Cherwell District Council
Digital Futures Strategy
2023-2026 - DRAFT

May 2023

Table of content

Introduction

As we adapt to an increasingly digital world, our strategies need to **focus on utilising available technologies** to **fulfil our responsibilities** and meet our goals. This approach will **enhance the experience for citizens**, businesses, partners, visitors, staff and future community members, **regardless of digital proficiency**, while maximising **effectiveness**, boosting **efficiency** and promoting **accountability**.

This digital strategy outlines how technology serves as a key enabler for our ongoing transformation programme, emphasising automation, digital solutions, data analytics, streamlined communication, and employee empowerment.

Through the implementation of a **unified platform approach**, we will deliver a seamless experience across all council services and incorporate advanced customer insights.

Our data and analytics strategy focuses on **breaking down information barriers**, using Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning (AI/ML) to gain insights across all services. We'll work towards creating reliable, accurate data sources while **enhancing transparency**. User privacy and data security remain top priorities, adhering to GDPR guidelines and building robust security standards into our systems by design.

We'll deploy chatbots, robotic process automation, and other technologies as needed to improve customer experiences further and reduce manual tasks. By adopting this digital strategy, we can build upon our already strong service delivery, enabling our staff to concentrate even more on refining and **enhancing the quality of council services**. This will ensure we continue to excel in meeting and exceeding the expectations of those we serve.

To achieve these ambitious goals, we will be transforming our IT Services into a dynamic Digital and Innovation hub. This transformation will serve as the catalyst for driving technological advancements, fostering a culture of innovation, and, ultimately, enhancing the delivery of our council services to better meet the diverse needs of all stakeholders.

Our ultimate aim is to ensure that **services are accessible to all**, irrespective of digital literacy, age, gender, ethnicity, disability, or socioeconomic background, in line with the principles of equality and inclusivity that underpin UK society.

Mark Duff – ICT and Digital Lead

Cherwell Digital Future
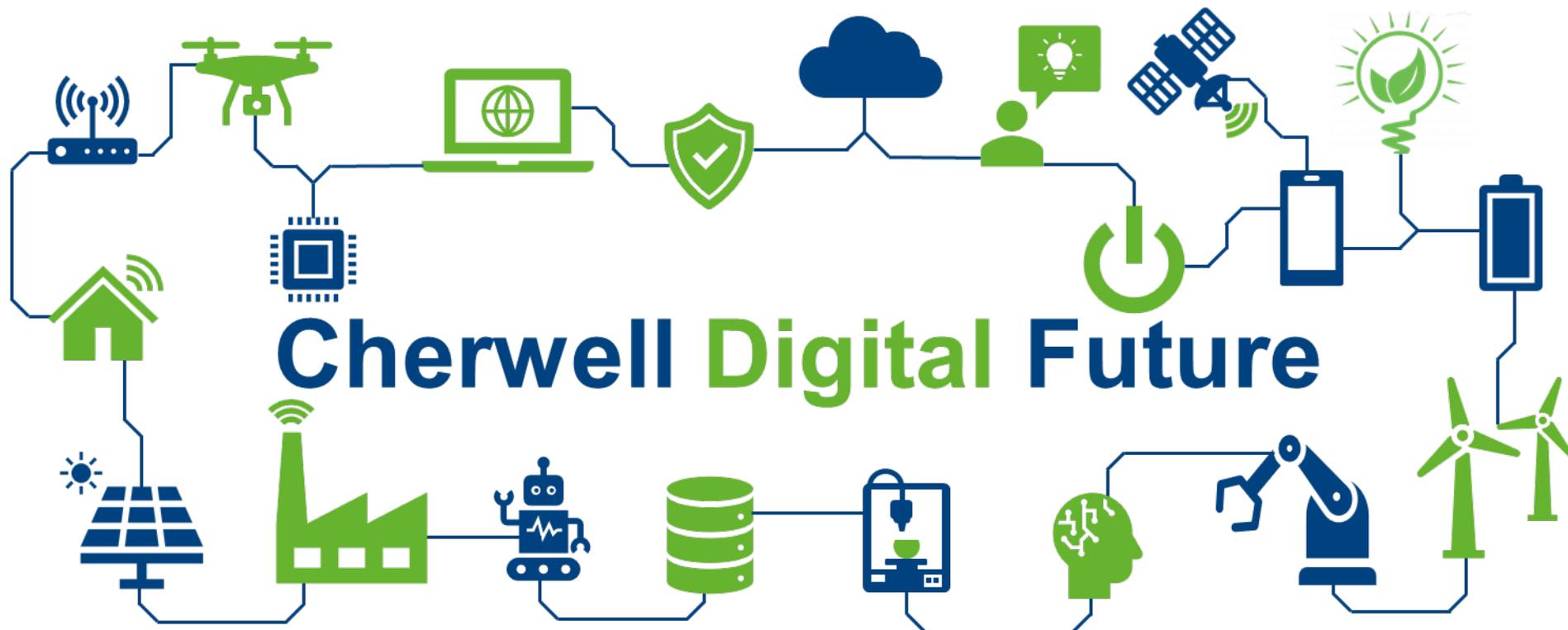
Summary

Definition of "Digital"

In the context of this strategy, "Digital" refers to the use of technology, electronic tools, and systems to enhance and streamline various aspects of the council's operations, communication, and interactions. It involves harnessing the power of digital technologies, such as the internet, software, artificial intelligence, machine learning, and automation, to improve efficiency, optimise processes, and deliver better experiences for citizens, businesses, and staff. The digital landscape encompasses the underlying infrastructure, platforms, and strategies that support and enable the integration of technology into the council's overall goals and objectives.

Why are we avoiding the term "Digital Transformation"?

The term "Digital Transformation" often implies a process driven primarily by the IT department. However, a truly transformative approach, especially one that focuses on operating cost efficiencies and challenges current operating models, requires the involvement of every part of the organisation. While some solutions may involve new systems, most will demand new ways of working and thinking. Digital technology can certainly facilitate these changes, but the focus should extend beyond digital aspects alone.

Understanding the motivation behind any initiative is key. If the reasoning is primarily "keeping up with the trend," it's beneficial to pause and delve into why others are adopting this approach. Gaining insight into their rationale equips us with the knowledge to decide if it aligns with our objectives and needs.

In summary, digital technology serves as a primary vehicle for driving transformation. However, a comprehensive transformation requires a broader focus and collaborative efforts across the entire organisation. This holistic perspective will ensure that the shift is not only about digital aspects but also about fostering a new mindset and implementing innovative ways of working.

Digital, a Vehicle of Transformation

Now
Running Service

Shared activities

Future
Running Service
Automation

Utilising digital tools and technologies, an effective digital strategy streamlines processes, enhances data analytics, optimises communication, and empowers employees. This approach will **support the transformation programme's goals** to elevate service delivery and reduce operational costs.

Our digital strategy will enable the transformation programme in the following ways:

Automating tasks

Identifying areas for automation, like data entry or invoicing, saving staff time and resources while boosting efficiency and accuracy.

Individual service activities

Shared activities

Adopting digital solutions

Aiding in finding and implementing digital solutions to cut operating costs, such as using cloud-based systems to reduce physical infrastructure needs while increasing resilience.

Individual service activities

Enhancing data analytics

Improving data analytics capabilities, allowing the council to monitor expenses better, pinpoint potential cost savings and provide customer and service insights.

Delivering Service

Simplifying communication

Streamlining communication among teams, departments, and stakeholders, decreasing the need for physical meetings and related expenses, and ensuring consistency and accuracy.

Delivering Service

Empowering employees

Equipping employees with tools and resources for efficient and effective work, like mobile apps or remote access, reducing office space requirements and associated costs. Implementing automation, digital solutions, enhance data analytics, and simplified communication will enable staff to focus less on running services and more time on delivering and improving services.

Improving Service

Improving Service
Insight

Facilitating Council Members

Providing council members with the tools and reports to assist decision-making and a platform to help connect to their constituents.

Our Digital Vision for Cherwell

Our vision is to make life **easier for everyone** in Cherwell—residents, visitors, businesses, Council Members and Council Staff — by using technology to enhance their experiences, whether receiving or providing council services. We strive for seamless, efficient interactions, **utilising technology both directly and discreetly** in the background.

We'll work on simplifying the process of all interactions with the council to **reduce the burden on citizens**. For example, pre-completed fields of known data in forms, map pin drops for locational information and automatic detection and reporting of issues such as fly-tipping. Whenever possible, we'll strive to eliminate the burden altogether. Our approach will involve **exploiting existing technology**, as well as implementing innovative solutions and improved data analytics to help us achieve all of the council's goals.

Ultimately, we want to create a single, **user-friendly platform** that makes every interaction with Cherwell straightforward and familiar, whether it's through our website, a mobile app, phone or other channels.
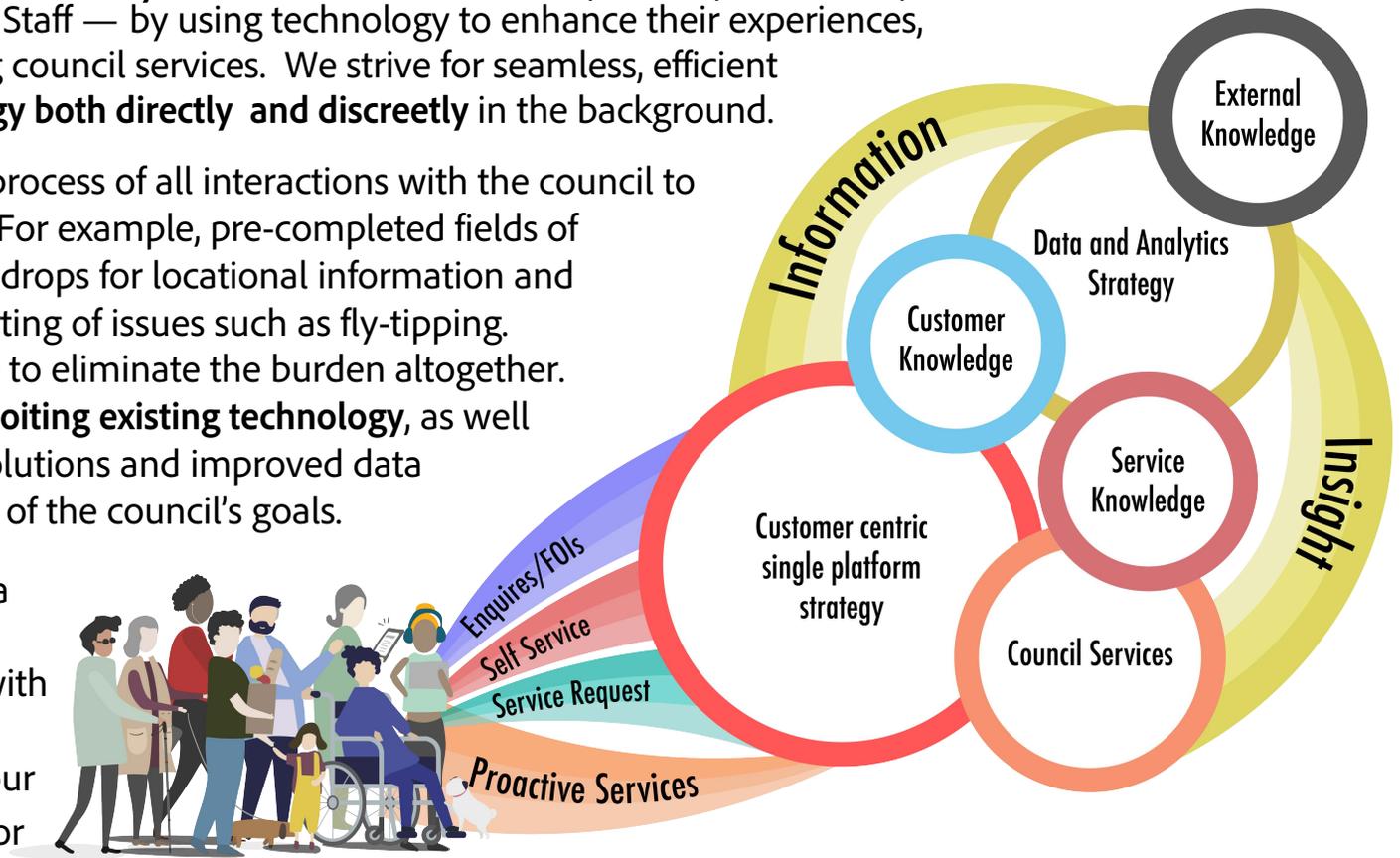
Consolidating our data sources and leveraging multiple channels will enable us to analyse information better, foster a culture of continuous improvement, and **deliver outstanding experiences for our citizens**. Additionally, this approach creates the potential to offer proactive services in the future across all channels.
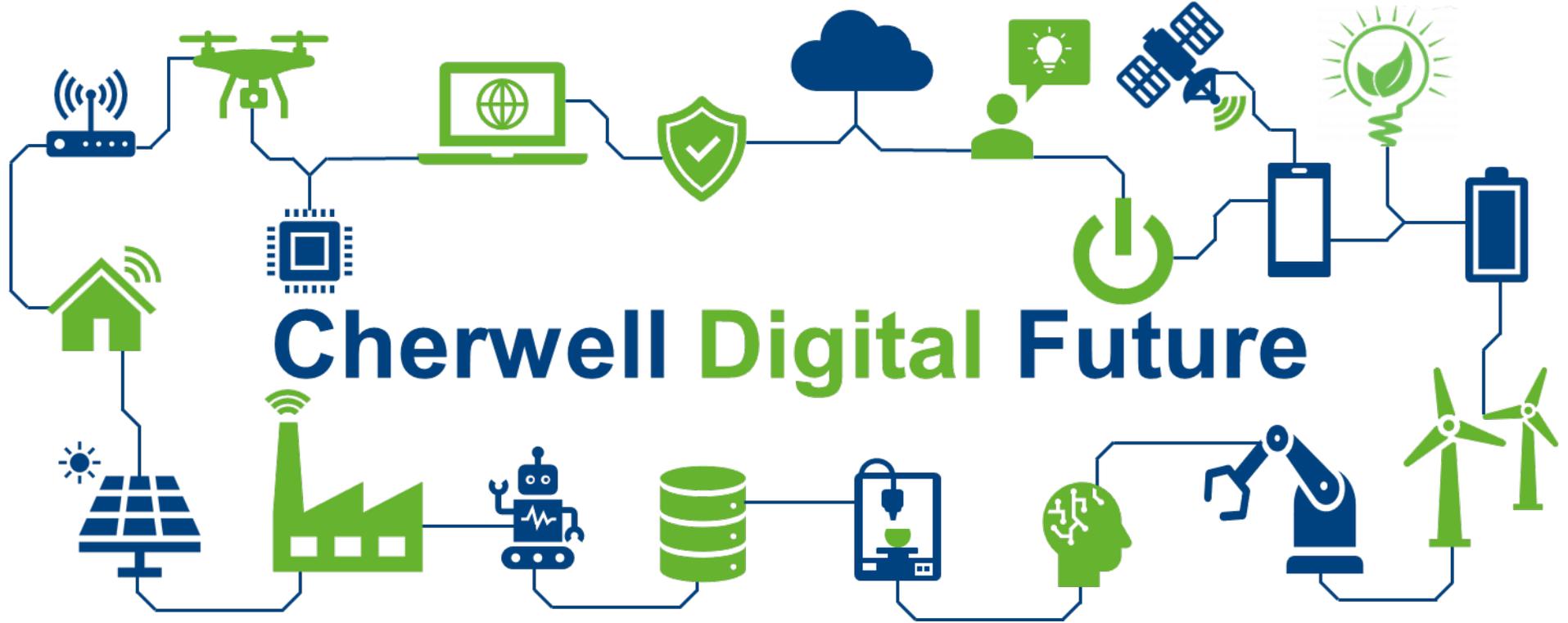
Strategy in detail

Current Digital Capabilities

Over the past few years, Cherwell has shifted to a cloud-first strategy, which means we've moved all our data and servers to the Microsoft Azure Cloud. This is like moving everything in a physical office to a virtual one in the cloud. As a result, we've been able to shut down our own data centres.

This move, which may seem like just moving things from one place to another, has given us a few significant advantages:

- Our services have become more reliable and resilient.
- Our data is backed up more securely.
- The physical security of our data has greatly improved.
- We can easily scale our services up or down as needed.

To ensure the safety of our data and services, we've set up multiple layers of security that protect us from various threats online.

We've started using Software as a Service (SaaS) solutions (see glossary), but we still have some systems hosted both locally (within our cloud-based virtual data centre) and in remote partner locations. The task of supporting these systems is shared by our partners, our IT team, and system owners within the council services. The responsibility varies depending on the system involved.

The Cherwell IT team is in charge of supporting all infrastructure services, which are the fundamental services that keep our systems running.

At present, our use of automation is limited to scripted processes, where we write a set of instructions for the computer to follow, and built-in system automation, which are tasks that computer systems can do automatically. Essentially, we're using basic automation technology to carry out routine tasks, saving time and reducing errors.

Cherwell IT provides and manages standard laptops for all staff and council members, along with support for mobile devices upon request. Additionally, everyone is given access to customised Microsoft 365 services, including, at the very least, an individual email account.

Although the model we have implemented may appear complicated, it has allowed us to establish a secure and efficient IT environment that caters to the diverse needs of our Services and a springboard for the next level of modernisation.
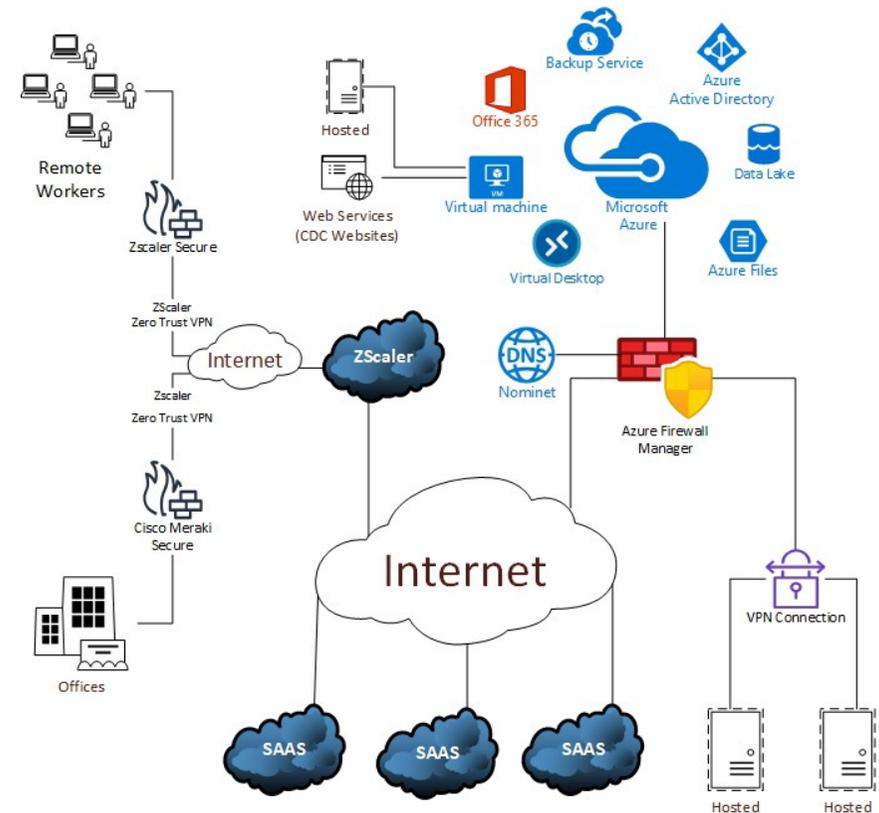
Focus on Security and Data Protection

In our digital world, safeguarding our systems and the information of our citizens is of utmost importance. To achieve this, we've implemented industry-leading security measures, such as:

- A 'Zero Trust' VPN solution: This is a type of secure online connection that doesn't automatically trust anything or anyone. Every user and device is verified before gaining access.
- Multiple firewall layers: These are like digital walls that keep out unwanted visitors from our computer systems.
- Secure Wi-Fi connections: This means that our wireless internet connections are encrypted, or coded, so that any information sent over them is protected.
- Multi-step identity verification: This is a process where users have to prove their identity in several ways before they can access our systems. It's a bit like showing multiple forms of ID before entering a secure building.
- Smart web and email filters powered by AI: These are systems that automatically sort through web content and emails to block out any harmful or unwanted material, using Artificial Intelligence to learn and improve over time.

However, we understand that cyber threats are constantly evolving, making it crucial to stay ahead. We are committed to continuing the bolstering our human, technical, and data security measures across the board. Our aim is to anticipate and pre-empt potential threats, prevent breaches, and swiftly contain any risks that arise. Our ultimate goal is the steadfast protection of our systems, and the data and privacy of our citizens.

The security and compliance bubble around the Digital and Innovation Target Operating Model illustrates that security is deeply ingrained and pervasive in all aspects of our operations.
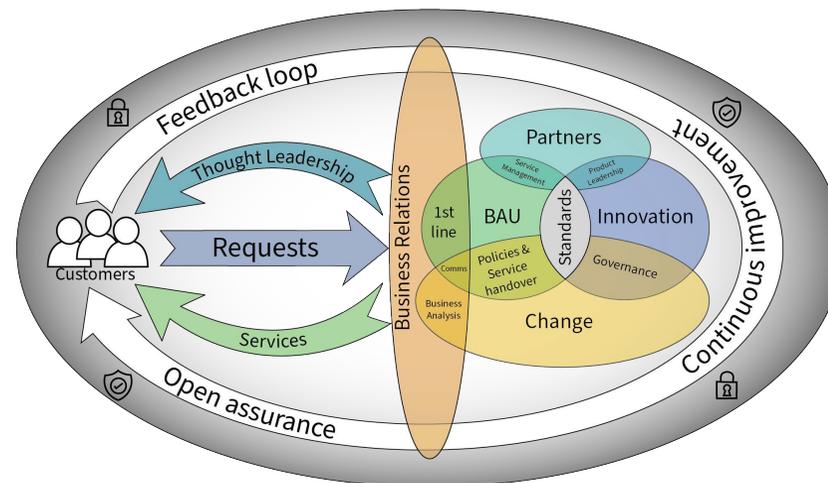
Continuous investment in these measures, ensures we protect our systems and the data entrusted to us by our citizens.

Technology and Infrastructure

To deliver our digital future, we need to use a structured approach that combines a number of standard approaches, such as "Guiding Principles", "Enterprise Architecture" and "Building Blocks".

Guiding principles:

These are the foundational values or rules that help an organisation make consistent and sound decisions. They serve as a compass, ensuring we stay on the right path while navigating the digital landscape. By adhering to these principles, we can build and maintain a digital ecosystem that is efficient, reliable, and sustainable while ensuring we are not constrained as new technology and methods develop.

Enterprise Architecture (EA):

Enterprise Architecture is a strategic planning process that helps organisations align their business goals with their information technology (IT) infrastructure. It provides a blueprint of the company's IT systems, their relationships, and their impact on the organisation's operations. EA helps identify gaps and redundancies, plan for future needs, and ensure that IT investments align with business objectives.

Building Blocks:

The building block approach in Enterprise Architecture refers to breaking down the complex IT environment into smaller, more manageable components or "building blocks." By understanding and managing these individual blocks, organisations can create an integrated and optimised IT infrastructure that supports their digital goals. Examples of building blocks are:

- Software building blocks: These include the various applications, platforms, and tools that organisations use to run their operations, manage data, and interact with customers. Choosing the right software solutions and keeping them up-to-date can improve efficiency and user experience while reducing costs.
- Data building blocks: Data is an essential asset for any organisation in the digital age. Data building blocks include databases, data warehouses, and other storage systems, as well as policies and procedures for ensuring data quality, security, and privacy. By managing data effectively, organisations can make better-informed decisions and drive innovation.
- Process building blocks: These represent the workflows, procedures, and rules that govern how the organisation operates and uses its IT systems. By streamlining and automating processes, companies can improve efficiency and adapt to changing business needs more quickly.
- People building blocks: The success of any digital initiative ultimately depends on the people involved. This includes the IT professionals who design, build, and maintain the systems, as well as the end-users who rely on them. Investing in training, collaboration tools, and a strong organisational culture can help ensure everyone is equipped to contribute to the digital future.

By using guiding principles and an Enterprise Architecture building block approach, we can create a flexible and efficient digital environment that supports our objectives and meets the demands of an ever-changing world.

Technology and Infrastructure - Principles

The following is a non-exhaustive list of essential guiding principles that will be implemented from the inception of the Digital Futures Strategy:

Secure by design

Security measures will be integrated from the inception of a project, ensuring robust protection against potential threats and vulnerabilities throughout the system's lifecycle.

Cloud only

No solutions requiring local hosting will be considered.

SAAS first

Software as a Service (SaaS) solutions over traditional software, leveraging cloud-based, scalable, and easily accessible applications to optimise business operations and reduce IT overhead.

Industry-standard cloud platforms only

For hosted solutions, partners must use known cloud platforms and be able to demonstrate expertise, resilience, scalability and supportability.

Embrace SAAS standards and improvements

Stay up to date with platform improvements implemented by partners.

Reuse/build before buy

This approach can save costs, ensure better integration with existing systems, and offer more control over features and security while minimising reliance on external vendors.

Native Azure Active Directory integration

Enabling seamless single sign-on experience.

Focus on reducing the burden for citizens and users

Pre-filled information wherever possible, use available technology for location information etc.

Data opportunities considered from system conception

All data captured by systems must provide benefits to citizens or aid the improvement of council services while remaining compliant with all data protection guidelines.

User-Centric design

Prioritise user needs by involving them in the design process, and creating intuitive interfaces and experiences to ensure high levels of user satisfaction and adoption.

Agile development

Employ Agile methodologies to continuously iterate, adapt, and improve software solutions based on user feedback and changing requirements, fostering faster delivery and better responsiveness.

Accessibility and inclusiveness

Ensure services are accessible to all users, regardless of their abilities, by adhering to accessibility standards and guidelines and promoting digital inclusion.

Transparent and ethical use of data

Practice responsible data handling and privacy measures, ensuring transparency in data usage, and maintaining citizens' and users' trust.

Privacy by design

At every stage of development, from conception to deployment, we prioritise privacy. We build our systems and services with the fundamental principle that privacy is not an afterthought.

Enhancing data analytics

This data and analytics strategy aims to utilise every interaction and service delivery as a data opportunity. Integrating internal and external data sources will improve service delivery, reduce information redundancy, and enable proactive service provision. The strategy serves as the foundation for creating a digital twin* of our services.

We will collect and integrate data from:

- Improve service delivery using data-driven decisions.
- Minimise information redundancy for citizens.
- Enable proactive service delivery through analytics.
- Create a digital twin of our services.

We will collect and integrate data from:

- An internal (centralised) data repository for all departmental interactions and service delivery data.
- Relevant external data sources, such as census data, and open data platforms.

To ensure data reliability and accuracy, we will:

- Enhance and strengthen data governance policies and procedures.
- Appoint a data steward to oversee data governance principles.
- Regularly audit and cleanse data.
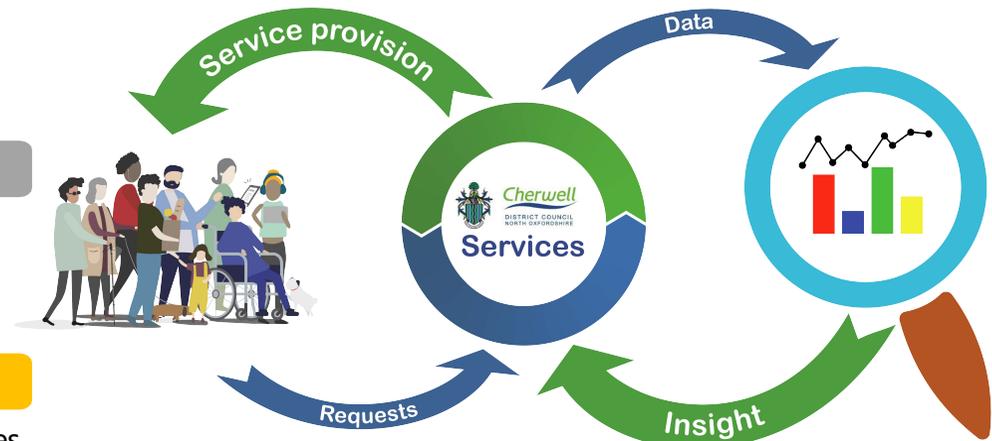
Advanced analytics techniques and tools, including descriptive, diagnostic, predictive, and prescriptive analytics, will be used to generate insights for continuous improvement and proactive service delivery.

We will invest in capacity building and training for our staff, developing data literacy and analysis skills, and fostering a data-driven culture.

Secure and scalable technology solutions will be implemented alongside the necessary software and analytics tools, enabling us to safely test and adopt new technologies as they become available.

This approach will allow Cherwell District Council to improve service delivery and reduce the burden on our citizens while promoting proactive service provision. Prioritising security and safety, this strategy lays a robust foundation for efficient operations, data-driven decision-making, and potential for technologies like Digital Twinning*.

* See Glossary

Enhancing Transparency

Enhancing data transparency through a data and analytics strategy for the Cherwell District Council will involve the following:

Data Accessibility: Consolidating and integrating data sources for easier access and understanding by our staff and citizens, promoting transparency in operations and decision-making.

Open Data Initiatives: Sharing relevant, anonymised datasets through open data platforms, fostering transparency, civic engagement, and innovation.

Data Governance and Quality: Establishing policies and procedures to ensure accurate and reliable data, enhancing trust and transparency in decision-making.

Clear Communication of Insights: Presenting data-driven findings in an easily understandable manner, promoting transparency in the basis for decisions and policy impact.

Self-Service FOI and SARs Requests: The potential for self-service Freedom of Information (FOI) and Subject Access Requests (SARs) will empower citizens to access the information they need without delays. This further increases transparency and demonstrates our commitment to openness.

Performance Measurement and Monitoring: Establishing transparent performance metrics and KPIs, ensuring accountability, progress towards strategic objectives, and continuous improvement.

Implementing a data and analytics strategy will promote transparency by making information more accessible, sharing data through open data initiatives, ensuring data quality and governance, effectively communicating insights, and establishing transparent performance measurements.
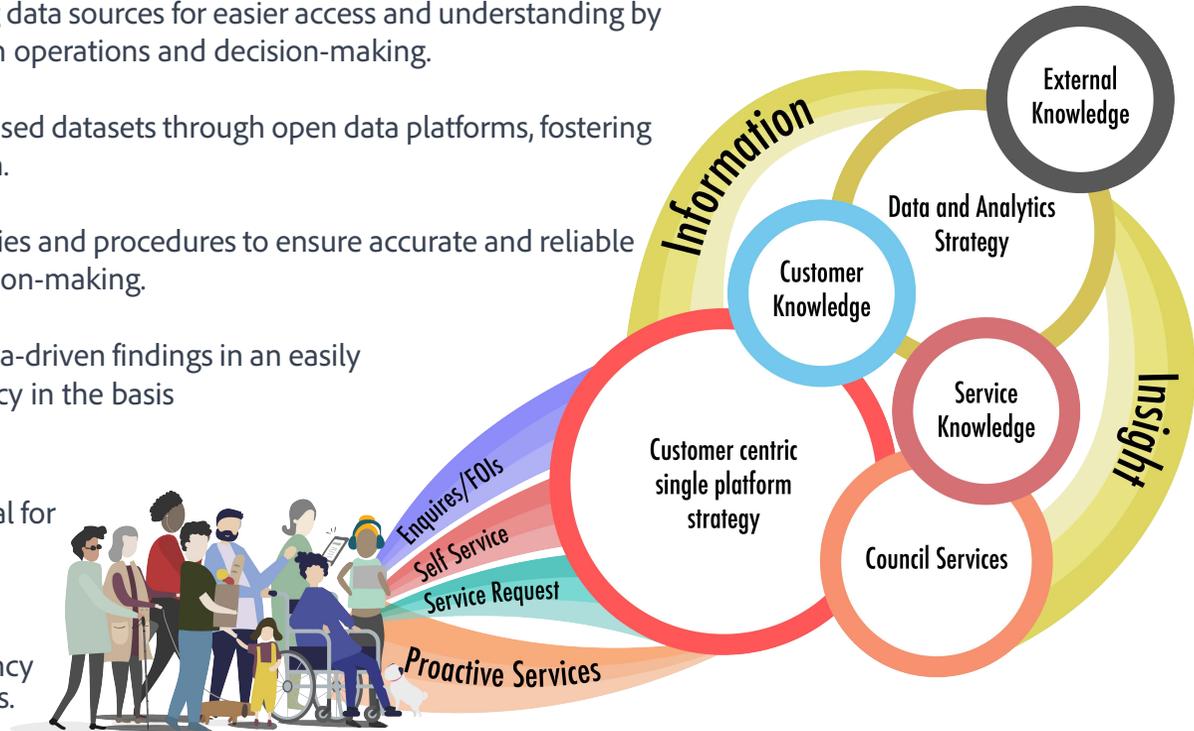
Digital solutions – A unified platform

To unlock the full potential of our data, enhance the customer and user experience and simplify system integration, we are focusing on implementing a unified platform solution.

A platform is a digital space that supports businesses and organisations in handling and sharing their information, tools, and services. It acts as a central hub for all business units and different online activities, making it simpler for people to collaborate, communicate, and get things done using technology.

Adopting a unified platform will offer numerous benefits to Cherwell, including:

Enhanced efficiency and communication:

A user-friendly and accessible platform makes it easy for everyone, including those with limited tech skills, to work together smoothly.

Centralised access to crucial information

With everything in one place, like documents, schedules, and tasks, it's easier to manage and access important data.

Facilitated collaboration

Teams can work together seamlessly, overcoming challenges posed by distance or organisational boundaries.

Robust security

Multiple layers of protection safeguard sensitive information from potential threats.

Creation and maintenance of golden records

A unified platform allows us to establish accurate and complete versions of specific information, eliminating the need for duplicated data. This ensures data consistency and integrity, reduces confusion, and simplifies data management.

| Refine the customer and user experience for ease and convenience | Optimise workflows to facilitate seamless and automated operations | Boost communication among team members | Improve decision-making processes and the efficiency of service delivery | Enable informed decisions driven by precise and trustworthy data |

Automation

As a public-facing service provider, our primary goal is to deliver high-quality, efficient, and cost-effective services to our community. By adopting automation technologies, we can enhance our services and improve operational efficiency.

Automation solutions streamline processes, reduce repetitive tasks, and optimise our IT infrastructure, enabling us to minimise errors, save time, and allocate resources more effectively. As a result, we can focus on delivering better, faster, and more reliable services to the public while ensuring prudent use of resources and maintaining cost efficiency. In doing so, we uphold our commitment to serving our community with the utmost dedication and professionalism.

As part of this digital strategy, we will implement solutions to enable the following types of automation:

AI Driven Chatbots	Robotic Process Automation (RPA)	Business Process Automation (BPA)	Workflow Automation	Data Automation	IT Process Automation (ITPA)
AI chatbots streamline customer interactions, freeing human agents for complex tasks. With 24/7 availability, they boost satisfaction and efficiency while reducing support costs. Chatbots can be integrated across channels, such as websites, social media platforms, and messaging apps, making them a versatile and valuable automation tool.	RPA involves the use of software bots to automate repetitive, rule-based tasks, helping reduce manual intervention, minimise errors, and save time. RPA can be applied to various processes, such as data entry, invoice processing, and customer service.	BPA focuses on automating entire business processes, driving efficiency, and standardising operations. By implementing BPA, we can optimise our processes, reduce turnaround times, and enhance productivity.	Workflow Automation streamlines the coordination and execution of tasks within specific workflows. It ensures tasks are completed in the right order, by the right people, and within the required timeframe, leading to improved process transparency and accountability.	Data Automation automates data-related tasks, such as data extraction, transformation, loading (ETL), data integration, and data analysis. By embracing Data Automation, we can make better-informed decisions, identify patterns and trends, and drive actionable insights while reducing manual data management efforts.	ITPA focuses on automating tasks and processes within the IT domain, such as system monitoring, incident management, and software deployment. ITPA can help improve efficiency and reduce manual intervention in IT operations, leading to reduced downtime and minimised risk of human errors.

Streamlining communication

Leveraging new and existing technologies, we aim to enhance internal and external communications, fostering a culture of effective collaboration and productivity. Through the integration of relevant technologies, we strive to improve overall efficiency and deliver an exceptional customer experience.

Internal

Accessibility: Access a variety of files, including documents, spreadsheets, and presentations, from any device with internet access, allowing everyone to work and collaborate remotely.

Real-time collaboration: Enable team members to work together on documents at the same time, streamlining workflows and promoting smooth collaboration among team members.

Communication channels: Utilise various communication channels such as email, instant messaging, video conferencing, and team channels to help staff stay connected and coordinate their efforts effectively.

Task and project management: Implement shared project and task tools to help teams monitor tasks, deadlines, and project progress, fostering accountability and improving overall work efficiency.

External

Unified customer record: Implement a unified customer record system for consistent external communications, preserving a detailed history of interactions and avoiding repetitive messaging.

Single view of customer: Adopt a single view of customers to enable better-focused and more efficient communication across all channels.

Single platform: Utilise a single-platform solution for all contact channels, including AI chatbots, emails, walk-ins, and phone calls, to improve the effectiveness of interactions and capture vital information

Automated messaging: Integrate automated processes to facilitate proactive communication, ensuring customers receive timely updates on service requests and potential issues related to statutory services such as waste collection.

Harnessing the full potential of our Microsoft 365 licensing, we can provide staff with a comprehensive suite of tools for efficient communication and collaboration. Simultaneously, by establishing a unified customer record system, we ensure consistent external communications and streamlined customer interactions across multiple channels.

This holistic approach not only enhances staff collaboration and productivity but also ensures a consistent and streamlined customer experience. As we continue to evolve and adapt to the ever-changing digital landscape, our commitment to fostering a culture of effective collaboration, leveraging innovative tools, and delivering exceptional services will drive us towards greater success and a brighter future.

Empowering staff

This page serves as a summary of the benefits to Team Cherwell (our staff) through the implementation of this strategy.

Enhanced communication

We will have improved communication throughout the council, allowing staff to communicate more effectively and efficiently with each other. This will lead to better collaboration, increased productivity, and better outcomes.

Improved access to information

Our data and analytics strategy will improve staff access to information, making it easier for them to find the information they need to do their jobs. This will enable staff to make better decisions and be more productive.

Streamlined processes

Implementing automation and streamlining processes within the council will make it easier for staff to complete tasks and reduce the amount of time they need to spend on administrative tasks. This can help staff to focus more on their core responsibilities and aid productivity.

Work from anywhere

Our technology will enable staff to work from anywhere (safely and securely), giving them greater flexibility in how and where they work. This can improve work-life balance and increase staff satisfaction.

Improved IT Skills support and training

Freeing IT staff from repetitive tasks will enable them to offer help and support not traditionally provided by an IT Service Desk. As well as being thought leaders, IT Staff will be digital leaders, providing help and support to enable Cherwell to get the most out of their digital investments.

Digital Inclusion

In addition to all the benefits above, we will also focus on enabling all staff to be more digitally aware and included. Staff who do not currently "need" devices and connectivity to complete their daily tasks will be provided with devices, connectivity and the skills they need to be part of Cherwell's digital community and help them navigate the digital world outside as well as inside of work.

Our digital futures strategy will empower staff by making their work easier, more efficient, and more rewarding. This will lead to increased productivity, better outcomes, and a more engaged and motivated workforce.

Facilitating Council Members

Council Members occupy a crucial and complex position, acting as conduits between their constituents and council officers. Up to this point, our strategies have predominantly targeted Cherwell's "customers" and staff. However, we will also ensure that our data insights, communication streamlining, and other strategies take into consideration the unique needs of our elected members.

Adopting a similar approach to "Empowering Staff", we will implement solutions and processes that ensure members have access to the same **consistent data sources** as council officers to help them in their decision-making. We will also provide them with the tools and systems they need to interact equally well with their constituents, fellow members, and council officers. Any systems created will comply with our **"Unified Platform"** approach and feed into our overarching **"Transparency"** agenda.

Supporting D&I Target Operating Model

The main objective of the Digital and Innovation Target Operating Model is to optimise IT operations by fostering customer-centric services, promoting collaboration between IT functions, encouraging innovation, and maintaining continuous improvement. A crucial aspect of this model is ensuring robust cybersecurity and data protection measures, which are vital to safeguarding sensitive information and maintaining customer trust. This model helps create better alignment between IT and business objectives, increased efficiency and enhanced overall performance while minimising risks and vulnerabilities.

The main benefits of this model are:

Enhanced customer focus - Ensures IT services meet customer needs, leading to better outcomes and satisfaction.

Improved collaboration - Streamlines operations and decision-making by fostering communication between IT functions.

Continuous improvement - Promotes ongoing evaluation and adaptation to changing needs through feedback loops.

Clear roles and responsibilities - Clarifies roles and dependencies, increasing efficiency.

Encouragement of innovation - Emphasises creative activities to stay ahead in the digital landscape.

Secure by design - Security is deeply ingrained and pervasive in all aspects of our operations.
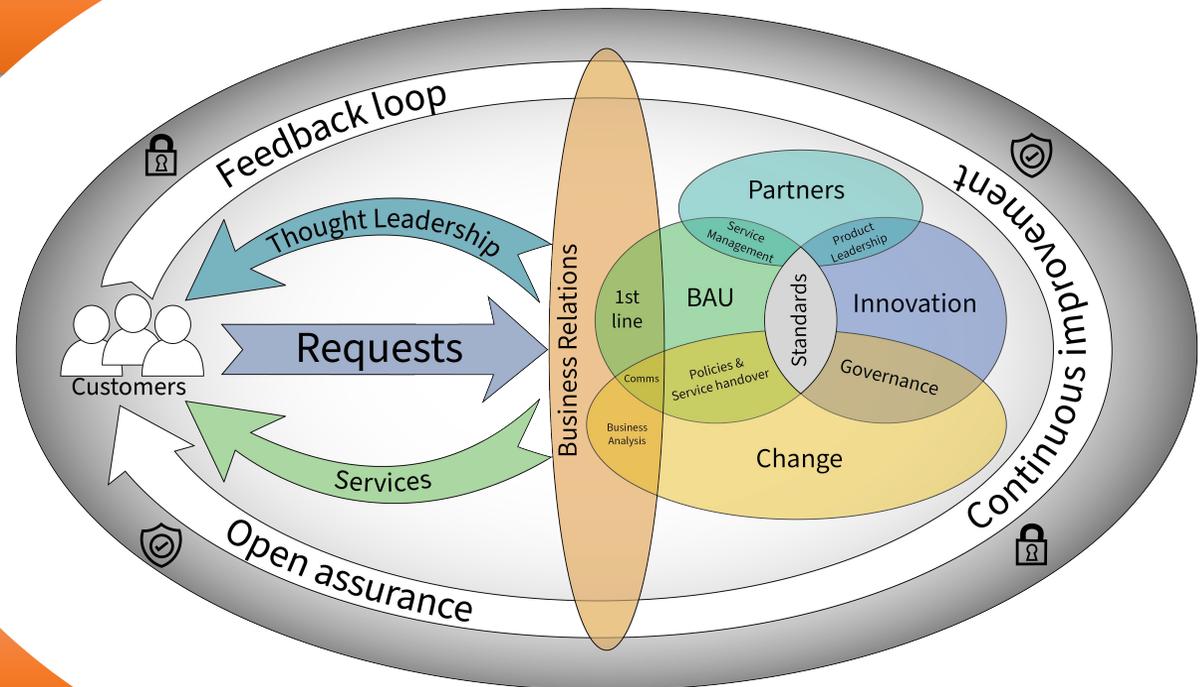
Moving to an assurance framework emphasises proactive risk management and continuous improvement, leading to increased transparency, collaboration, and optimised decision-making.

D&I Functions accountability

Clearly defined accountability within a collaborative framework will be a key feature in our delivery of excellent service

This functional structure provides a clear view of accountability for the Digital and Innovation - Operations, Innovation, and Change Teams.

This structure ensures accountability while enabling better collaboration between teams, streamlined decision-making, and increased efficiency.

Additionally, it ensures that all aspects of IT operations, from service desk to cyber security to change management, are effectively managed and monitored to ensure a seamless and secure IT environment.

Operations	Innovation	Change
Service Desk	Enterprise Architecture	Programme Management
Application Support	Solution Architecture	Project Management
Infrastructure Support	Application Development	Business Analysis
Major Incident Management	Project Delivery	IT Governance
Partner Management	Data Science	IT Assurance
Business Relations	Cyber Security	Change Control
Operational Cyber Security	Spatial Services	
IT Asset Management		
Contract Management		

Fostering collaboration and fusing this with accountability and innovation, we will be able to create a cohesive and dynamic environment which supports our Agile approach.

Responsive Digital Futures Pathway

Cherwell | DISTRICT COUNCIL NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

Strategic Solutions

	2023	2024	2025	2026
Technology and Infrastructure	• EA Practice definition • Platform Building Blocks created • Internet of Things POC (Fly Tipping detection)	• Initial Solution Building Blocks created • IOT Pilot candidates • EA Practice pilot	• EA Process implemented for new systems • Guiding principals reviewed • Building blocks reviewed	• Next Strategy defined for 2027 onward
Security	• Cyber Security Manager • Standards Alignment • SIEM and SOC tender • Improved awareness campaign	• SIEM and SOC setup • Continue awareness campaign	• Review standards • Continue awareness campaign	• Review SIEM and SOC contracts • Review Standards • Continue awareness campaign
Data and Analytics	• Data Platform Created • PoC data feed for fly-tipping detection • PoC Data Feeds, Visualisations	• Initial AI Chatbot data feed and insights • IOT Data capture • Expand data feeds (CRM, external etc)	• Customer insights & visualisations • Continue to expand data feeds • Proactive service delivery POC	• ERP data feeds • Proactive service delivery Pilot • POC digital twin
Transparency	• Budget data online	• Public automated previous FOI sharing • Contracts made available online • Analysis of other data sources to publish	• Chatbot for FOI requests POC • Easy search of previous FOIs • Other data sources available online	• Pilot AI Chatbot for FOI requests
Unified Platform	• CRM POC	• Tender for Unified Platform • Pilot CRM • Other POCs (based on existing contracts)	• Single View of Customer established • Pilot ERP • Other pilots	• At least 3 core systems implemented
Automation	• RPA Tool selection and Pilot • ITPA Pilot • AI Chatbot POC	• FOI capture and response POC • AI Chatbot pilot • Initial RPA/BPA/ITPA implemented	• Continue analysis and implementation of suitable automation candidates • AI Chatbot implemented for first contact	• End to end automated service delivery pilot
Streamlining Communication	• Microsoft 365 Awareness • Pilot SharePoint as main file store solution	• Implement SharePoint as default file store • Continue awareness of shared tools	• Single View of Customer established • Pilot My Account for customer	• SARs requests via MyAccount POC

Use Pathway to Success
PoC | Pilot | Deliver

BAU Solutions

	2023	2024 - 2026
Service Delivery	IT Services – Digital and Innovation	Digital and Innovation continued service delivery
Assurance	Project Assurance Framework	Maintenance & Replacement of service contracts • End User Devices, Networks, Printers…
Business Systems		Replacement of current line of business applications • Consideration of functionality/feature replacement at end of contracts and suitability for move to Unified Platform

Act | Plan
Check | Do

Continuous Improvement

As we navigate our transformation journey, we remain committed to consistently reassessing and adapting our pathway to ensure synchronised progress and alignment with the council's overarching priorities and goals.

Glossary

- **Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning (AI/ML):** Technologies that enable computers to learn from data, recognise patterns, and make decisions or predictions based on that data without explicit human intervention.
- **BAU (Business As Usual):** BAU refers to the regular, routine functions of an organization.
- **Chatbots:** Automated software that can simulate conversation with users, often used for customer service, information retrieval, or other tasks.
- **Cloud-first Strategy:** A strategic approach that prioritises the use of cloud-based infrastructure and services over traditional, on-premises solutions, offering benefits such as flexibility, scalability, and cost savings.
- **CRM (Customer Relationship Management):** CRM is a technology for managing a company's relationships and interactions with customers.
- **Cyber Essentials Plus:** A UK government-backed cybersecurity certification scheme, designed to help organisations protect themselves against common online threats and demonstrate their commitment to cybersecurity.
- **Cybersecurity:** The practice of protecting systems, networks, and data from digital attacks, theft, or damage, ensuring a secure online environment.
- **Data steward:** A person responsible for overseeing data governance principles.
- **Digital twin:** A digital replica of physical assets, processes, or systems, enabling data-driven decision-making and proactive service delivery.
- **Enterprise Architecture (EA):** A strategic planning process that helps organisations align their business goals with their IT infrastructure, providing a blueprint for the design, implementation, and management of IT systems.
- **GDPR:** General Data Protection Regulation, a set of rules governing data privacy and protection for individuals within the European Union (EU).
- **Golden records:** Accurate and complete versions of specific information, eliminating the need for duplicated data and ensuring data consistency and integrity.
- **Microsoft Azure:** A cloud computing platform and service offered by Microsoft, providing a range of services including infrastructure, storage, and analytics.
- **Secure by Design:** Integrating security measures and practices throughout all aspects of operations to protect sensitive information and maintain customer trust.
- **Security Incident and Event Management (SIEM):** A set of tools and processes for collecting, analysing, and responding to security events and incidents, helping organisations detect and respond to threats more effectively.
- **Security Operations Centre (SOC):** A centralised unit responsible for monitoring, analysing, and responding to cybersecurity threats and incidents in real- time, working to prevent and mitigate potential attacks.
- **Single view of customer:** A comprehensive view of customers to enable better-focused and more efficient communication across all channels.
- **Software as a Service (SaaS):** A software licensing and delivery model where software is provided over the internet, rather than installed on individual computers or servers. Users typically access the software through a web browser and pay a subscription fee.
- **Zero Trust VPN:** A virtual private network (VPN) solution based on the Zero Trust security model, which assumes that no user, device, or network should be trusted by default and requires continuous authentication and validation for access to resources.

Digital Examples

- **Maidstone BC have used data analysis to prevent 100s from becoming homeless.** https://www.lgcplus.com/idea-exchange/data-analytics-helped-us-prevent-100-households-becoming-homeless-14-01-2022/

- **Norfolk CC use low-cost, low-power devices to monitor weather conditions for more effective gritting etc** https://www.govx.digital/technology/local-councils-turn-to-iot-to-improve-their-services

- **Coventry City Council use IoT sensors for Footfall and Air Quality reporting** https://coventry-city-council.github.io/iot/

- **The UK Power Network has initiated "Social Connect", which will use AI to mine current data sources from Smart Meters etc, to help reduce the impact of fuel poverty by providing individual advice on energy-saving measures** https://es.catapult.org.uk/project/ukpn-social-connect/

- **How Taiwan is Using Technology to Foster Democracy** https://hbr.org/podcast/2020/10/how-taiwan-is-using-technology-to-foster-democracy-with-digital-minister-audrey-tang

- **The City of Palo Alto interactive online budget demonstrating transparency** https://paloalto.opengov.com/transparency

- **Rutland County Council embrace a unified platform approach** https://www.salesforce.com/uk/customer-success-stories/rutland-county-council/

- **E-Estonia – the story of Estonia digital journey** https://e-estonia.com/story/