Rushcliffe
Borough Council

RUSHCLIFFE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Technology, Digital and Customer Access Strategy

2025 - 2028

Contents

Foreword

“With this Technological, Digital and Customer Access Strategy we will increase the diversity of our digital services and use technology to maintain easy access and reliability of Council services. Our goal is to work with technology to remove barriers and reduce costs, all whilst continuing to tackle digital inequality and embrace technological transformation.

We aim to invest in and empower our workforce to improve our processes making use of emerging technologies ensuring residents can access our services quickly and efficiently at a time, and in a way, that suits them. And, crucially at this time, we aim to increase data security through physical measures, increased training and awareness, and more robust and more regular testing of our security measures.

Through the delivery of this Strategy, we will create digitally enhanced dynamic systems and processes delivering high quality access to Council services for both residents directly (including our Councillors) and our employees”.

Councillor Jonathan Wheeler – Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Wellbeing, ICT and Member Development

“The Technological, Digital and Customer Access Strategy 2025-2028 defines how Rushcliffe Borough Council will leverage technology to enhance services, processes and digital access to customers and our workforce.

We will invest in technology, modernise our infrastructure, enhance our cyber security, and explore innovative solutions like Artificial Intelligence. We will prioritise training and support internally to ensure the successful adoption and exploitation of new technologies. We will also prioritise accessible design for our customer-facing digital services so that all stakeholders can access the services they need anytime of the day.

This strategy is flexible and will be updated as technology changes, ensuring the Council stays ahead in technological and digital service delivery, for the benefit of all stakeholders”.

Peter Linfield - Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Corporate Services

Introduction

The Technological, Digital and Customer Access Strategy ('the Strategy) is aligned with the Council's Corporate Strategy for 2024-2027 and the Council's Strategic Priorities of the Environment, Quality of Life, Sustainable Growth, and Efficient Services. It consolidates three existing strategies (ICT, Digital-by-Design and Customer Access strategies) where there is overlap and modernising these with the impact of emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence.

The Strategy not only outlines our previous successes more importantly this Strategy looks ahead to what the future may bring, horizon scanning and learning from the private sector and other councils to bring the best of the new technologies to Rushcliffe. It enables all stakeholders to access Council services at a time and in a manner that suits a range of individual preferences.

The context within the which the Strategy operates and successes of the past strategies are detailed at Appendix A.

This Strategy provides a framework within which the Council can explore, and exploit, new technology to deliver more economic, efficient, and effective services to our residents. It provides support for all front-facing service delivery teams as well as the Council's extensive support services in terms of awareness raising, skill development and implementation support.

Introduction

The main challenges the Strategy aims to deliver are to:

• Capitalise on the Council's existing systems to ensure users are making the most of what these systems already offer.

• Extract and utilise data to drive innovation in areas where it is likely to deliver the biggest gains.

• Identify, assess and introduce emerging technologies for their ability to improve customer access and experience, streamline internal processes, reduce the cost of processes and / or reduce human errors in processing.

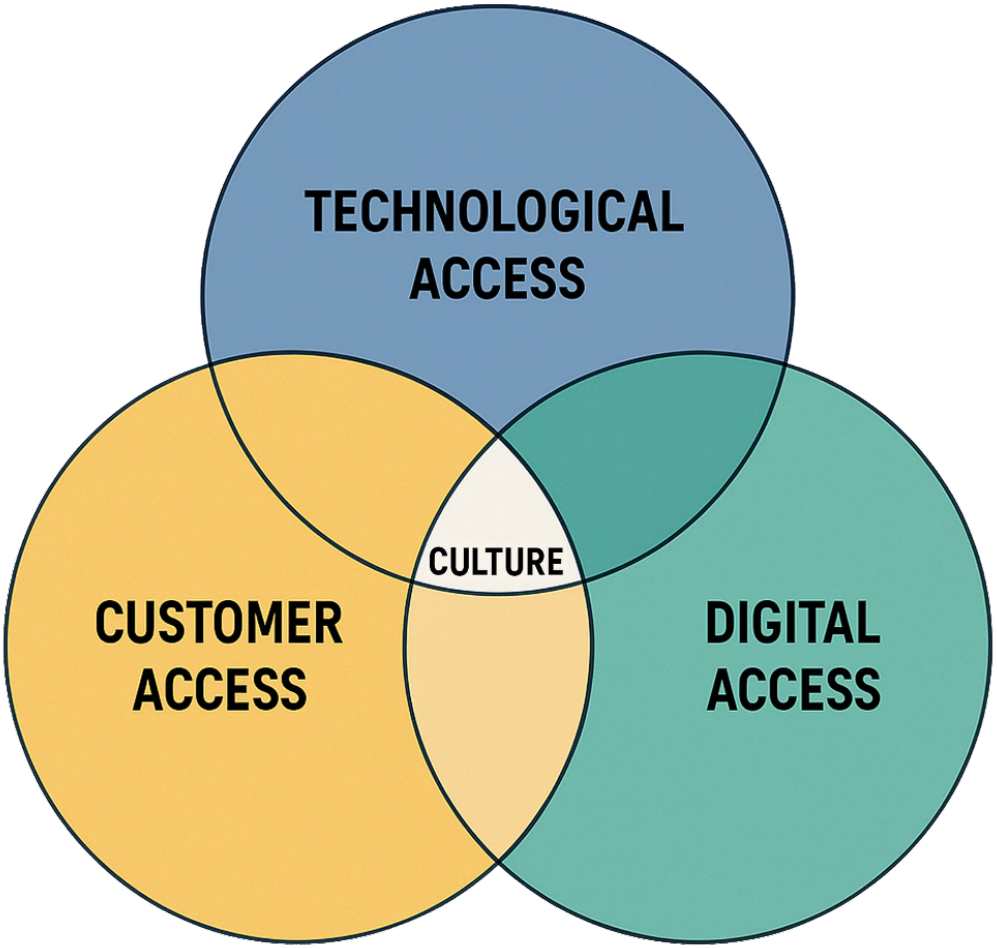
• Upskill the Council's workforce to enable them to understand and exploit emerging technologies, and support the development of skills for other stakeholders such as local business owners and residents by signposting to external courses and information.

• Increase the Council's technological defences to prevent infiltration by cyber criminals, whilst also increasing the Council's resilience to attack and strengthening its ability to recover if such attacks are ever successful.

To meet these challenges there are 3 strands, each having their own objectives and specific actions and work streams identified in Sections 3 to 5. The effective interaction of these should enable excellent service delivery. Underpinning the strands is the culture of the Council.

Introduction

Council Culture underpinning the 3 Key Work Strands to innovate



The three work strands are defined as follows:

- **Technological Access** - addressing technological transformation in an ever fast paced sector with AI advances, reviewing infrastructure, data governance and IT resilience and mindful of possible Local Government Reorganisation

- **Digital Access** - using data and insight to empower people and communities, enhancing skills to deliver a more rounded technological culture for an increasing number of stakeholders

- **Customer Access** - ensuring our customers and residents can access services ever more conveniently and using innovative projects to meet changing expectations of service delivery.

Introduction

Culture

It is important the Council has the right culture in place to develop services. Taking services forward is the responsibility of everyone. To this end this strategy aims to harness the following to optimise the development of technological, digital and customer access:

- Focus on being agile and both iterative, and if necessary 'big bang', development;
- A 'fail fast – learn faster' culture, not being afraid to make mistakes but important that we identify and learn from them and share the lessons learned. To this end there is not a 'blame culture'.
- That project feedback is constructive and there is psychological safety so individuals are not afraid to innovate and also having the headroom to innovate is important. Furthermore that we collaborate across teams aided by effective project management;
- Empowering our employees and councillors to continue to develop. Both 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' innovation and also maintaining excellent governance and that stakeholders are aware of 'railguards' to protect both individuals and the Council. The balancing act of having both 'digital first' thinking and a culture of 'security and ethics'; and
- Our commitment to ongoing training and development and investment in technology, so employees can both identify and acquire the tools they need, maximise their use and continue to take services forward for the benefit of customers.

Technological Access

Introduction

Keeping up-to date with technology is important to make life easier, tasks more efficient, improving resilience and work more cost-effective. Artificial Intelligence has the potential to change the way we work yet again providing faster access to information, reducing low value tasks to free up staff to work on high value activities, and increasing data security. To take advantage of these new technological developments we need to ensure we are making the most of our existing technologies, understand how best to use the new tools, and create an environment within which they can perform effectively. This strand of the strategy focuses on ensuring our existing technology performs at its best whilst also looking forward to develop the processes of the future is about creating technological access.

The challenges Technological access focuses on is to:

- Capitalise on the Council's existing systems to ensure users are making the most of what these systems already offer.
- Increase the Council's defences to prevent infiltration by cyber criminals, whilst also increasing the Council's resilience to attack and strengthening its ability to recover if such attacks are ever successful.

Rationale

Looking ahead, the future ICT landscape will be defined by rapid technological advancements and evolving security threats. We anticipate significant growth in cloud computing, offering opportunities to leverage innovative technologies and enhance service delivery. This shift necessitates a heightened focus on cyber security to protect sensitive data and infrastructure. This Strategy will prioritise staying ahead of emerging threats, implementing robust security measures, taking full advantage of new cloud-based technologies to drive efficiency, resilience, and customer-centric services. Furthermore, we recognise that our users are key stakeholders in driving technological advances.

Looking forward, there is no doubt that Artificial Intelligence (AI) provides significant opportunity for service improvement and efficiencies within the Council. Reducing the time spent on common tasks such as minute taking, document creation and data analysis frees up staff time for focus on more complex tasks. AI tools already incorporated into the Microsoft 365 suite of products that are making day-to-day work more efficient. The challenge is training staff to take advantage of these tools to make routine tasks easier in an environment that is constantly evolving whilst also ensuring that adequate data security measures are in place.

As well as transforming the way individuals undertake their work, AI also presents the opportunity to transform Council services through the automation of processes both internally and for resident facing services.

Within any projects, managing our data is critical and developing the measures needed to ensure security of data is robust moving forward.

Technological Access

Service Objectives

The Technological Access work strand has four objectives, which are underpinned by six key initiatives detailed below:

Objective	Initiatives
1. ICT Future Proofing and Security: Adapt ICT capabilities to meet evolving business needs and exploit emerging technologies and ensuring resilience against cyber attack. **2. ICT Service Improvement:** Continuously enhance ICT services and processes to increase efficienct, effectiveness and user satisfaction. **3. ICT Infrastructure and Platform Management:** Establish and maintain a reliable, scalable and secure ICT environment including hardware, software, networks and platforms. **4. ICT Service Request and Delivery:** Maintain a robust, secure and scalable ICT service that effectively supports all council services.	**a. Digital Governance, Security and Compliance:** To establish and maintain robust governance frameworks, implement stringent security measures, and ensure ongoing compliance with relevant regulations to protect the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of all systems and data assets. **b. Infrastructure improvement:** To modernise and enhance the foundational IT infrastructure, ensuring scalability, reliability, and performance to support current and future business needs. **c. Applications Development:** To accelerate digital transformation by modernising existing applications (merging where possible) and developing new digital solutions that improve customer experience, streamline internal processes, and drive business growth. **d. Data governance:** To establish a comprehensive framework for managing, governing, and optimizing the use of data as a strategic asset, enabling data-driven decision-making and insights. **e. Cloud Technology:** To strategically leverage cloud technologies to enhance business agility, improve operational resilience, and optimise IT costs through a well-defined cloud adoption strategy. **f. AI and Automation:** To strategically explore, evaluate, and deploy artificial intelligence and automation solutions across the organisation to drive efficiency gains, foster innovation, and improve operational processes.

Appendix B details various actions against the key objectives.

Digital Access

Introduction:

Introducing new technologies to improve cannot work on its own unless we invest in the digital skills of our staff enabling them to be able to use the right tools, develop new processes that actually meet customer need; and increase their understanding of how technology can assist in streamlining internal processes. Thus reducing the potential for error, and automating repetitive work, creating capacity, potential efficiencies and releasing staff time to focus on more complex tasks.

We also need to better analyse the data we have creating a better understanding of what customers need and their expectations, as well as how our existing processes operate, and where improvements will be most beneficial. We need to encourage all of our different stakeholders to access our services digitally, and to look at 'upskilling' if digital access is a barrier. Accepting there are more vulnerable groups and some traditional channels may remain.

Digital access is the second strand of this Strategy and is focused on expanding the ways residents can access Council services, giving our staff the skills they need to develop these new access channels, and using the data these new methods provide to drive further improvements.

The challenges digital access focuses upon is to:

• Upskill the Council's workforce to enable them to understand and exploit emerging technologies, and support the development of skills for other stakeholders such as local business owners and residents by signposting to external courses and information

• Extract and utilise data to drive innovation in areas where it is likely to deliver the biggest gains.

Digital Access

Rationale:

The Council wishes to build further foundational digital literacy for Councillors and employees. To help stakeholders develop starter, intermediate or advanced digital skills aligned to their needs. We will promote a comprehensive training program to enhance our digital literacy and empower us to effectively utilise new systems and tools internally.

It will seek to define skill levels of the Council's employees based on:

• Basic Skills: Email, online safety, digital communication, internet navigation.

• Intermediate Skills: Microsoft Office, digital collaboration tools (e.g., Zoom, Teams), data entry and management.

• Advanced Skills: Data analytics, cybersecurity, software development, AI/ ML, cloud computing, data ownership (retention, governance and GDPR)

• Leadership and Strategy: Digital transformation leadership, IT governance, innovation management.

We are also aware that in order for residents to make use of an expanded range of digital access tools then they also need to be comfortable with their use. Some of this will form naturally as the Council catches up with the private sector who have already deployed chat bots and intelligent agents but for other residents' access to information and signposting to training opportunities will be required.

Digital Access

Service Objectives

The Digital Access work strand has four objectives, which are underpinned by seven key initiatives detailed below:

Objective	Initiatives
1. ICT Infrastructure and Platform Management: Establish and maintain a reliable, scalable and secure ICT environment including hardware, software, networks and platforms. **2. Extending tools and learning:** So the council grows with new technology, systems and processes. **3. Reducing digital exclusion:** Upskilling councillors, staff etc so they can use technology and data. **4. Making increased use of data and trends:** So the council can make better informed decisions.	**a.** Partnerships with universities, businesses, D2N2 and public sector organisations through public sector reform to drive innovation and skill **b.** Improve transactional services with increased convenience to report, apply, register and access information on the Council's website **c.** Improve and review digital self-help advice and information **d.** Review how services are designed with innovations for improvements for resident and customer accessibility **e.** Upskill and develop the Council's workforce and ensure they are digitally enabled, trained and supported, reducing the digital inclusion gap and leading to a more digitally agile and flexible workforce. Also infrastructure training in relation to Cloud technology **f.** Link relevant improvements with the Council's Communications and Engagement strategy 2025-2028 **g.** Create a transition plan for new systems and solutions to create a tangible legacy of improved skills for Council staff.

Appendix B details various actions against the four objectives.

Customer Access

Introduction:

We appreciate that many of our residents rarely have cause to contact the Council. For some, the only communication is limited to the receiving, and payment of, the annual Council Tax bill, or the regular emptying of household waste and recycling bins. For others, contact can be a lot more regular, more complicated and sometimes fraught with difficulty. It is vitally important that those residents who need to access help and support can do so easily, conveniently, and at a time, and in a way, that suits them. Understanding and meeting this expectation is called Customer Access and it forms the third strand of this Strategy.

The challenge customer access focuses upon is to identify, assess and introduce emerging technologies for their ability to improve customer access and experience, streamline internal processes, reduce the cost of processes and / or reduce human errors in processing.

Rationale:

To improve services for our customers, we need to have a better understanding of who they are, how they expect services to be delivered, and their expectations of Council services.

Traditional methods of contact, such as ‘face-to-face’ can be more expensive and time consuming. Understanding why certain customers prefer these channels can help us to help them to move to quicker and more efficient channels. Examining the customer journey, and the cost of delivering each process, can identify key areas for development as well as identify the areas customers consider to be less important to help us prioritise resources.

Consulting with different customer groups and using customer insight data will help us to understand the requirements of our customers. It can also help to develop end to end digital transactions and ease of access to online services allowing in-person and telephone conversations to be focused on vulnerable customers or those with complex needs or queries.

Identifying these customer groups for whom digital services and self-service may not be the most suitable type of access, will enable us to target our resources to meet all of our customers’ needs and ensure no one is excluded from accessing services.

Understanding our customers will enable us to make decisions based on real data and real customer feedback instead of making assumptions about what our customers want.

Customer Access

Service Objectives

The Customer Access work strand has four key objectives, which are underpinned by seven key initiatives detailed below:

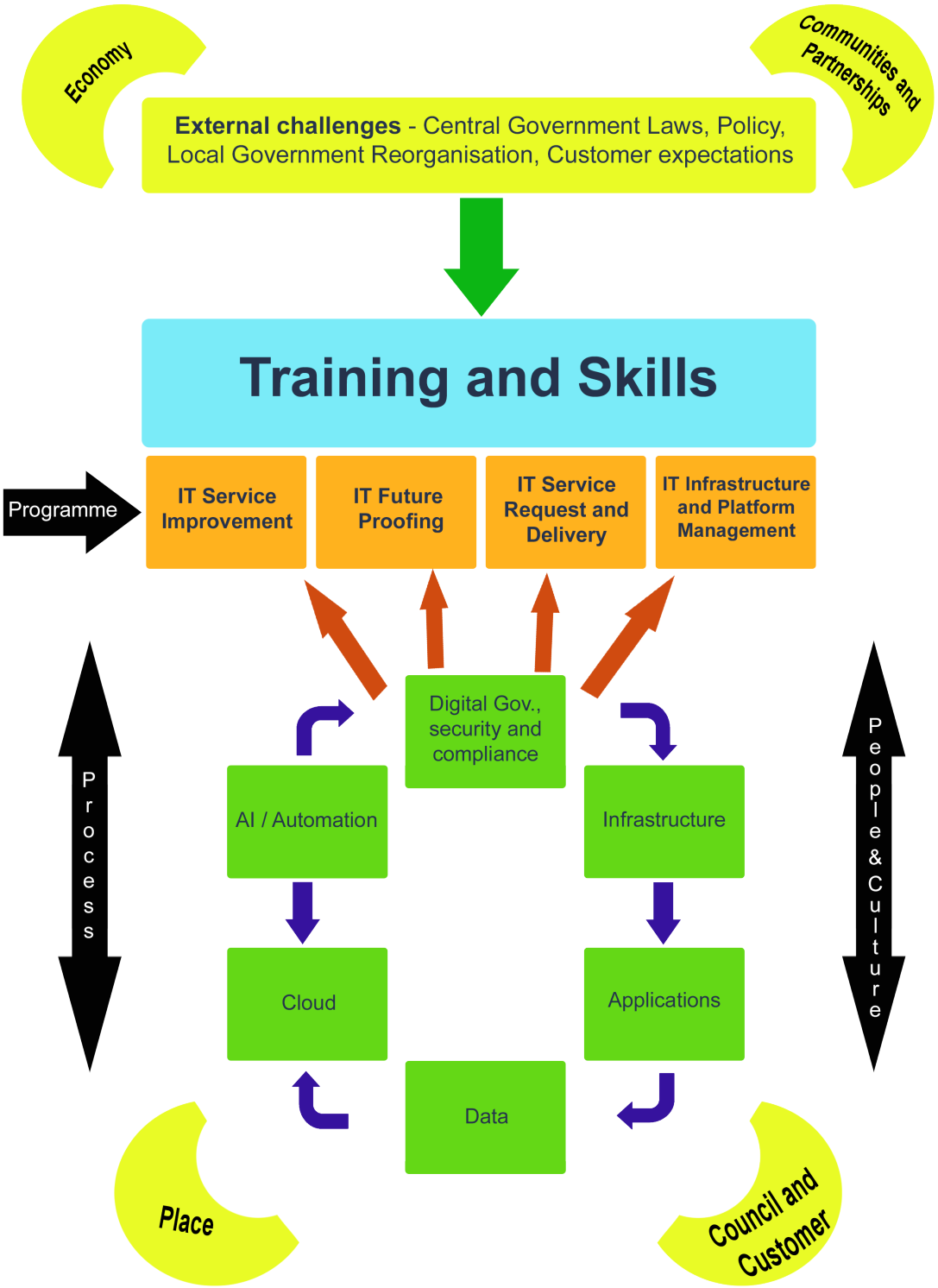
Objective	Initiatives
1. To progress digital and in-person self-help: Improving and expanding communication channels.	**a.** Improve transactional services with increased convenience to report, apply, register and access information on the Council's website. **b.** Continue to develop more understanding of who our customers are through analysis of our ESB Customer Relationship Management and other systems' data on enquiries.
2. To be innovative: Looking at the latest technology including AI.	**c.** Understand further why services are used in the ways they are by customers and whether this is an active choice or lack of awareness regarding alternatives.
3. To review and build partnerships: How customers are using the council's contact centres.	**d.** Understand further and define the needs and expectations of customers across different communities including the provision of in-person contact points. **e.** Continue to capture accurate customer data to guide which services can be delivered more effectively digitally.
4. Listening and responding to evolving trends: To inform how services are delivered.	**f.** Understand further the cost of delivering our services and where we can identify partner organisations who can benefit from shared services or space at our sites. **g.** Develop our systems to collect and monitor customer feedback and satisfaction from all access channels.

We will deliver the above objectives by undertaking the 12 tasks contained in the Action Plan appended to this Strategy.

Customer Access

The diagram overleaf depicts how processes and culture interact with the ICT Programme and the influence of external factors on the Council's Technological, Digital and Customer Access Strategy.

The world of ICT is extremely fast paced and dynamic. The strategy and associated action plan is under continuous review so the Council can take advantage of emerging technologies for the benefit of all stakeholders. We know even now Local Government Reorganisation will lead to significant transformative change and the Strategy is designed to ensure that the Council will be on the front foot when this change materialises.



Resourcing

Maintaining existing points and forms of access to Council services, as well as looking to the future and developing new access channels, is the responsibility of all officers at Rushcliffe Borough Council. However, the driving forces behind this Strategy fall mainly within the Council's Corporate Services team and more specifically within ICT and Customer Services.

Some projects contained within the three action plans appended to this Strategy are significant enough to require additional funding, for example an investment in new software, and these costs have been incorporated into future budgets where they are already known. For more explorative projects currently in the very early stages of investigation, funding options will be considered as part of the business case and provision made, if necessary, in future years.

A significant part of the Digital Access strand, is upskilling officers to enable them to see the possibilities new technologies can bring for increasing efficiency, reducing costs and expanding on Customer Access. The cost of this upskilling is contained with the Council's training budget and will be constantly assessed along with other Council priorities.

Recognising the ongoing discussions surrounding Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), this Strategy balances the need to be proactive and innovative in ways that benefit all stakeholders but also recognises the potential of an 'as yet' unknown demand on the service as we move into LGR. Resources, and the respective action plans, will be reassessed once the outcome of LGR is clearer for Rushcliffe as an organisation.

Previous Successes and Service Context

ICT Strategy

Our previous successes from the 2022-25 ICT Strategy include:

- Delivered an enhanced backup solution from tape to Cloud storage
- Introduced Endpoint Detection and Response solutions to enhance security
- Achieved Cyber Assessment Framework “READY” status
- Introduced Microsoft Teams to all staff
- Upgraded to Windows 11 for all devices
- Established a new secondary ‘fail-over site’ to enhance business continuity
- Improved network connectivity and wireless access.

It is worth understanding in terms of context and the scale of support that ICT has to deliver:

- 350 individual ICT users
- 267 staff laptops
- Sending and receiving over 16,000 emails each day
- 32TB (Terabytes) of data stored on 10 physical servers
- 62 different software applications with 61% operating from physical servers on our sites and 39% operating from the Cloud
- Supported by seven ICT staff
- Physical support over eight RBC sites
- A partnership approach with the Cutter Group to deliver more responsive and resilient services
- Over 1,500 spam or phishing attempts per day highlighting the importance of robust cyber security.

Previous Successes and Service Context

Digital by Design

Key outcomes from the Council's Digital by Design Programme over the last few years have included:

- The digitisation of our Home Alarms service ensuring customers continue to receive vital piece of mind following the switch over to digital only phonelines
- The introduction of Hybrid Mail automating the printing and posting of outgoing mail using an external service provider
- The development of electronic internal processes such as digital recruitment, licensing applications, benefits claims, and tree preservation orders
- The introduction of a brand new website for the Council which meets the WCAG 2.2 Accessibility Standards meeting the needs of a more diverse group of residents.
- Better methods of data analysis allowing managers to identify where digital development will make the biggest impact both in terms of customer access but also cost reduction and higher levels of productivity.

Current statistics – see below Customer Access Strategy

Customer Access Strategy

Key outcomes from the 2022-2025 Customer Access Strategy include:

- Introducing self-serve terminals at Customer Contact Points, reviewing their use and removing them in favour of more online development
- Introducing the online MyAccount feature enabling customers to easily access key information about services that matter to them ignoring internal operational boundaries
- Introducing clear customer services standards that make expectation of Rushcliffe Staff and Customers clear

Current statistics

From April 2024 to March 2025, on average:

- 6,500 customers phoned us each month
- 3,000 customers emailed us each month
- 800 customers used an enquiry form on the website each month
- 5,500 customers used the electronic payment line each month
- 480 customers visited us in person each month
- 142,300 web hits per month.

Appendix B

Technological Access Action Plan

Theme	ICT Future Proofing	ICT Future Proofing	ICT Future Proofing	ICT Future Proofing	ICT Future Proofing
Initiative	**1. Capitalise on existing Microsoft licenses including the introduction of Hyper-V . Hyper-V is Microsoft's virtualization platform that enables multiple servers to run on a single physical machine, reducing hardware costs, improving efficiency, and enhancing security**	**2. Introduce solutions to enable… PowerBI and PowerAutomate to enable quicker access to data Power BI is Microsoft's business analytics tool that transforms data into interactive visual reports to support smarter decision-making. Power Automate is a cloud-based service that automates repetitive tasks and workflows across apps to boost productivity and reduce manual effort**	**3. Work with software and hardware suppliers to maximise our current contracts**	**4. Simplify and improve the Data Protection Impact Assessment**	**5. Test and improve Disaster Recovery provisions**
What are we going to do?	Transferring to the Cloud where appropriate, extending the use of Sharepoint and exploring the benefits of Azure technologies	Introduce the tools across the organisation laying the groundwork for more advanced use of Artificial Intelligence	Create plans for maximising future developments	Review the due diligence process to make it easier to do business with the Council whilst meeting our statutory responsibilities	Further assessments to assure business continuity and resistance to cyber attacks
Why?	To make the most of the tools we already pay for, which will help us run our systems more efficiently, save money, and prepare our technology for the future	We are introducing these tools to help everyone get the information they need more quickly and easily, which will also help us explore how newer technologies like Artificial Intelligence can benefit our work in the future	To ensure we are getting the best possible value and performance from the technology and services we already use, and to plan ahead so we can take full advantage of new opportunities and improvements from our technology partners	To make our data protection checks simpler and more efficient, so it's easier for others to work with us while ensuring we always meet our legal duties to protect information	To make sure that if something unexpected happens, like a major system failure or a cyber attack, we can get our essential services back up and running quickly and keep our information safe
When are we going to do it?	Phased approach starting August 2025.	March 2026 (after successful staff training)	As and when the contracts are due for renewal with vendors and system owners	CIGG meet every quarter and will be addressed September 2026	Scheduled for every six months
How will we know we have delivered?	A reduction in the number of physical servers and data stored on premises.	Clear examples where new PowerBI reports or automated PowerAutomate workflows have led to quicker, more informed decision-making. We can measure a reduction in the time it takes to compile or access information that was previously difficult to obtain	There's a general understanding and readiness within relevant teams about how these tools can support future AI initiatives. Staff express increased confidence in the organisation's data and its potential for more advanced analysis	A measurable reduction in the average time it takes to complete a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) from initiation to approval. A similar reduction in the time it takes to complete due diligence checks for new partners or suppliers	Regular Disaster Recovery (DR) tests, and these tests are consistently carried out for critical systems and services. After each test, there's a clear report on what worked, what didn't, and lessons learned. Recovery Time between tests has not increased.

Technological Access Action Plan

Theme	ICT Service Improvement	ICT Service Improvement	ICT Infrastructure and Platform Management	ICT Service Improvement	ICT Service Request and Delivery
Initiative	**6. Create a programme of support for system owners**	**7. Migrate the Council's internal data from the Y drive to SharePoint**	**8. Move towards cloud-based networks**	**9. Assess security access**	**10. Make processes paperless and digitalise manual service sheets**
What are we going to do?	Create workshops highlighting responsibilities and building relationships, and a rolling evaluation to ensure systems are meeting the needs of the organisation, internal and external users	Deliver staff training to highlight smarter ways of working collaboratively using new technology	Provide automated updates, alerts and systems management	Replace the security access systems to provide continuity across all physical sites	Increase the acceptance of digital signatures and electronic stock control
Why?	To better support the people responsible for our different technology systems, helping them understand their roles clearly and work together, while also making sure these systems are always doing what our organisation and our users need them to do	To move our shared files to a more modern and accessible system, and to help everyone learn how to use these new tools to work together more effectively and efficiently	To modernise our network infrastructure, which will help keep our systems up-to-date automatically, alert us to any issues quickly, and make managing everything simpler and more secure	To update our building security so that we have a consistent and reliable way to manage access across all our locations, making them more secure with identity management, easier to manage and track any unauthorised entries	We are doing this to make our work more efficient, reduce waste, and speed things up by moving away from paper-based tasks to digital methods for things like service records, approvals, and managing our supplies
When are we going to do it?	September 2025 and then every quarter	Before December 2025	Before July 2026	Before December 2026	RBC teams with piloting this and rollout if successful in 2026
How will we know we have delivered?	System owners demonstrate a clearer understanding of their responsibilities (e.g., for system maintenance, security, user support, future planning). There's improved collaboration and communication between system owners and with IT/digital teams. System owners proactively engage with the support programme and the evaluation process, rather than it being a purely top-down exercise. fewer escalations or issues arising from a lack of clarity around system ownership or responsibilities	All relevant data from the Y drive has been successfully migrated to the designated SharePoint environment with data integrity maintained. The Y drive (or relevant sections) has been made read-only and eventually decommissioned, with staff successfully redirected to SharePoint for their files. There's a clear and logical information architecture in SharePoint, making it easy for staff to find what they need	Consistent network configurations and policies are applied across all sites, managed from the central cloud platform. IT staff report spending less time on manual network maintenance and firefighting, and more time on service improvement and strategic initiatives. It's quicker and easier to deploy new network services or make changes to existing configurations across multiple sites	The new security access system is installed, tested, and fully operational across all designated council sites. The old access systems have been completely decommissioned. Relevant staff (e.g., facilities management) are trained and proficient in using and managing the new system New system accurately logs and allows authorized personnel to generate reports detailing who entered specific rooms or zones, and at what precise times, providing a consistent and auditable trail across all equipped sites	Manual service sheets are replaced by a digital system (e.g., staff using tablets or mobile apps to record service delivery). Data from these digital sheets is accurate, captured in real-time, and easily accessible for reporting and auditing. Field staff find the digital solution efficient to use

Technological Access Action Plan

Theme	ICT Infrastructure and Platform Management	ICT Infrastructure and Platform Management	ICT Infrastructure and Platform Management	ICT Infrastructure and Platform Management	ICT Service Request and Delivery
Initiative	**11. Refresh the Council's infrastructure to increase resilience, stability and decrease the Council's impact on the environment**	**12. Replace the Council's Audio Visual and meeting room technology**	**13. Install layer two networking (Layer 2 networking helps devices in the same area connect directly and securely, making local communication fast and reliable) providing secure digital links between our physical sites**	**14. Explore and advantage of SAAS products. SaaS (Software as a Service) is a cloud-based model where users access software via the internet, eliminating the need for installation or maintenance**	**15. Introduce chat bot and single sign on to access different systems**
What are we going to do?	Provide capacity to deliver better options, and the opportunity to exploit cloud technology	Make it easier to use and more secure providing a stable platform from which to expand the business and increase revenue	Assess sites to promote a zero-trust environment (A zero-trust environment helps protect sensitive data by always verifying who's trying to access it)	Put the onus on suppliers to ensure their equipment and services are upgraded, maintained, and secured in line with current security standards	Make our services more accessible through smarter access methods
Why?	To update our core technology foundations to make our systems more reliable and stable, ensure we can support new and better services, and allow us to take advantage of modern cloud-based solutions all contributing to the Council's goal to be Carbon Neutral by 2030	To upgrade our meeting room equipment so it's simpler for everyone to use, more secure, and provides a reliable setup that will help us conduct business more effectively and explore new opportunities for growth	To create stronger and more secure direct connections between our different office locations, which helps ensure that only authorized people and systems can access our information, making our overall network much safer	We are doing this to align with Central government's direction for using cloud technologies, a key reason being the enhanced security these modern systems provide, alongside benefits like efficiency and keeping our services current	To make it much easier for people to use our services by providing instant help through a chatbot and allowing them to access different systems with just one login
When are we going to do it?	Phased approach starting August 2025	Before August 2025	Before September 2026	September 2025 and then every quarter	Jan 2026 – May 2026
How will we know we have delivered?	Old, end-of-life equipment is decommissioned, potentially leading to reduced maintenance costs and risks. Faster system performance, quicker response times, and fewer incidents related to hardware failures or capacity bottlenecks Reduction in reliance on non-renewable energies, better energy management and lower emissions	All targeted meeting rooms are equipped with the new, fully functional AV technology (e.g., high-quality displays, reliable audio, seamless video conferencing, intuitive control systems). The old AV equipment has been decommissioned. Staff (and any external users, if applicable) report that the new technology meets their needs for various meeting types	The new layer two network links (e.g., dedicated fibre, VPLS - VPLS (Virtual Private LAN Service which securely connects multiple office locations, making communication between sites seamless, fast, and private). are successfully installed, tested, and fully operational between all specified council sites. Inter-site network performance (bandwidth, latency) meets the agreed-upon service levels, ensuring efficient data transfer. Network monitoring shows stable and reliable connectivity across these links	A majority of key council services or internal functions are successfully running on well-chosen SaaS platforms. Council staff are effectively using these SaaS products, and user satisfaction is positive	The chatbot is live, easily discoverable on the council website, and available 24/7. A significant and growing number of residents are using the chatbot to ask questions and find information. The chatbot is successfully handling a high percentage of common enquiries without needing to escalate to a council officer (e.g., queries about bin collections, council tax, reporting minor issues)

Pillar Two: Digital Access Action Plan

Theme	Extending tools and learning	Making increased use of data and trends	Reducing digital exclusion	Extending tools and learning	Reducing digital exclusion
Initiative	**1. Manual workforce upskilling**	**2. Improve data analysis across Councils teams**	**3. Empower opportunities for partners and local business owners to gain digital skills**	**4. Enhance AI options such as Co-pilot for improved communication**	**5. Increase opportunities for residents to access further digital and cyber awareness**
What are we going to do?	Make use of new technology ensuring our devices meet the needs of staff on the frontline including a smart phone app supported by location services	Work with internal stakeholders to make it easier to analyse the data in a timely manner to facilitate responsive services and performance management	Identify and signpost further digital and cyber awareness workshop opportunities in conjunction with D2N2 and other partners	Introduce training to highlight the tool's effectiveness at honing written communications	Signpost to workshop and bootcamp opportunities with local partners
Why?	To equip frontline staff with modern tools, like specialised smartphone apps that use location information, to help them perform their jobs more effectively and efficiently while they are out serving the community	To help teams quickly understand the information to make smarter decisions, and respond faster to needs	So increasing numbers of partners and business owners can increase digital skills to strengthen their economic outlook	So colleagues can improve communication to stakeholders and each other and convey more effective exchanges and responses	To ensure more have the skills to learn and navigate digital opportunities and ways to engage with Council and other services more easily
When are we going to do it?	September 2025 and then every quarter	September 2025 and then every quarter	Annual review in conjunction with Economic Growth team	September 2025 and then every quarter	Annual review in conjunction with Economic Growth team
How will we know we have delivered?	The supplied devices are secure and managed according to council IT policies. Demonstrable improvements in the quality, speed, or efficiency of services delivered by frontline staff	Key performance indicators (KPIs) readily available to relevant stakeholders in a timely fashion. Meetings more data-driven, with stakeholders using up-to-date information to assess progress and make decisions	Volume of businesses and partners who engage with the signposted initiatives reviewed each year in December 2025, 2026 and 2027	100% of office staff to have completed training by March 2026	Volume of businesses and partners who engage with the signposted initiatives reviewed each year in December 2025, 2026 and 2027

Pillar Two: Digital Access Action Plan

Theme	Developing infrastructure	Extending tools and learning	Extending tools and learning	Developing infrastructure
Initiative	**6. Cloud storage adoption increase**	**7. Upskill colleagues on project delivery**	**8. Upskill colleagues in Power BI, SharePoint, Co-pilot, Teams and Power Automate tools**	**9. Review disaster recovery systems to further protect Council IT infrastructure**
What are we going to do?	Increase cloud footprint to 70% while reducing on-premise workload	Train colleagues to minimise missing project milestones and ensure a much higher project completion rate	Train system owners and admins with the new tools and increase knowledge	Tests with on-prem system owners every 180 days
Why?	To ensure Council files are ever more protected in a robust Cloud setting	To increase consistency of project completion, in conjunction with Project Framework	So colleagues are aware of the ways the tools can help their every day tasks	So this links in with our Emergency Planning protocols and upskills colleagues of the need to protect systems
When are we going to do it?	September 2025 and then every quarter	March 2026 after successful staff training	September 2025 and then every quarter	September 2025 and then every quarter
How will we know we have delivered?	Reaching the 70% footprint by December 2027	No more than 5 missed milestones; 95% project completion rate	Train a minimum of 40 system owners/ admins	180 day test completed with all system owners by December 2026

Appendix B

Pillar Three: Customer Access Action Plan

Rushcliffe Borough Council

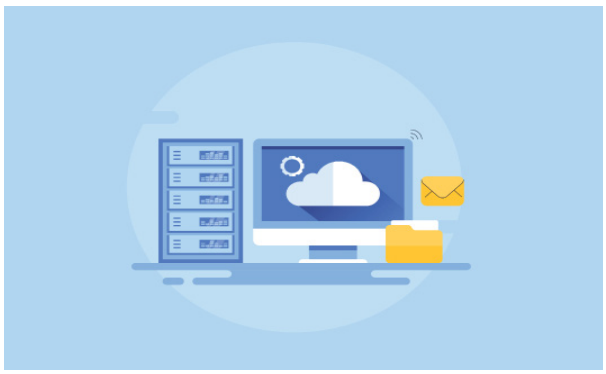
Theme	Progressing digital and in-person self-help	Building on and exploring innovation	Progressing digital and in-person self-help	Listening and responding to evolving trends	Reviewing and building partnerships	Listening and responding to evolving trends
Initiative	**1. Identify and explore new communication and transactional channels to engage customers and stakeholders further**	**2. Further explore Artificial Intelligence (AI) options to improve automation and system integration**	**3. Explore ways to showcase further digital solutions**	**4. Use data insight to aid decision making on where services can be enhanced**	**5. Review existing contact point locations and opening times**	**6. Engage customers on possible Local Government Reorganisation**
What are we going to do?	Improve the range of options to contact, report, apply, register and access Council services	Work with contractors to implement new AI solutions answering common queries, utilising chat bot, virtual assistant and automated chat technologies	Identify ways to nudge customers to further ways they can self-serve online and receive information to aid increased channel shift	Collect and analyse further detail on each contact channel	Analyse further how customers are engaging with the Council through non-digital methods	Digitally and in-person ensure latest information available at Customer Service contact points. Ongoing benchmarking with fellow local authorities' sharing LGR info
Why?	So residents and stakeholders can access services ever more conveniently with digital 24/7 options	To make it easier and more convenient for people to get in touch with the Council by offering more ways to communicate	For increased channel shift to digital methods, freeing up resource for team to respond to more complex queries	To innovate, improve and provide accessible value for money customer service functions	To ensure customers can access face to face services easily and conveniently and maximising opportunities with partners	So residents feel informed as to possible new shape of Councils and their services
When are we going to do it?	2025-2027	Throughout 2025-2028 as the tools evolve	Review in December of 2025, 2026 and 2027	Review in December of 2025, 2026 and 2027	Review at end of 2025 and 2027 in line with existing contracts	As and when key LGR milestones take place
How will we know we have delivered?	The volume of new channels available reviewed in December 2025, 2026 and 2027	The volume of interactions through the new channels increasing year on year and measured December 2025, 2026 and 2027	The volume of residents signposted to digital methods of accessing services or to learning opportunities with external providers	Annual review of what functions have been increased, decreased or reshaped to meet changing customer trends.	Ongoing interactions with partners such as Inspire and NHS to listen and explore if different opening times can better meet customer need	Ensuring each milestone is communicated appropriately

Appendix B

Pillar Three: Customer Access Action Plan

Rushcliffe Borough Council

Theme	Listening and responding to evolving trends	Progressing digital and in-person self-help	Listening and responding to evolving trends	Reviewing and building partnerships	Listening and responding to evolving trends	Listening and responding to evolving trends
Initiative	**7. Continue to work with Customer Service Advisors to further explore key themes and insights from their experiences**	**8. Continue to reshape postal communications**	**9. Communicate clear Customer Service Standards across channels and sites**	**10. Review service level agreements with partners to identify further areas where services can be shared or enhanced**	**11. Build on ways to routinely monitor customer groups, trends and feedback**	**12. Regularly evaluate all software including Customer Relationship System**
What are we going to do?	Consult and listen to advisors' recommendations on where we can improve the service based on week to week feedback.	Continue to amend and reduce postage and printing costs in line with digital options increasing to contact stakeholders	Publicise standards so stakeholders' expectations on queries being resolved can be clearer	Engage with partners on the contracts across Customer Service Contact Point sites	Gather more data to analyse customer interactions to highlight where team resource is prioritised	Annual reviews of each software solution with contractors to ensure the systems are as effective as possible
Why?	Identify where the service could be ever more adaptable to customers' needs	To realise efficiency savings in line with digital channel shift and environment priority	So customers are aware of likely response times and keep these under continued review	To continue to provide value for money service and ensure locations are convenient for residents	To align resources correctly to where the services needs to respond more effectively	To ensure a consistent and contemporary, responsive service
When are we going to do it?	Discussion item during team days four times a year	Annual review with BSU in December 2025, 2026 and 2027	Reviewed annually in December 2025, 2026 and 2027	Review the agreements in November 2025, 2026 and 2027	Review in line with monthly reporting dashboards to Director	Review annually in November 2025, 2026 and 2027
How will we know we have delivered?	Volume of ways advisors shape the service reviewed annually	Assess the volume of postal interactions at the end of 2025 and compare with 2026 and 2027	Notices at Customer Service Contact Points updated in line with annual review	Ongoing exchanges with partners and reviewing contract dates at each site	Focus team resources on solutions to reduce higher intensity contact methods	Review system annually to ensure it is meeting service need



Rushcliffe
Borough Council

By telephone: Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5pm
T 0115 981 9911 | E customerservices@rushcliffe.gov.uk | W www.rushcliffe.gov.uk

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