

Annex 1



Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council IT Strategy 2018 – 2023

Revised: December 2020

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This strategy details at a high level how we can apply and develop Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to underpin the delivery of the Corporate Strategy, our Savings and Transformation plan and service improvement by enabling change and driving forward efficiencies.
- 1.2. This strategy is a statement of our aims and objectives which will be used as the framework within which we can operate and is to form the basis for making future decisions. It also sets the scene for future joint working and collaboration with partner organisations through links to the Kent wide Public Services ICT Strategy.
- 1.3. The extremely rapid pace of change and development of ICT means we have to be constantly identifying opportunities for further improvements. As with any strategy this document will be kept under review and updated to reflect internal and external drivers for change over the next 3 years.

- 1.4. The IT Strategy will support the vision, values and priorities detailed in Corporate Strategy 2020-2023, namely:

Vision: To continue to be a financially sustainable Council with strong leadership that delivers valued services, a commitment to delivering innovation and change to meet the needs of our Borough

Values & Priorities:

- Achieving Efficiency
- Embracing Effective Partnership Working
- Valuing our environment and encouraging sustainable growth
- Innovation

- 1.5. The IT Strategy will also support the objectives set out in the Savings & Transformation Strategy 2018/19 – 2020/21, which are:
 - To deliver sufficient savings in order to bridge the funding gap identified in the Council's MTFS, and to deliver those savings as quickly as possible in order to minimise risk to the Council's finances.
 - To direct resources in line with the principles of the Council's Corporate Strategy
 - To maintain the Council's reputation of good front line service provision
 - To adopt a 'mixed' approach to addressing the funding gap through a series of 'themes'.
 - To be open to accept 'cultural' change/transformation in the ways we work and offer services to the public in order to release efficiencies and savings
 - To engage, as appropriate, with stakeholders when determining how savings will be achieved
- 1.6. Whilst the IT Strategy will cover a number of areas of business transformation and customer service from a technology standpoint, Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council should give consideration to developing a number of complimentary corporate strategies and to ensure a corporate change culture is embedded within the organisation.
- 1.7. The Roadmap section of the policy collates the action points which are referenced within the main text. These are given an AP reference. Some of the action points are discrete

items whereas others will trigger a project or series of projects. As this is a living document, the projects will be documented here as they arise.

2. Current Position

- 2.1. The previous IT Strategy (2014-2017) set out “deliverables” that were expected over the lifetime of the strategy. The following key areas of the strategy were identified and acknowledged as underdeveloped at the inception of this IT Strategy (2018-2022). The table below highlights the progress made over the last two years of the strategy.

| We said (2014-2017) | We did (2018-2020) |
|---|--|
| Guiding and supporting staff in the acquisition and use of digital skills through a comprehensive assessment and training programme. | We have established and adopted a new device policy and enabled staff with digital knowledge and skills to work more flexibly and efficiently. We have also provided mandatory Cyber security awareness courses to all staff in ensuring that the organisation and its data are kept and processed securely, and protected against malware, ransomware, social engineering and phishing threats. |
| Review and challenge business processes throughout the organisation and implement workflow and document management where appropriate. | We have established a Digital Strategy (2019-2023) and are currently carrying out end-t-end business process mapping and re-engineering across the council’s services. 60% of the business process mapping have already been completed. We are currently re-engineering the mapped processes and have identified several opportunities to automate key workflows in Back-office administration efforts across the council and are in discussions with the respective services. |
| Facilitate new business processes, business models and business moments by the appropriate use of technology. | We have also implemented a mobile working platform to enable our frontline and field-based officers to carry out their primary on-field duties more efficiently, without having to duplicate their efforts in the office. |

3. Aims & Ambitions

- 3.1. During the course of this strategy, we will examine the business systems that we use and how we use them. By and large we are still users of legacy business applications. Systems with a single use and operating as a silo. Using data as a strategic asset and liberating it from these silos is a key goal. Better use of the data we own will help inform business decisions and the setting of priorities arising from the Savings and Transformation Strategy.
- 3.2. If we are to get the most out of the data assets we own, then we have to ensure that the quality of data is sufficient for it to be used. We know that the current quality level is extremely variable, so we will aim to improve this by a combination of factors including the establishment of a data quality policy (AP1) and implementation of master data management (AP2). This will ensure that we have an authoritative source of clean customer

information in the same way that we have for properties with the Local Land and Property Gazetteer. This will help us to comply with Article 5 of the GDPR which states that data should be accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date. Before any new use of data takes place, Privacy Impact Assessments will be undertaken.

- 3.3. Business change will be a large cultural challenge for the Council. We will need to provide an adequate level of support and resources to ensure we benefit from change rather than resist it (AP3). These is a key requirement for robust project management as part of this process.
- 3.4. The Savings and Transformation Strategy has a number of themes and saving targets to be delivered during the lifetime of this IT Strategy. Examples where Information Technology projects can assist are described in the table below:

| Theme | Example of assistive Information Technology |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Income Generation & Cost Recovery | Data analysis identifying new opportunities for income and providing a holistic view for cost and debt recovery |
| In-Service Efficiencies | Better use of technology for service delivery, such as automated workflows and avoidance of double data entry |
| Service Change & Reduction | Full review of business processes across the organisation to identify candidates for technology led business process re-engineering |
| Contracts | Reduce the cost of large legacy-based IT system contracts and replace them with commodity platform alternatives which carry out common functions such as customer management, fulfilment, payments, notifications, and workforce planning |
| Organisation Structure Change | Provide effective communications and collaboration tools to enable work to be conducted any time at any place |

- 3.5. Work is already underway with the Virtual Desktop Infrastructure project to introduce a wider number of tools and options for workers to get their jobs done. Reviews of service areas across the Council is informing us how to equip a flexible workforce. This work will continue.
- 3.6. The website continues to be our main focus for doing business with the Council. Since the previous website overhaul in 2015, expectations and technology have moved on. The next iteration of the website will take this into consideration. Our objective is to make online the best way of receiving services for the customer and the council.

4. Strategic Objectives

4.1. Customers

- Understanding how customers interact with the website is an important factor in developing a user experience that will encourage repeated use. We will continue to use Google Analytics to benchmark website performance and user requirements and feed this

information into a website development plan (AP4).

- We will continue to work with external partners (such as Smarter Digital Services at Tunbridge Wells) to conduct user testing, draw on the experience of others and to participate in joint projects of benefit.
- Development of our online services is an evolutionary process that continually iterates on improvements. Customer opinion is important in this so more opportunities will be built into the customer journey to ask for their views on how well a service is delivered (AP5). This will be crucial information that can be used within the website development plan and the corporate Transformation and Savings plan.
- Improvements will be required to business processes in order to align them better with digital services. Automated tasks such as notifications, enquiry responses and service fulfilment should be considered and existing processes challenged where a more streamlined alternative is available (AP6).
- Close working is required with the Customer Services Team in order to capture and understand key metrics of customer contact. This information can be used to help prioritise the work in the website development programme (AP7).

4.2. Staff

- Over the last few years our workforce have been demanding more flexibility and choice in the digital tools used to deliver their service. By introducing Skype for Business on the telephony side, and Virtual Desktop Infrastructure on the IT Service Delivery side, we have the foundations of meeting this demand. We will build upon these developments and closely liaise with service departments on the best mix of IT tools for their use. Offering more staff focussed apps will also drive-in service efficiencies (AP8).
- Current legacy business applications are very specialist and duplicate common processes across the organisation, leading to fragmentation and different ways of doing the same thing. We will aim to increase the flexibility and resilience of the organisation by consolidating common processes across services which will help break down information silos (AP9). Candidates for this will include payments, case management, and order fulfilment.
- All projects will be run in adherence to the 'Agile' project management principles. Where it involves IT system development and implementation, we will adopt the project structure consisting of the following roles and responsibilities:

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Project Sponsors | Senior officer and members responsible for driving forward the overall programme |
| Project Manager | Making sure the components of the project remain on track and are delivered within the budget allocation. Key role in communicating progress to all stakeholders. |

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Digital Lead | Responsible for content, user journeys, branding and consistency of the transformation service being delivered. |
| IT Lead | Making sure the technical elements are integrating and providing the desired outcome. |
| Business Process Analyst | Able to pick apart the components of a current service we deliver and reconstruct that in a “digital first” manner. |
| Service Managers and Service Users | A willingness to improve the way we deliver services and come forward with ideas and suggestions of their own to include within the projects. |
| Transformation Officer Study Group | Keeping the wider organisation informed and consulted on the overall transformation programme |

4.3. Members

- It is important that members understand the journey that we are on with digital technology and use the relevant IT tools effectively to conduct their own business for the Council. We will ensure that members are regularly trained in digital technologies via training sessions (AP10). Members will be canvassed on areas of interest and a training programme will be put into place.
- We will ensure that Members are provided with suitable equipment and software to work in a digital way (AP11).

4.4. Partners

- Partnerships exist within many service areas including IT and provide the opportunity for joint projects, co-location and delivery of services. We will continue to work with partners to ensure the opportunities presented by these working relationships can be maximised to help drive down costs and improve service delivery.

4.5. IT Infrastructure

- We will challenge our legacy infrastructure and business systems with more agile alternatives (AP12). We will be adopting a “cloud first” approach to our IT infrastructure, primarily to cater for the ever-growing business demand for digital engagement via online services. This will enable our Business systems and Digital services to be and more resilient and highly available to our staff, residents, and businesses. In the long-term, this will also drive down the overhead costs associated with the current on premise solutions. When evaluating potential solutions, the preference for cloud services will be taken in the following order to ensure economic viability:

1. Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS)
2. Software as a Service (SaaS)
3. Platform as a Service (PaaS)

4.6. Information Security

- Keeping our organisation safe online is a key priority and is one of the top risk management activities undertaken by the Council. The approach to information security is maturing across the local government sector and top-level responsibility for this risk is required at both Management Team and Member level (AP13). In addition to keeping pace with emerging the threats on a technical basis, we will also put in place the governance structure and procedures so that our security posture and risks can be evaluated corporately.
- We will ensure that the basics of information security are being done well. This includes:
 - maintaining firewalls & content filters
 - using up to date anti-virus
 - promoting good password practice & identity management of users
 - patching software to keep it up to date
 - not using out of date and unsupported software
 - effective monitoring of our environment for anomalous behaviour
- We will maintain compliance with regulatory frameworks such as the Public Service Network Code of Connection (PSN CoCo) and Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI-DSS).
- We will also obtain certification on Cyber Essentials (AP14) which is a publicly recognised standard set up by the National Cyber Security Centre. This is a voluntary programme but will provide re-assurance to our customers and partners that we are managing the information security risk effectively.

4.7. Business Continuity & Disaster Recovery

- The Councils Business Continuity Plan and Disaster Recovery Plan will continue to evolve and take on board changes arising from this strategy (AP15).
- As a minimum we will ensure that the Council can continue to provide its statutory services in times of emergency or disaster.
- We will also ensure that the Council has the IT services it requires to carry out its duties as required by the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

5. Roadmap

5.1. The following is a list of actions and milestones from the IT Strategy.

| Ref | Description | Timeline | Priority | Status |
|------|--|-----------------------------|----------|------------------------|
| AP1 | Establish data quality policy | 2019 | High | Complete (IG) |
| AP2 | Implement Master Data Management to create an authoritative customer record | 2019 | High | Active |
| AP3 | Work with Personnel and other services to embrace a culture of change | Throughout life of strategy | Medium | Active |
| AP4 | Formalise website development plan | 2018 | High | Complete |
| AP5 | Seek customer views on completion of website transactions | 2019 | Medium | Complete |
| AP6 | Comprehensive business process reviews across services to identify conversion to digital processes and highlight automation opportunities | Throughout life of strategy | High | Active 60% Complete |
| AP7 | Capture and analyse key customer contact metrics across all channels | 2019 | Medium | Active |
| AP8 | Ongoing dialog with service areas to determine the best digital tools for the job | Throughout life of strategy | Medium | Active |
| AP9 | Consolidation of common business processes between systems | 2020-2021 | Medium | Active |
| AP10 | Regular technology training sessions for Members | Annually | Medium | Active |
| AP11 | Ensure Members are equipped with hardware and software to participate in paperless Council meetings | Throughout life of strategy | Medium | Active Up to date |
| AP12 | Challenge continued use of legacy business systems vs. cloud-based alternatives | 2020-2021 | Medium | Active |
| AP13 | Establish a lead representative for Information Security at officer (Management Team) and Member level | 2018 | High | Complete |
| AP14 | Ensure that basics of Information Security are done well, regulatory compliance on Information Security is maintained, and obtain Cyber Essentials certification | Throughout life of strategy | High | Active Up to date |
| AP15 | Evolve the Business Continuity and Disaster recovery plans in line with business changes | Throughout life of strategy | Medium | Active Up to date |