire for customised local solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alignment with the People Strategy and the Agile Working Policy will ensure the users concerns and queries are addressed and support the delivery of common objectives/aims With the introduction of new ICT projects or technologies - Ensure appropriate skills, support and training is in place to empower employees to deal with ICT changes
Constantly evolving threats of Cyber Security	List of key ICT Security threats facing the authority and our approach for mitigating the risks are covered in Section 6.4 of this document
Cloud/Hybrid technologies not delivering intended benefits or outcomes	Have a clear strategy and approach for why Cloud or Hybrid technologies are being used - Section 6.3 , defines the reasons, options considered, measurement factors and approach for developing the Hybrid ICT Infrastructure.

Current and future ICT risks will be managed within the Council's [Risk Management Framework](#)

8 Resourcing and Implementing the Strategy

Effective resourcing is an essential requirement to enable the delivery of the Vision, Aims and actions covered in this Strategy.

The document covers key areas such as the development of the Hybrid Cloud infrastructure ([Section 6.3](#)), making increased use of the O365 environment and the implementation of the single application for Planning Services, Environment Health and Strategic and Private Sector Housing (see actions under [Section 6.2](#)) which have already been approved and costed.

The strategy also includes the following new requirements which (as part of the Monitoring and Review arrangements, mentioned below) will need to be resourced;

1. Supporting the delivery of the new Transformation programme - Services, Workspace & People (SWaP) by delivering the actions covered in [Section 6.1](#). Some aspect of the Digital platform have already been resourced as part of the O365 programme.
2. Also as part of [Section 6.1](#) (in line with strategy for reviewing and consolidating Applications), key changes to existing systems and the introduction of new applications will need to be funded. This should follow a standard approach for outlining a Business case, return of investment (as part of a 5-year plan) and the alignment of supporting resources such as software licences, system administration, etc
3. Agile working changes - any new practices that will increase the need for ICT resources and equipment e.g. increased Service Desk hours of support, the need to provide new equipment for field or mobile workers, etc
4. Accommodation – relocation or changes to the onsite accommodation which will impact both on end users and the ICT Infrastructure
5. ICT training - The ability of the Council to gain maximum advantage from its investment in ICT depends crucially upon the existence of adequate operational ICT skills. In line with the People Strategy, ICT training and development should be resourced for different users e.g. end users, system administrators, IT Developers, etc

Monitoring and Review

The outcomes and actions of this strategy will be incorporated in the ICT Development plan that will be overseen by the SWAP Board

This principle body will have decision making responsibility, approve resources, agree the development of new ICT projects and ensure that business, user and technical agendas are fully recognised in ICT development and will be chaired by the Chief Executive

The membership of this group as of January 2021 includes;

Name	Position	Role
Rob Mitchell	Chief Executive	Chair
Justin Henry	Strategic Director - Commercial Development, Asset and Leisure	Member
Simon Jackson	Strategic Director - Strategic Support, Governance & Procurement	Member
Eileen Mallon	Strategic Director - Community, Planning and Housing	Member
Karey Barnshaw	Head of Customer Experience	Member
Lesley Tansey	Head of Financial Services	Member
Helen Gretton	Organisational Development Manager	Member
Mike Roberts	Communications Manager	Member

Charnwood Borough Council

Equality Impact Assessment 'Knowing the needs of your customers and employees'

■ Background

An Equality Impact Assessment is an improvement tool. It will assist you in ensuring that you have thought about the needs and impacts of your service/policy/function in relation to the protected characteristics. It enables a systematic approach to identifying and recording gaps and actions.

■ Legislation- Equality Duty

As a local authority that provides services to the public, Charnwood Borough Council has a legal responsibility to ensure that we can demonstrate having paid due regard to the need to:

- ✓ Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- ✓ Advance Equality of Opportunity
- ✓ Foster good relations

For the following protected characteristics:

1. Age
2. Disability
3. Gender reassignment
4. Marriage and civil partnership
5. Pregnancy and maternity
6. Race
7. Religion and belief
8. Sex (Gender)
9. Sexual orientation

What is prohibited?

1. Direct Discrimination
2. Indirect Discrimination
3. Harassment
4. Victimisation
5. Discrimination by association
6. Discrimination by perception
7. Pregnancy and maternity discrimination
8. Discrimination arising from disability
9. Failing to make reasonable adjustments

Note: Complete the action plan as you go through the questions

■ **Step 1 – Introductory information**

Title of the policy	ICT Strategy 2021-2023
Name of lead officer and others undertaking this assessment	Karey Barnshaw
Date EIA started	10/2/21
Date EIA completed	10/2/21

■ **Step 2 – Overview of policy/function being assessed:**

Outline: What is the purpose of this policy? (Specify aims and objectives)
The purpose of the strategy is to set out how the Council intends to develop its Information and Communications Technology (ICT) over the next three years. The role of ICT is essential to the delivery of all of the Council services, both in enabling ongoing day to day business processes and in supporting strategic change.
What specific group/s is the policy designed to affect/impact and what is the intended change or outcome for them?
The strategy is not aimed at any specific groups it covers all users of Council wide ICT system. It is designed to support users by providing them with efficient and effective system that support the delivery of the roles. Whilst also ensuring the Council is protected from any system security threats.
Which groups have been consulted as part of the creation or review of the policy?
There has been no specific consultation with any groups. Consultation has been undertaken with CLT, SLT and the Lead member for ICT to ensure there is consideration of the strategy will impact on their service area.

■ **Step 3 – What we already know and where there are gaps**

List any existing information/data do you have/monitor about different diverse groups in relation to this policy? Such as in relation to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation etc.
Data/information such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consultation ▪ Previous Equality Impact Assessments ▪ Demographic information ▪ Anecdotal and other evidence
There is no specific data in relation to different groups of people, this is a internal strategy aimed at supporting the needs of the Council and its users
What does this information / data tell you about diverse group? If you do not hold or have access to any data/information on diverse groups, what do you need to begin collating / monitoring? (Please list)
N/A

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■ **Step 4 – Do we need to seek the views of others? If so, who?**

In light of the answers you have given in Step 2, do you need to consult with specific groups to identify needs / issues? If not please explain why.
No as there is a neutral impact to all groups

■ **Step 5 – Assessing the impact**

In light of any data/consultation/information and your own knowledge and awareness, please identify whether the policy has a positive or negative impact on the individuals or community groups (including what barriers these individuals or groups may face) who identify with any ‘protected characteristics’ and provide an explanation for your decision (please refer to the general duties on the front page).

	Comments
Age	Neutral Impact – all users will have the opportunity to discuss any specific requirements they have and there will be a range of options to meet individual needs.
Disability (Physical, visual, hearing, learning disabilities, mental health)	Neutral Impact – all users will have the opportunity to discuss any specific requirements they have and there will be a range of option to meet individual needs
Gender Reassignment (Transgender)	Neutral Impact – all users will have the opportunity to discuss any specific requirements they have and there will be a range of option to meet individual needs
Race	Neutral Impact – all users will have the opportunity to discuss any specific requirements they have and there will be a range of option to meet individual needs.
Religion or Belief (Includes no belief)	Neutral Impact – all users will have the opportunity to discuss any specific requirements they have and there will be a range of option to meet individual needs
Sex (Gender)	Neutral Impact – all users will have the opportunity to discuss any specific requirements they have and there will be a range of option to meet individual needs
Sexual Orientation	Neutral Impact – all users will have the opportunity to discuss any specific requirements they have and there will be a range of option to meet individual needs
Other protected groups (Pregnancy & maternity, marriage & civil partnership)	Neutral Impact – all users will have the opportunity to discuss any specific requirements they have and there will be a range of option to meet individual needs
Other socially excluded groups (carers, low literacy, priority neighbourhoods, health inequalities, rural isolation, asylum seeker and refugee communities etc.)	Neutral Impact – all users will have the opportunity to discuss any specific requirements they have and there will be a range of option to meet individual needs

Where there are potential barriers, negative impacts identified and/ or barriers or impacts are unknown,

please outline how you propose to minimise all negative impact or discrimination.

Please note:

- a) If you have identified adverse impact or discrimination that is illegal, you are required to take action to remedy this immediately.
- b) Additionally, if you have identified adverse impact that is justifiable or legitimate, you will need to consider what actions can be taken to mitigate its effect on those groups of people.

N/A

Summarise your findings and give an overview as to whether the policy will meet Charnwood Borough Council's responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity (please refer to the general duties on the front page).

The ICT strategy 2021-2024, has a neutral impact in relation to the Council responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity. Where there are any specific requirements relating to a protected characteristic these can be considered as solutions provided to meet any individual needs

■ Step 6- Monitoring, evaluation and review

Are there processes in place to review the findings of this Assessment and make appropriate changes? In particular, how will you monitor potential barriers and any positive/ negative impact?

The implementation of the strategy will be monitored by the SWaP Board, if there any issues arise relating to equality and diversity these will be picked up and addressed.

How will the recommendations of this assessment be built into wider planning and review processes? e.g. policy reviews, annual plans and use of performance management systems.

The assessment will be include as part of the background papers that will go to Cabinet on 11th March 2021

■ **Step 7- Action Plan**

Please include any identified concerns/actions/issues in this action plan:
The issues identified should inform your Service Plan and, if appropriate, your Consultation Plan

Reference Number	Action	Responsible Officer	Target Date

■ **Step 8- Who needs to know about the outcomes of this assessment and how will they be informed?**

	Who needs to know (Please tick)	How they will be informed (we have a legal duty to publish EIA's)
Employees	Y	This assessment will be attached alongside the Cabinet paper of 11 th March 2021
Service users		
Partners and stakeholders		
Others		
To ensure ease of access, what other communication needs/concerns are there?		

Please delete as appropriate

I agree

Signed (Service Head): Karey Barnshaw

Date: 10/2/21

Digital Transformation Scrutiny Panel Work Programme

Responsible Body	Meeting Date	Item	Scope	Invitees/Officers	Notes
Digital Transformation Scrutiny Panel	Meeting 1 28 February 2022	Report/presentation on current projects	To enable the panel to understand current workstreams To include; current projects, difficulties identified, usage of e-reports pre-Covid and during Covid.	Karey Barnshaw/Aymen Khan	
Digital Transformation Scrutiny Panel	Meeting 1 28 February 2022	Assignment of tasks to panel members	To enable panel members to begin to gather relevant information to inform the panel	Karey Barnshaw	
Digital Transformation Scrutiny Panel	Meeting 2 March 2022	Feedback on Tasks	To enable panel members to highlight findings from tasks assigned		
Digital Transformation Scrutiny Panel	Meeting 2 March 2022	Identify Key Stakeholders	To consider useful contacts to speak to the panel		
Digital Transformation Scrutiny Panel	Meeting 2 March 2022	Paul Ward Head of IT and Digital, Coventry City Council			
Digital Transformation Scrutiny Panel	Meeting 2 March 2022	Planning Applications	To consider the current process involving planning applications and potential ways to improve this	Planning Officer	
Digital Transformation Scrutiny Panel	Meeting 3 27 April 2022	Feedback on Tasks	To enable panel members to highlight findings from tasks assigned		

Digital Transformation Scrutiny Panel Work Programme

Digital Transformation Scrutiny Panel	Meeting 3 27 April 2022	Stakeholders	Stakeholder interviews. To include someone with Marketing background and other councils.		
Digital Transformation Scrutiny Panel	Meeting 3 27 April 2022	Developing Survey	To create a survey for customers. To include what questions should be asked, who should answer the survey, how should the survey be distributed	Karey Barnshaw/Ayman Khan	
Digital Transformation Scrutiny Panel	Meeting 4 30 May 2022	Feedback on Tasks	To enable panel members to highlight findings from tasks assigned		
Digital Transformation Scrutiny Panel	Meeting 4 30 May 2022	Survey Results	To review the results of the survey.		
Digital Transformation Scrutiny Panel	Meeting 5 27 June 2022	Draft Panel Report and Recommendations	To agree final version for submission to the Scrutiny Commission and Cabinet	Karey Barnshaw	