

Tandridge District Council

IT & Digital Strategy

2021-2024

# Introduction

Like all local authorities, the challenge for Tandridge is to provide the right service to the right residents, when and where they need it and for the best price. Our ambition is to provide efficient, cost-effective services 24/7 to a growing majority of our residents. We aim to design and commission systems which are simpler to use and provide a good customer experience, based on meeting the needs that our service users have.

Our Digital Strategy for 2021-2024 sets out how we will use our ICT resources to optimise service delivery under three key themes consistent with our Strategic Plan priority of **Building a better Council** – making the Council financially sustainable and providing residents with the best possible services.

## Strategic Plan Priorities

1. **Building a better Council** – making the Council financially sustainable and providing residents with the best possible services
2. **Creating the homes, infrastructure and environment we need** – both now and in the future
3. **Supporting economic recovery in Tandridge** – from lockdown to growth that everyone benefits from
4. **Becoming a greener, more sustainable District** – tackling climate change

## **Overall aims**

We will make the most out of the technology systems, tools and solutions we have as a council. This is to enable us deliver efficient and effective services to the residents and communities we serve.

The technology systems and tools we apply, enable;

- Our workforce and councillors to work effectively and securely whether in the office or remotely
- Greater levels of self-service for our residents and businesses
- Those who need assistance, to access information and services online

## **How we will deliver**

Our aspirations over the coming years will be underpinned by:

- Standardising and simplifying how we use and maintain our technology tools and systems to ensure these remain up-to-date and secure
- Integrating our front and back office systems to enable end-to-end processes, reducing unnecessary duplication and errors
- Having clear and agreed processes about how we commission the implementation of technology tools and systems
- Having clear and agreed governance arrangements in place to oversee and support our work
- Improving our digital capability and digital skills across the Council, putting in place the right tools and training for staff and councillors
- Accelerating and supporting greater levels of channel shift

# Our digital aspirations over the coming years will be underpinned by three critical ambitions:

## **Accelerating channel shift –**

More people will be able to access the services and information they want, when they want, online without needing to contact us. We have invested in new, digital, citizen facing services, notably waste services, council tax and benefits (citizens portal go live October 2021). By 2024 we aim to ensure the same or increased level of digital presence in all council core services while keeping open non digital channels for those that need them.

## **Working smarter –**

We want people to be able to work easily from wherever they are, with the right tools and training, embracing what technology can offer, supported by a leadership team that exemplifies digital thinking.

## **ICT modernisation –**

We will continue to consolidate, standardise and simplify our current technology estate with improved integration and connectivity between the core systems. We aim to keep our network and systems updated, secure and safe to protect the data of our residents and businesses, we require similar from all our partners and providers.

# Principles of our approach

## **Better by design**

Services will be reviewed from a customer journey perspective to ensure true digital transformation, putting the users at the centre and ensuring their needs are being met. This will help us design and build a better service.

## **Digital inclusion**

We recognise that not everyone is able to access our services digitally and/or may not have the necessary skills, so we will ensure we continue to offer phone and face to face services. Our customer service team will support residents by guiding them through our website and signposting to external online training support.

## **Continuous improvements**

We will strive to maximise the benefits from our existing systems. Improvements will always need to be made, as no service is ever finished or complete.

## **Getting IT right**

We want a simpler, safer and more efficient core service, taking out the complexity and risk of outdated, unsupported legacy IT. We have already realised significant benefits from replaced old unsupported services for new world equivalents.

## **An innovative mindset**

We want a council that is led from the top in championing continuous digital change, that has signed the Local Digital Declaration, a public pledge along with hundreds of other councils to meet high standards for our technology and digital services. We want to adopt a digital culture and ways of working.

**Data and cyber security**

We will regularly review and carry out robust testing of the infrastructure and systems to ensure we are best prepared to deal with cyber-attacks, data loss and threats to business continuity, recovery times are minimised, and services are restored in the shortest possible time.

**Climate change and sustainability**

We want to take full advantage of new technology to reduce the carbon footprint of the Council – both directly and indirectly. By enabling smarter working and channel shift, we can reduce the necessity for officers, Members, customers, and other stakeholder to travel our head office, reducing transport emissions. By modernising our ICT systems, we can take advantage of the emissions savings associated with the economies of scale of using large centralised cloud servers, rather than maintaining many local servers.

## **Theme one**

### **Accelerating channel shift**

People expect services to be online and available on any device. Accessing council services online should be easy and simple to use as any other online ordering service. Shifting those people who can and who want to use our online services will reduce demand on our Customer Services team and business areas and improve the overall customer experience.

To achieve this we will:

- Put the user experience and customer focus at the heart of the redesign and design new services
- Deliver a series of redesign projects in partnership with service areas enabled by technology, focusing on high volume services and highly manual process
- Explore different communication channels, including online chat and text services
- Monitor channel shift uptake and measure customer satisfaction to help inform and drive further channel shift projects
- Make it a priority to understand and resolve why certain users continue to use non-digital methods of engagement
- Move to an environment where services are consistently available on any device

## Theme two

### Working smarter

We want our staff and councillors to work effectively and easily from wherever they are using corporate technology and business systems which do not constrain their work, but work well together, are resilient and fit for purpose.

To achieve this we will:

- Provide colleagues with the correct devices for their role enabling them to operate in a more agile way
- Review and improve how we support and train users of corporate and business software to maximise their effective use and develop a confident digital workforce
- Establish project teams where technical and business leaders are driving digital change at the frontline
- Technology enabling projects will have clearly defined outcomes, provide value for money, meet quality and cyber security standards, GDPR and a clear understanding of everyone's role in delivery
- Drive out inefficiencies through increased automation in our routine and transactional activity, allowing staff to focus on actions and providing better outcomes reducing duplication and waste
- Ensure the tools and software we procure can be integrated with existing systems and reused (where possible) and to enable greater data sharing within the council and with our partners
- Ensure all our partners and providers collaborate with us to deliver services to our communities and residents, effectively, efficiently and safely



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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be open to new ways of working and change, carrying forward the positive lessons learned from forced remote working during the pandemic</li></ul> |
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## Theme Three

### ICT modernisation

We want our technology systems and tools to work when needed and to be secure, so we need to “keep the lights on”.

We have made significant investment in our digital technology, however, to ensure these continue to operate, the infrastructure they depend on needs regular updating and maintaining.

We also need to respond to new incidents and user requests, to design and implement new technology when these are agreed.

To achieve this we will:

- Provide compulsory training for our staff and councillors in cyber security, GDPR, data protection and business continuity
- Develop and deliver the disaster recovery solution
- Develop and maintain an asset register
- Improve how we manage and monitor IT service desk requests
- Revise and revise IT policies and procedures to ensure up to date
- Review whether the corporate network can support connectivity for all agile workers
- Decommission old or outdated kit
- Implement standards to ensure all our technology is secure and work properly
- Put in place a schedule for regular maintenance, updates and patching
- Implement a new telephony and contact centre solution
- Horizon scan beyond the public sector to identify upcoming areas of innovation and learn from best practice across the industry

# Governance Structure

It is important to define how the ICT department and the work it does should be governed ie agree a work programme and oversee the delivery through regular and appropriate monitoring.

The ICT department has two major functions:

- 1. Business as Usual (BAU).** This involves maintaining the online service (including through planned maintenance and regular patching of systems, infrastructure and software), responding to incidents and user requests, and a host of mainly invisible activities that 'keep the lights on'. This accounts for around 78% of the ICT department's workload and requires specific skills and capabilities.
- 2. Change/Project Work.** This involves work to introduce new systems or upgrade existing ones and represents the other 22% of the workload. ICT staff sometimes mistakenly see these projects as purely technical activities however, most ICT projects involve changes in business and working practices and culture, those working in the service are key to the design and implementation of any new system/upgrade therefore for the benefits to be realised, the service area needs to commit appropriate resources. While most projects involve change within the business, there are internal ICT projects too, sometimes purely technical in nature (network upgrades, etc).

In terms of new projects, it is proposed that it be a two-part process, an initial high level brief to the Digital Design Group, and if approved a full business case would be prepared, and presented to the IT Strategy Board, which would then approve, ask for modifications, or reject the proposal.

**Digital Design Group** chaired by the Head of Digital Business Transformation, will include an IT Specialist and the Project Delivery Manager and meet monthly. This group is responsible for working together with service areas in examining and assessing high level briefs in terms of technical and business merits, as well as setting out how this will fit with the

council's current digital architecture, whether an existing or proposed system would (largely) meet the need, and what dependencies there would be on other systems or initiatives. Costs and risks would also be discussed. A full business case would be prepared to be submitted to the IT Strategy Board.

**IT Strategy Board** chaired by Executive Lead of Corporate Resources, and will include the Executive Lead for Communities, the Project Delivery Manager, the Head of Digital Business Transformation and the Finance Business Partner. Key stakeholders and business representatives will be invited to attend to present business cases, project status and highlight reports. This board will meet 6 weekly and escalate decisions to Strategy & Resources committee when required. This board is responsible for evaluating requests for ICT projects. To consider their impact on the current IT priorities, IT systems and operations, their expected benefits in terms of efficiency and cost and agree proposed timeframes for implementation and how they relate to council services, improvement programmes and national priorities. The Board will receive project status reports/highlight reports from project and programme boards to understand and manage the relationships, risks, dependencies and cross-cutting implications between major ICT projects and programmes.

**Project Boards** chaired by either the Project Delivery Manager, Head of Digital Business Transformation, or business owner that has a relevant project management qualification/experience. These project boards will manage the entirety of the project in line with project management principles, structures and tools; reporting to **Programme Boards** chaired by the Executive Lead for the business area and to include all senior stakeholders.

# IT & Digital Governance Structure

