Rushcliffe Borough Council

Digital Strategy

2019- 2023

Introduction

The vast majority of the UK adult population now uses the Internet, and is taking advantage of new innovative ways of accessing services digitally. As mobile devices become increasingly faster and smarter, there is a growing expectation that digital services should be secure, quick and easy to use, and available at our convenience.

Our Digital Strategy 2019 – 2023 will be a digitally advancing strategy, ensuring we continue to take advantage of digital technologies that benefit on-going residents and organisational needs. We do not believe replacing any of the existing access channels such as telephone or face-to-face would be beneficial, and see digital services when engaging with residents as complementary, and an important part of any service design moving forward.

This digital strategy was informed by the outcomes of the Council's Service Plans, Customer Access Strategy 2015/17, ICT Services Shared Partnership Digital Strategy 2014/18, and the national Government Transformation Strategy published February 2017.

Digital Strategy Vision

The Corporate Strategy 2020 vision confirms that Rushcliffe will continue to be
**"An excellent place to live, work and visit."**

This Digital Strategy vision will complement the Corporate Strategy, by continuing to
"Adopt digital technology, and encourage a digital culture, enabling the Council to improve overall efficiencies, giving efficiencies back to its residents."

The Council will continue to encourage a digital culture, and empower its residents when accessing Council services digitally, without removing existing access channels such as telephone and face to face.

Where digital solutions are provided, they will operate to the following principles:

» Be accessible, and easy to use
» Save time and money for residents and the Council.
» Be relevant, and Informative.
» Be secure, and have privacy safe guards in place.
» Take advantage of Cloud technology where possible.
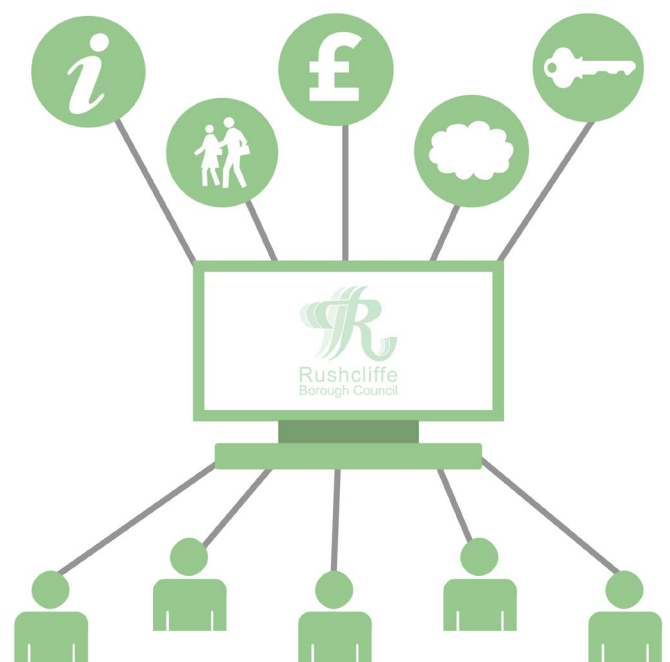
The Council intends on achieving the Digital vision by following the above principles adopted by the national Government Transformation Strategy from central government. This will help our residents engage in our digital service provision with confidence.

Key Achievements

Externally Recognised Website

The Council's website has been recognised through the SOCITM Better Connected annual survey as achieving three out of four stars for the last two years.

Services Online

Many services are now available online from simple payments and checking when my bin is to be collected, to Garden Waste registration checking, planning applications, benefit claims, and applying for a job. All have contributed to an increase of over 365,000 online transactions since 2016/17 and an overall increase of 69% in just three years.

Channel Shift

Online services have helped the Council manage its demand, as positive marketing has improved digital take up. 2017/18 has seen the continuation of reduction in the financial year for both face to face and telephony transactions into the Council's Customer Contact Centre ensuring that more time is available for those most vulnerable in our community.

Social Media

The Council uses a number of social media networks to communicate and engage with its residents.

It provides updates on the latest news, events, jobs, consultations and service information in real time. It has proven to be particularly useful in crisis communications and for severe weather updates and advice.

Mobile

56% of all requests made to the Council's internet services was done using a tablet or mobile phone as the preferred device, which is increasing every month. This has been encouraged by the prompt development of a mobile enabled website. The mobile enabled website also focuses on digital services supporting the previous channel shift programme.

Strategy

This strategy will focus on more than just digital technology to succeed, and support our residents' needs. It will look at gathering service insights from existing digital services, analyse data already captured from multiple sources to reveal patterns and trends, in particular, human behaviour and interactions with Council services.

It will leverage benefits from social media, create shared platforms with other organisations, review Artificial Intelligence (AI) and where this might assist our residents, and continue to build on our digital culture within the organisation.

This digital strategy focuses on the following four strategic themes:

Enabling a digital culture

Efficiencies, and reducing overall costs

Security and privacy by design

Customer satisfaction

Digital Strategy Monitoring

The Council have a detailed programme of activity for performance monitoring purposes. The Council will be monitoring the overall effectiveness of each digital initiative to ensure all are delivered on time, and reflect our goals outlined in this strategy. The Council will also provide an opportunity for residents, and the organisation to feedback on any outcomes that would help to improve Councils Digital Services.

The four themes detailed in this strategy will be monitored by the 'digital-by-design' project board. The project board will meet monthly to ensure the successful delivery of the Strategy. On a quarterly basis, updates will be provided to the Executive Management Team for oversight on all digital initiative.

Enabling a digital culture

Enabling a digital culture is not just implementing digital technology, it is also about changing the hearts and minds of individuals to become more digitally aware, and embrace digital technology.

> **AIM: To actively discover new ways that digital technology can support our residents' needs, and continue to embed a digital culture within the organisation.**

The Digital Strategy will deliver this strategic theme by:

» Understanding our digital needs for both our residents and organisation.
» Using technology to change behaviours, and business process.
» Reviewing existing business processes to remove inefficiencies, and change to new ways of working.
» Continuing to build strong relationships between different service areas, enabling collaboration.
» Promoting staff awareness and training on how to become more digitally enabled.
» Exploring the use of Artificial Intelligence, and how the Council may best use this technology to assist its residents or the organisation.

Efficiencies and Reducing Overall Costs

Efficiencies can be achieved by new digital technology performing tasks such as Intelligent Automation (IA), system integration, or self-serve portals for our residents.

It is also important not to lose sight of internal business processes and interactions between service areas to continue promoting a digital culture within the organisation.

Other initiatives such as sharing platforms with other organisations can also bring efficiencies, savings, and free up resources to focus on high value tasks.

AIM: To establish efficiencies in time, money, and resources, to benefit our residents' needs.

The Digital Strategy will deliver this strategic theme by:

» Maximising resources, increasing productivity, shifting to higher value tasks, targeting human resources.
» Introducing IA (Intelligent Automation) to automate front-end and back office business processes where appropriate.
» Integrating back office systems to increase efficiencies between service areas.
» Where possible, using Shared Platforms with other organisations

Customer Satisfaction

The Council hold in high regard their residents' needs, and satisfaction. The Corporate Strategy focuses on Rushcliffe being an excellent place to live, work and visit, and the Digital Strategy will ensure that these commitments are met.

AIM: To adopt digital solutions that meet our residents' needs that are accessible, and easy to use, relevant and informative, and do not take away existing access channels such as face-to-face or telephone.

The Digital Strategy will deliver this strategic theme by:

» Ensuring customer feedback is captured, and continuing to contact our residents through different means.
» Ensuring digital services are flexible to run across different device types such as mobiles, tablets or computers, and different platforms like Android, Apple and Windows.
» Being easy to use, save time, and are relevant and informative.
» Providing instant responses to complex requests using online services.
» Continuing the development of self-serve technologies, and access to digital services via front-end facilities.
» Enabling residents to access Council services from one place, using the 'My Account' portal.
» Leveraging benefits from social media.

Security and Privacy by Design

The Council takes seriously the importance of keeping personal data safe and secure. Sometimes enforced security can cause systems to be over complicated, and cumbersome to use. This can then lead to putting people off from using them in the future.

There is always a balance between security, and functionality, and the Council will ensure all data is appropriately made safe and secure, without compromising functionality or making a system over complicated to access. All digital solutions will be designed with security and functionality at the heart.

AIM: To provide secure digital solutions with privacy safeguards built-in, and security that protects against different types of cyber-crime. When applying security to a system, it is important not to lose sight of system functionality and ease of use for our residents.

We will:
» Ensure the Council meet good security standards, which are nationally recognised.
» Invest in Cloud technology where appropriate.
» Ensure that digital solutions are 'secured by design', with privacy safeguarding in place.
» Ensure the digital solution doesn't lose functionality, and is easy to use.

Action Plan

The Digital Strategy is an emerging strategy however, these are objectives the Council have already committed to over the next 4 years. The below table demonstrates how these objectives support the Councils Digital Strategic themes.

Objective	Enabling a digital culture	Efficiencies and reducing overall costs	Customer satisfaction	Security and privacy by design
Launch a self-service portal for residents to access digital services called 'My Account' by July 2019.	✓	✓	✓	✓
To enable the 'My Account' portal to become the one stop shop for access to all Council digital services by 2023.	✓	✓	✓	✓
To update the Councils mail website to adhere to the new Accessibility 2.1 standards by September 2019.			✓	✓
To review all council department postage requirements, and move them over to an electronic Hybrid Mail system by March 2020.	✓	✓		
Provide the ability to access Council systems from Mobile devices whilst out in the field to increase efficiencies. Currently Environmental Health, Planning and Properties team will have this capability by March 2020.	✓	✓		✓
Self-service scanning facilities will be made available across contact points. Initial pilot to start by December 2019.	✓	✓	✓	✓
To adopt Artificial Intelligence by 2023. Throughout the digital strategy, attending conferences and work closely with partners will ensure the Council stay informed on Artificial Intelligence technology, looking for ways to adopt and improve Council services and experience for our residents.	✓	✓		

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