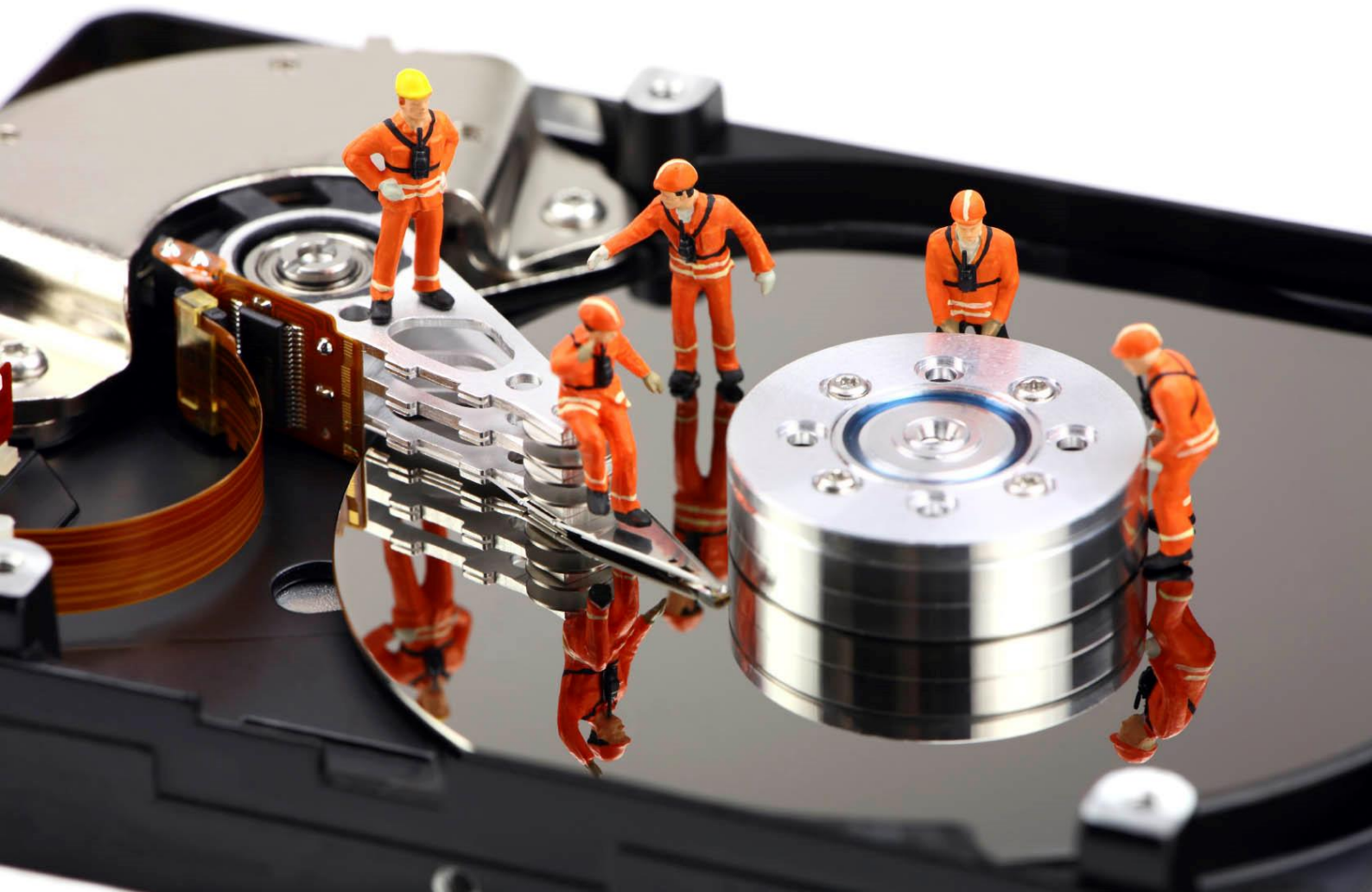


Ashfield

DISTRICT COUNCIL

Technology Strategy

BACKGROUND INFORMATION, OVERVIEW & AIMS OF
TECHNOLOGY IN SERVICE DELIVERY 2016-2020





Forward

ASHFIELD DISTRICT COUNCIL,
AMBITIOUS, INNOVATIVE, INDUSTRIOUS
AND INSPIRING

Ashfield District Council is an ambitious and enterprising council committed to maintaining and improving services in challenging financial times. Focused on our residents' needs and a desire to help shape a positive future for our District, we are improving our performance to ensure we provide value for money.

The Council is on a positive journey and over the past five years the Council has successfully improved performance year on year. The Council has faced an unprecedented reduction in its external funding since 2010 and has made budget reductions equivalent to 30% of its current budget, reducing net costs by £6 million.

This has been achieved by becoming more efficient and increasing income, undertaking service reviews, implementing shared services, generating income, making our management leaner and achieving better value for money through procurement.

We recognise that Ashfield is a district made up of four distinct community areas each with specific and disparate service and support needs. A new approach to delivering services at local level was adopted in 2014, to promote community empowerment and underpin regeneration of our local town centres/areas.

The approach uses the Area Committee Structure to encourage community engagement, addressing local issues by developing and delivering Locality Plans, which are informed by extensive engagement with our communities.

Looking to the future the Council will adopt a more enterprising and commercial approach to support additional income generation from a range of sources.

The Council wants to work more closely with public, private and community groups to secure improvements for our residents.

Extract from the Corporate Plan 2016-2019

Our Values

Enterprising, Ambitious and Innovative

Community and Customer Focused, Putting People First

Positive, Proactive and Successful

Collaborative

Transparent and Accountable

Commitment to Residents

Commitment to employees

Commitment to Councillors

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Introduction

The next four years will witness significant changes across the public sector. How Ashfield District Council delivers its services is likely to change, as will the size and shape of the organisation. The requirement to provide high levels of service to our citizens will remain and be set increasingly against a backdrop of reduced budgets. With these new challenges will come new opportunities; using “ICT as an enabler” the Council can achieve efficiencies, provide the infrastructure to support service delivery and most importantly, keep pace with citizens’ changing needs and expectations.

ICT is no longer just a support service; it has become a critical service. 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 and underpinning the organisational change programme.

Demand for public services and expectations of levels of service are ever increasing. Citizens and businesses expect the same levels of access, ease of use and customer service that they see online from large private sector organisations. They expect to be able to access their services from multiple locations and in ways that suit them. Generation Y are the ‘self-service’ generation, comfortable conducting all aspects of their lives online; moreover they are the next cohort of decision makers and service users for Ashfield District Council.

The aim of this strategy is to ensure that we are ready and able to meet the demands arising from changing expectations of customers, the future role of public service delivery, the workforce skills profile and the ever pervasive nature of technology.

ICT will support organisational change through reduced resources and to provide the necessary technology to deliver the services necessary to satisfy our community.

The development and implementation of the ICT Strategy needs to be an integral part of the overall planning process for the delivery of our services and must integrate with our suite of strategic plans. The strategy will require regular reviews and strong governance in order to ensure that the benefits are realised and that it continues to meet our developing business requirements.

However, ICT is ‘part of the solution’ rather than the solution itself. The relationship between people, ICT and other resources continues to be at the heart of efficiency and modernisation and we need to anticipate the growing expectations of our customers to ensure we deliver what they need, when they need it.

It is vitally important that we derive maximum benefit from our existing systems and technology whilst at the same time ensuring that future investment is focussed on projects that have the greatest potential for efficiencies and savings. Efficient and effective use of technology has the proven capacity to deliver savings along with effective management and procurement of the corporate ICT resources.



Vision

Our vision – we want to:

Be recognised as a progressive and responsive council in relation to technology and change.

Be a leader in intelligently and appropriately adopting technology to maximise the council's effectiveness

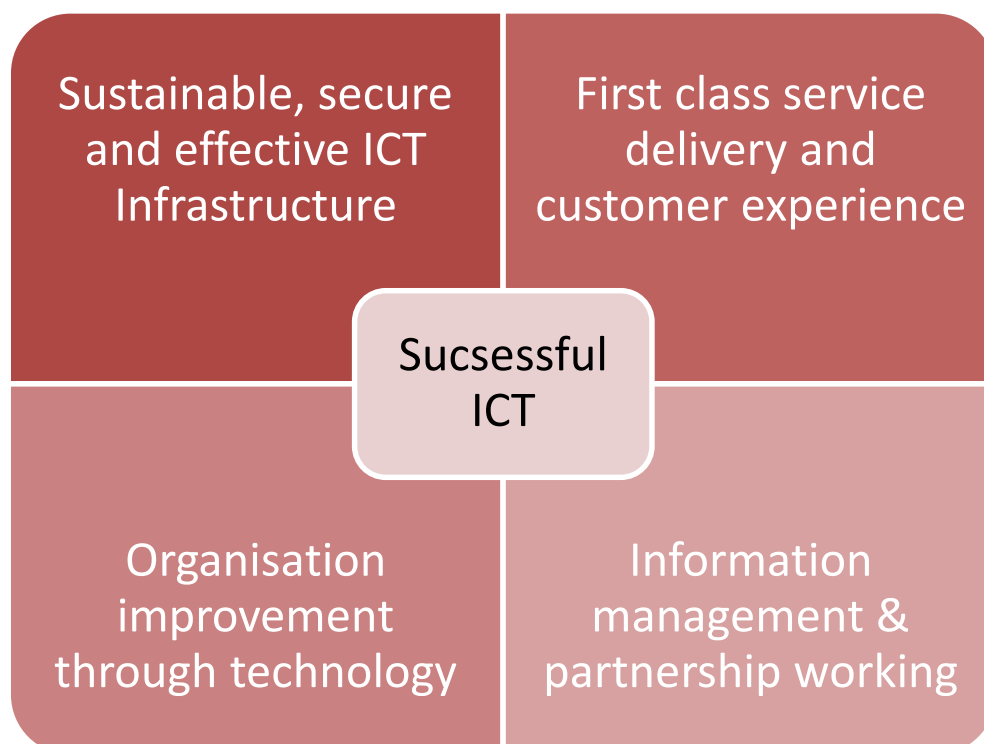
Engage and interact with our customers through a 'digital first' channel that's convenient and accessible.

Provide a suitable platform for the diversification of services and markets.

Our mission – we must:

"Provide a modern and integrated technology environment, which sustains and strengthens the council's ability to deliver its strategic objectives, whilst providing a first class, relevant customer experience"

Our model – core themes



Drivers for change

Citizen needs and expectations are changing. Technology capability is exponentially increasing.

Ashfield District Council is committed to exceeding these evolving demands through the adoption and exploitation of technology; both existing and emergent.

This strategy, the core themes it contains and the programmes that will deliver our agenda, are offered in direct response and recognition of “the technology landscape and our changing society”.

Against the backdrop of reduced spending capacity lurks an equally challenging adversary in the shape of the changing citizen. A new breed of tech-savvy service users has evolved, those that will shape the future of public sector demand. The first generation to be completely immersed in digital life from birth, Generation Y, has expectations of local government and the services it provides, that are distinctly different from Generation X and the baby boomers that preceded them.

Service providers need to match those expectations. Future local authority success will rise and fall by the degree of satisfaction felt by this next cohort of decision makers from the services they receive and how they access them. Generation Y is the self-service generation comfortable conducting all aspects of their life online and are currently enjoying digital services through their banks, retailers and even some central government services such as vehicle tax and voter registration.

It is important for Local Authorities to evaluate emergent technologies. Cloud based services continue to develop and convert service design away from traditional in-house hosting, however there still exists some reluctance to transfer large, critical applications to a hosted environment. This is due to a number of factors, not least the risk (perceived or real) of compliance and access to data.

No doubt ‘technology as a service’ will appear on the horizon in due course, however the more immediate landscape leans towards mobile and wearable technology and the efficiencies they can unlock. With 89% of UK adults using the internet on a regular basis and 66% owning a smart phone it is no surprise that during 2014, 4G subscriptions leapt from 2.7 million to 23.6 million and as of August 2015, the smartphone had overtaken the PC/Laptop as the device of choice for internet access.

With this in mind Councils need to address their capacity and capability in responding to change. Ashfield District Council believes asking questions such as; ‘how well informed are we on emergent technology and its application?’ What are the developing demands of its users? ‘How can we position our offer to meet expectations whilst still providing first class basics?’ are the corner stones of future success in a technology shrouded landscape. This strategy documents four themes that will enable Ashfield District Council to answer these questions and ensure the workforce is appropriately positioned for transformation through technology.

Future Use of ICT in Ashfield District Council

The Council aspires to adopt existing and emergent technology to deliver services in a more flexible and innovative operating model. Faced with a more challenging financial future and with customers who expect services to be delivered in convenient and relevant channel, ICT should be a key tool used by managers to deliver improvements.

Digitally Driven Customer Facing Services

The council is committed to digitally driven and more efficient services. This is an excellent example of how technology can be used to deliver services in ways that are much more flexible. This desire will be promoted throughout the council as 'Digital First' mantra. Services delivered on-line can be accessed by customers:

- Wherever they have access to the internet
- On a twenty four seven basis
- From a variety of different IT devices including tablets, PCs, phones and laptops

More Efficient Services

ICT can be used to deliver services in more efficient ways to help deliver improved services or to drive financial savings. Some examples include:

- Use of mobile technology: - if Council officers are able to access IT systems when out of the office then they can work more efficiently and spend more time in the field where they add most value
- Automating administrative tasks – by automating manual processes less time can be spent filling out forms and reducing the time spent on administrative tasks. This type of work also reduces the staff frustration that often arises when carrying out work of this type. Reducing bureaucracy is one of the aims set out in the Council's Here to Help Programme
- The availability of workflow systems provides opportunities to the business to review their processes and re-engineer them to operate more efficiently and effectively
- Utilising improved document and records management systems will enable the Council to rationalise the number of physical and electronic records held and to reduce duplication of data

Theme 1: Sustainable, secure and effective ICT Infrastructure

The provision of ICT services is vital to service delivery. Essential ICT includes corporate infrastructure such as email, voice and data networks, servers and personal computers, mobile devices and increasingly internet and other e-channels. The provision of such a level of capability requires a solid and dependable technology infrastructure that is maintained and updated on a regular basis. It also needs to have an appropriate level of capacity and resilience to reflect changing organisational and service demands and data growth. The effective management of ICT resources is critical to overall business success. ICT resources should be used effectively ensuring that all ICT activity meets strategic needs and outcomes.

Theme: Sustainable, secure and effective ICT Infrastructure

Ensure Security Compliance	Development and strengthening of the Council's ICT security framework with annual compliance and accreditation by Public Services Network (PSN). Undertake annual third-party security audit.
Ensure robust Business Continuity Process	<p>Introduction of a performance management tool in service to contribute towards capacity planning and reporting process.</p> <p>Exploration of shared arrangements for off-site data storage with partner organisation.</p> <p>Continued development of staff, cross skilling within the team to aid resilience. Continue cover arrangements on Service Desk to aid knowledge share and continuity.</p> <p>Continued use of partner organisations and suppliers to complement our existing in-house skillset and as an escalation point for complex technical situations.</p> <p>Up to date disaster recovery protocol and regular onsite testing of procedure.</p>
Ensure relevant, modern and familiar platform for employees.	<p>Employment of industry best practise in support of different technology stacks (e.g. servers, storage, networks, desktops, applications, databases) and to ensure compliance with data and information security protocols.</p> <p>Keep abreast of changes in the market and to ensure ADC remains on relevant and supported software/hardware platforms. Maintain a standard baseline for desktop, laptop & mobile computer solutions inside the technology curve</p>

	<p>Continue with existing virtualisation direction of travel by continuing to maximise the use of virtualisation of Servers, moving remaining physical servers to a virtual environment to increase flexibility and efficiency of the datacentre along with supporting better ICT business continuity processes.</p> <p>Remain up to date with a programme of patching, upgrades and replacements relating to the applications, databases, server infrastructure, network hardware and boundary security in line with supplier product road maps.</p> <p>The development of Wide and Local Area Networks across council assets</p>
<p>Leadership</p>	<p>Continually review and develop a comprehensive ICT/Digital Services Strategy to support the achievement of wider policies and the strategic objectives of the Council.</p> <p>Present business cases for change or investment in ICT Infrastructure, applications and service delivery to contribute to improved business processes and organisational effectiveness in line with the strategic objectives of the Council.</p>

Theme 2: First class service delivery and customer experience

This theme focuses on putting the customer first, whoever that may be. The ICT Department services multiple customers and recognises the differing needs of each. In order to provide relevant and satisfactory services we must recognise the changing requirements in our customer base, ensuring suitable adaptation are made in the core offer, whilst also keeping a firm grasp on getting the basics right. First and foremost we must provide the right tools for the job for all employees and respond in a timely manner when called upon to resolve user problems. The customer experience is a key measurement of success and satisfaction, also where appropriate, repeated and worry free service use.

The provision of information and access to services through the Council's website continues to be a significant and cost-effective method of communicating with and providing services for the Council's customers. The website is also used to promote the wider messages, emphasising issues related to our corporate objectives.

The council's intranet provides access to information and is a useful means of communication for employees and Members.

Theme: First class service delivery and customer experience

Performance management	<p>Continue to improve existing 'IT Service Desk' provision to allow better reporting of incidents, by ensuring the self-serve portal is kept up to date and that communication of resolution and timescales are given each time a call is updated or resolved via auto emailing of form to customer.</p> <p>Publicise customer charter and service standards to clearly communicate to service users the department's commitment to their experience. Measure operational output in relation to the standards and report back to customers on progress.</p>
Managing customer experience Members	<p>Complete the implementation of Modern.Gov as a digital democratic solution. All members have iPads to enable full take up of the service and allow for maximum benefit of digital working.</p>

Managing customer experience Employees	<p>Promote ICT Service Standards / Customer Charter to clearly communicate service expectation with clear accountabilities and escalation points.</p> <p>Document scheduled upgrades to core platform in line with Microsoft release dates</p> <p>Ensure relevant and fit for purpose ICT Provision. Development of core theme 3.</p> <p>Provide forum for feedback on service. Undertake customer satisfaction surveys</p>
Managing customer experience Residents	<p>Increase 24-hour access to services through phone or internet.</p> <p>Investigation into 'Citizen Portal'</p> <p>Exploration and provision of alternative channels of communication. Customer integration and service delivery to ensure most convenient and relevant access is afforded to our residents, including development of "myAshfield" the app.</p> <p>Where possible share data among departments to reduce customers proving duplicate data. Explore further the disclaimer at collection point and legal implications of internally sharing data.</p> <p>Implementation of the Web Improvement Plan including, content and maximise the use of existing online portals purchased by service areas to ensure the continuation of channel shift from phone and face to face.</p> <p>In conjunction with Customer Services explore the use of online chat/presence for the ADC website to aid customers using the ADC website.</p> <p>Use appropriate Social Media channels to enhance the customer experience.</p>
Managing customer experience Businesses	<p>Support ICT links between ADC and the business community.</p>
Leadership	<p>Motivate and coach employees to continually improve services to internal and external customers and develop an ethos of service excellence and exemplar customer experience.</p>

Theme 3: Organisation improvement through technology

The Council is committed to continuous improvement. Its value for money approach is based on reducing overheads, eliminating duplication, maximising assets and service review. ICT has a key role to play in the success of all of these.

The past few years have seen the steady adoption of new ways of working. This has demanded changes to the way ICT services are delivered to staff. These demands will continue to increase as Members, staff and partners continue to adopt new and modern approaches to delivering services.

In order to provide the most relevant and convenient channel through which to deliver our outputs we must first need to assess our existing capability and capacity understand fully the relationship between our current position and future demands.

Theme: Organisation improvement through technology

Integrate technology with business change.	Establish the appropriate resource, structure and governance for the formulation and implementation of a technology and transformation programme.
Leadership Establish a culture of digital acceptance & integration	<p>Ensure technology leadership, championing technology and building bridges between the services and its users, winning heart and minds.</p> <p>Ensure ICT is appropriately considered and deployed in line with business objectives and communicated clearly to all stakeholders.</p> <p>Support the transformation culture by being an unambiguous corporate champions of technology in enabling a “can-do” permissive approach.</p> <p>Work closely with colleagues in key support services such as HR, Communications, Performance and Improvement to engage stakeholders and actively participate in the development and integration of the People Strategy & Workforce Development plan.</p> <p>Enhance the organisation’s reputation and ensure that the internal business planning processes are built on customer feedback and analysis of the future direction for public services.</p>

Paperless Office	Conduct corporate review of paper transactions and work with department to identify paper based alternatives, including service-specific software suppliers.
Agile working	<p>Improving remote access and mobile device management.</p> <p>Investigate the use of video conferencing, instant messaging and presence tools.</p> <p>Continue the use a mix of 'thick and thin' client computing to support</p> <p>Review corporate policies for home and remote working.</p> <p>Continued deployment and support of Smart Phone and Tablet type devices for staff on a business case basis to support flexible/remote working.</p>
Channel Shift	<p>Upgrade ADC website content management system to latest product version to allow the configuration of mobile device optimised pages that will auto resize the information and layout according to device screen size.</p> <p>Continue work on Website Improvement adding new features for contacting and conducting transactions with the Council.</p> <p>Work with colleagues in corporate communications team to develop new access channels through social media.</p>
Self-Service	<p>Continue work on the HR Improvement Programme to offer self-serve HR Administration directly to managers and employers.</p> <p>Continue work on Recruitment Management System to enable applicants to apply for vacancies electronically. Work with other council departments to offer self-service provision where appropriate and available.</p>
Workforce profile	<p>Ensure new technology is delivered with appropriate consideration to user skill level.</p> <p>Provide opportunity to support and develop workforce where a need arises through workshops, help notes, demonstrations or training of new technology.</p>

Theme 4: Information management & partnership working

Information is one of the Council's key assets. Effective data and information management is vital to decision making and providing appropriate levels of security. This theme of the ICT Strategy builds upon the local and corporate achievements that have been made in improving information management and aims to further establish a fit for purpose information management and reporting environment.

The Council enjoys successful relationships with a range of partners and suppliers. These include public sector bodies such as Health and Police, other government departments, the third sector, voluntary organisations and a wide range of suppliers. As services develop, the Council's mixed economy of service provision will also develop. It is vital that appropriate ICT arrangements are in place to support the growing range of strategic partner and supplier relationships.

Theme: Information management & partnership working

Work collaboratively to share data with partner organisations. DWP, Police, NHS.

Support the development of joint working arrangements with other public sector partners such as the NHS and other local authorities in line with statutory, value for money and other service requirements.

Work in partnership with Police, and future co-habiting partners, to ensure infrastructure is appropriately managed.

Close working with the Council's Revenues and Benefits partner to introduce systems to manage changes to benefits, council tax and business rates and to respond to new statutory driven local changes and arrangements.

Continue working with other outsourced service providers and partners across all Council service areas.

Continued use of proven third-party software solutions and avoidance of local bespoke development.

Support shared working	<p>Technical group / Regional working</p> <p>The development of ICT provision over the current shared service arrangements and support of other emerging opportunities</p>
Align ICT to promote growth in region	<p>Review delivery to business of ICT skills training – commercial agenda for digital</p> <p>Website in the role of brand management? Digital services and our digital footprint in relation to brand management and place advertising.</p>
Leadership	<p>Develop and maintain effective relationships with relevant supporter, sponsor or commissioning organisations, government departments and other national or regional bodies.</p> <p>Seek to embed a pro-active culture of 'getting it right first time' amongst the Council's web authors</p>
Information Management	<p>Implementation of Electronic Document and Records Management System is planned for Development Control.</p> <p>Complete Democratic Service Management System installation to allow quicker and easier access to information, both internally and externally.</p> <p>Increase awareness and use of the National Public Sector Network (PSN) as a means of securely exchanging data with partners.</p> <p>Continue to support and develop transparency code presentation on website</p>

ICT Governance

This strategy sets out the direction of ICT application in the medium term. It will be delivered in conjunction with service providers and partners. It will provide opportunities to exploit new technologies and infrastructures and enable efficient delivery of our service plans.

This strategy will be monitored and steered by the Corporate ICT Development Group with exceptions and any recommendations for change reported to the Corporate Leadership Team. The development group will review its terms of reference annually and this will provide opportunity to consider its role, ICT governance arrangements and the maturity of the project governance arrangements. In particular to consider the further development of the current corporate ICT governance arrangements providing a strong 'gate keeping' role and enforcing compliance to agreed ICT standards and procedures. All ICT projects of sufficient scale or consequence are also to be managed in accordance with the Council's corporate project management methodology and monitored via the Transformation and Efficiency Programme Board.

The effective management of ICT resources is critical to overall business success. The themes in this ICT Strategy tackle the need to focus on using ICT resources effectively and ensuring that all ICT activity meets strategic needs and outcomes.

To this end the development group, Corporate Leadership Team and ICT Senior Management Team will ensure:

- Development of the current corporate ICT governance arrangements providing a strong gate keeping role and enforcing compliance to agreed ICT standards and procedures.
- ICT advice, guidance and services to corporate and service delivery programmes.
- Management of ICT partner development resources in accordance with approved ICT projects or programmes.
- The preparation of procurement administration and management of tender process in relation to main ICT Services contract including review of current and future ICT resource.
- Adherence to the corporate project and programme management methodology across the Council.

Theme 3: Organisation improvement through technology

Of the four key themes offered in this strategy this theme drives a purposeful and deliberate set of actions and outcomes in relation to business change. This theme is a direct relationship to the newly refreshed corporate plan outcome of Organisation Improvement and as such will be governed through the same framework as other core corporate outcomes.

The establishment of the "Evolve" programme will facilitate business change objectives whilst maintaining robust and relevant processes to service users. Evolve Ashfield will be the delivery vehicle of organisation improvement and seeks to educate and empower service managers to deliver business change.

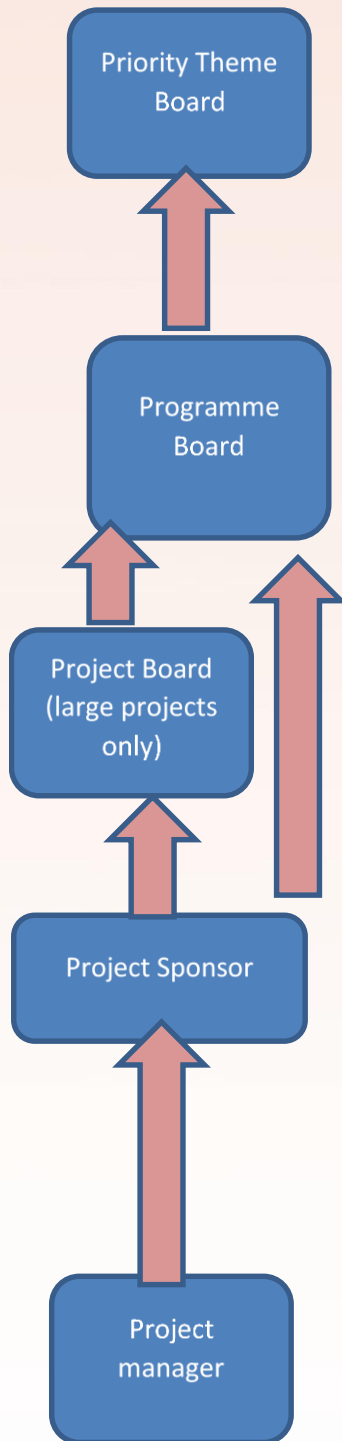
Technology Leadership

Leading technology is not solely the responsibility of one officer, but a collective and combined efforts from all employees involved in service delivery. Critical to the success of this strategy's core themes, the 'Evolve Ashfield' programme and the 'Digital First' mantra is the approach and attitude towards technology and business change shown by not only those tasked with its delivery but all employees in the council.

Ashfield District Council is committed to the core themes in this strategy and in order to guarantee their success it will ensure:

- The organisation has capacity and resilience for the formulation and development of the technology and transformation programme.
- Contribution, development and promotion of the organisation's strategic plans where technology is used as enabling tool to deliver change
- Employees are engaged and educated as to the corporate position of technology in service delivery and 'digital first' customer access.
- Service managers are empowered to evaluate and transform their services through a suite of fit for purpose tools, suitable learning opportunities and support from specialist resource.
- The technology workforce are nurtured and provided with the support necessary to secure high levels of performance, continuous improvement, motivation, commitment, teamwork, collaboration and trust.
- An entrepreneurial working environment, maximise trading opportunities and fostering the development commercially charged services or market diversification where appropriate.
- Employees receive motivation and coaching to continually improve services to internal and external customers and develop an ethos of service excellence and exemplar customer experience.
- Effective relationships with relevant supporter, sponsor or commissioning organisations, government departments and other national or regional bodies are maintained

Integration with corporate priorities



Programme delivery – Programme Highlight Report

- Agree the programme of activity and projects, responsibilities and time
- Approve Project Business case and Initiation documents
- Monitor progress through project highlight reports and agree further action
- Managing programme issues and risks
- Approve project change requests
- Approve project closure reports, defining and tracking progress of realisation

Project delivery – Project Highlight Report

- Being sure that the project outputs are consistent with the Project Initiation Document and contribute effectively to the programme benefits
- Monitor direction and progress of the project
- Supporting the Project Manager and finding the resources needed
- Signing off project documents and making sure that the work of the project is fit for purpose.

Project delivery – Project Highlight Report

- Managing the creation and delivery of project outputs within tolerance levels within the PID and agreed by the Programme Board
- Directing and motivating the Project Team
- Planning and monitoring the project, including the production of reports against the project plan to be submitted to the programme board
- Managing project-level issues and risks
- Liaising with programme management to ensure that work is neither over nor duplicated across projects or at programme level

Next Steps; 0-24 Months

The following projects represent the Councils commitments to the core themes in this strategy. The Digital Transformation agenda will add projects to the work streams as and when necessary, however a major review will take place annually to evaluate, prioritise and communicate new and existing transformational need. After 24 months the next stage in the programme will continue the commitment. Where appropriate the Transformation and Efficiency Board will shift resource and priorities of the work programme to match major organisational projects and objectives.

The key digital transformation programme which combines the milestones of this strategy with mission and themes of the Corporate Plan is the “Digital Services & Customer Access” programme. This will seek to channel shift transactions into the digital form where possible and provide a ‘virtual’ corporate customer services presence

KEY PROJECTS

Secure customer portal for Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates

New Recruitment Management System

Implementation of Modern.gov democracy management system

Employee tools allowing digital first approach and adoption of self-service;

- Web based Financial Management Portal

- e-HR Portal [extended features]

Internet and Intranet site redesign and launch

Digital Services & Customer Access

Agile Workforce, with policy and infrastructure to support

- Corporate Agile Working Principles to modernise workplace and release capacity

- Service Agile Working to provide services in localities, directly to customers

‘Digital First’ Customer Services

- Secure Resident Portal

Electronic Forms through Website/Mobile Device

Timeline Overview

	2016-17				2017-18			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Secure customer portal for Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates								
New Recruitment Management System								
Implementation of Modern.gov democracy management system								
Employee tools allowing digital first approach and adoption of self-service;								
Web based Financial Management Portal								
e-HR Portal [extended features]								
Internet and Intranet site redesign and launch								
Digital Services & Customer Access								
Agile Workforce, with policy and infrastructure to support								
Corporate Agile Working Principles to modernise workplace and release capacity								
Service Agile Working to provide services in localities, directly to customers								
'Digital First' Customer Services								
Secure Resident Portal								
Electronic Forms through Website/Mobile Device								