

Improving Lives Through Connected Futures



Digital Technology
Strategy
2019 - 2023



Introduction

This document outlines the vision and strategic aims of the Allerdale Borough Council Improving Lives through Connected Futures Strategy 2023. It describes how our services and structures will be designed to deliver positive outcomes for the residents and businesses of Allerdale.

The Strategy, aims to deliver the requirements of the Councils Corporate Plan, and makes up an integral part of the Transformation and Commercialisation Strategy of the Council.

This is not an IT Strategy, but a Digital Technology strategy, designed to support the strategic aims of the Council as a whole. It describes how Allerdale Borough Council will make up full use of technological advances and data to meet its objectives, enabling efficiencies, opening up commercial opportunities and helping the council thrive amidst increasing budgetary pressures.

The principles within this strategy provide a framework for how services will be designed, sourced and delivered, and how digital technologies will support ways of working that deliver real benefits to customers.

This document is to be used in conjunction with the Connected Futures Technical Plan, where future technical developments are explained in more detail.



Executive Summary

Allerdale is an ambitious organisation focused on delivering the Council priorities

The pace of change in technology is rapid, and growth in the uptake of technologies such as mobile devices, social media, voice assistants, high speed broadband and open data presents huge opportunities.

If we are to meet the increasing expectations of our customers, it is essential that we use these advances in technology and have a clear and progressive approach to continuous improvement.

This document outlines the approach that we will take in developing and implementing new technologies to support service delivery. It describes how we aim to become a leading digital authority and outlines the technology and skills we will need to meet our objectives.

The strategy is a catalyst for innovation and change in an environment of constructive disruption, with the aim of improving lives through the delivery of outcomes that matter to

our customers.

Our previous IT Strategy has left us with strong foundations to build on over the next 4 years. A robust, high performance network, along with the introduction of cloud based services have improved availability and resilience and provided access to technology from any location at any time of day or night. New contact centre and telephony solutions have improved the ways in which customers can contact us as well as enabling mobile working across the borough for officers. We are now well placed to be more creative in our use of technology to deliver real benefits.

This strategy is designed across four themed areas - Future Customer, Future Workforce, Future Lives and Future IT.

It describes our key objectives, and how we will ensure milestones are managed to completion. This includes:

- The development of a digital platform that connects integrated data and intelligent

systems.

- The introduction of artificial intelligence (AI) and AI-powered voice control, which over time will automate responses to increasingly complex customer demands, reducing the time staff spend resolving queries
- Becoming a 100% cloud-based environment and realising a simplified and lower maintenance Information and Communications Technology model
- A more strategic approach to what we do, the services we provide, who we work with and what we buy.
- Investigate opportunities and methods to provide more commercial services to peers and private sector organisations.



Our Vision

Our vision is to:

- Improve lives through the use of technology to support the corporate Plan, the Transformation and Commercialisation Strategy, and other Council priorities.
- Support the development of a digital borough which improves lives and empowers its residents, customers and businesses through the innovative use of digital technologies and services.
- Provide exemplary technological business services within a smarter, better informed council.
- Deliver high quality digital services to transform the way the council operates.
- Develop the right skills and culture among our staff and leaders and bring together policy and delivery to enable services to be provided in a learning and iterative environment, focused on outcomes providing services that are personalised to meet the needs of individuals.
- Build better workplace tools and processes to make it easier for our staff to work effectively across boundaries, ensuring that

we collaborate to serve our consumers.

- Make better use of data - not just for transparency, but to enable transformation.
- Increasingly use data to make decisions, both to inform policy and to rapidly improve the way services work.
- Promote Allerdale as a trusted brand which protects personal data
- Identify and build shared understanding of emerging technologies, demonstrating how they can help to transform services.
- Be flexible in the way we organise ourselves to respond quickly to a changing environment.

Our Aims

We will provide digital services which are:

Future Proofed - we will carefully choose our partners to ensure that any investment is fit for purpose and properly future-proofed.

Customer Focused - our customers will be the focus of all the digital services that we design and implement, and we will make sure that all services are accessible and easy to use. We will drive further improvements by measuring our customers experience of our digital services.

Visitor Focused - the economy of Allerdale relies heavily on tourism, so we will develop our facilities to ensure that we make our visitor experience the best it can be. We will look for opportunities to promote the facilities, businesses and events in Allerdale through digital channels. We will also develop solutions to enhance our visitor experience, using technologies such as virtual reality.

Self Service Enabling - we will continue to increase the number of digital services, and any new or changed services will be digital by design. We will improve our efficiency through streamlined processes, and by automation wherever possible. We will re-use technologies where appropriate, thereby reducing costs.

The creation of a consistent look and feel will enable our customers to gain familiarity and will assist with the adoption of new systems.

Digital First - A Digital First approach will be adopted across the council. Digital will be the primary channel for providing information and for interacting with customers. We will enable all services for access through digital channels, whilst continuing to offer alternative channels as necessary.

These aims are driven by the following principles;

- Subscription Based Services
- Single Identity
- Constructive Disruption
- Open Standards
- Use Again
- Security and Compliance
- Data Sharing
- Platform
- Agnostic
- Tactical Deployments

Four key themes

To deliver the Connected Futures Strategy we focus on 4 key areas.

Future Lives

Improving Lives through the adoption of Smart Technologies, enabling access to digital services, and developing digital skills through the delivery of high speed broadband, free Wi-Fi and other digital services to those living, working or visiting Allerdale.

Future Customer

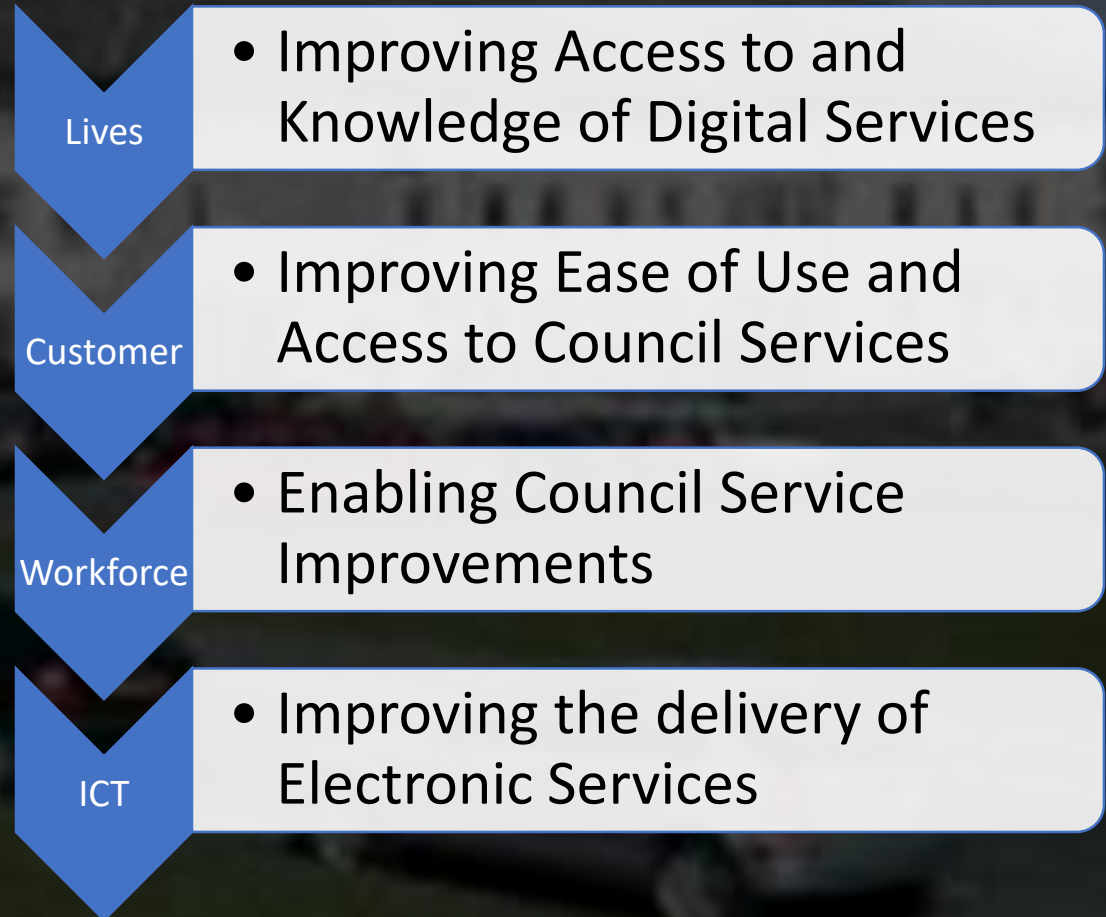
Developing the services and solutions used for our customers to interact with us

Future Workforce

Enabling solutions to improve the efficiencies, productivity and cost of delivery of our services

Future IT

Supporting the adoption of digital technologies to deliver the Improving Lives through Connected Futures Technology Strategy for Allerdale.





Future Lives

Improving Lives through Connected Futures

We believe that a prosperous Allerdale requires both the access to Digital services and the skills to enable them to fully exploit the digital revolution.

Allerdale towns and villages will access digital services and technologies that will provide life changing opportunities for local businesses and residents. It is then important that we equip the people with the skills and knowledge the need to exploit the digital revolution.

To enable this we will develop a digital hub to enable businesses to work together to build world recognised solutions

Develop a smart cities manifesto to improve lives and council service delivery

Work with providers to improve access opportunities across the region

Promote the development of Digital Skills for all

Future Lives – Strategic Outcomes

Improving Lives through Connected Futures

Allerdale towns and villages will access digital services and technologies that will provide life changing opportunities for local businesses and residents. It is then important that we equip the people with the skills and knowledge the need to exploit the digital revolution.

We will:

qDevelop our internet presence to provide information for businesses and visitors alike. Introducing them to the wide range of opportunities and services available to them across Allerdale. Development of a digital hub that will enable like minded and technologically focused businesses to work together to build world recognised solutions, supporting the development of the economy within Allerdale.

qDevelop commercial opportunities and partnerships to implement Public Wi-Fi, 5G and Narrowband solutions supporting the delivery of services for the Internet of Things smart devices

qWork closely with local parish and town councils to develop their digital capability, helping them to broaden their reach and to engage successfully with their residents.

qWork with partners to help local businesses develop online presence and improve their opportunities for economic growth via the digital world

qDevelop a Smart Cities manifesto that will be used to develop electronic

services throughout the borough, including the use of Internet of Things technologies that will provide insight assisting the enablement of improved service delivery and improving opportunities for people living and visiting the area.

According to the DCMS Report on Digital Skills for the UK 2016, less than 20% of UK residents have basic digital skills,

q Support the most vulnerable groups to help them learn the basics and to help them improve their quality of life and to benefit from the opportunities available via the Internet.

q Ensure that our residents have the access, skills and support required to carry out online transactions, search and apply for jobs and apply for grants and benefits.

q Work with partners, community groups and voluntary sector to develop digital inclusion programs, where we will promote the concept of Digital Skills for All.

q Work with telecommunications and network providers to promote opportunities for town centre based public Wi-Fi, and to enable all exchanges in Allerdale with high-speed broadband.

q Targeting the most vulnerable, digitally excluded communities and individuals, raise awareness of how and where customers can gain access to internet services.

q Explore external funding sources to develop digital inclusion programmes and initiatives.

Future Lives- Measuring Success

Measures of success for the Future Lives theme are:

By End of Year 2

1. Initiatives implemented to actively encourage communities to learn digital skills and to raise general awareness of the opportunities and benefits of using the internet.
2. Virtual-reality solutions developed and implemented to enhance the visitor experience across Allerdale.
3. Visit Allerdale website developed further and operating as a hub for business and visitor information

By End of Year 3

1. Support in place to assist parish and town councils to develop their digital capability in order to broaden their reach and enable improved electorate engagement.

By End of Year 4

1. Digital Hub established locally where technology-focused businesses can collaborate to develop world class solutions

2. Smart Cities manifesto developed, and solutions implemented and driving the use of smart technologies across the area.
3. Cost-effective, digitally-enabled, multi-organisation customer access centres established for local communities and residents.
4. Self-help events held for residents and communities which promote better digital skills and greater use of the internet which leads to reduced bills and access to better value for money services, as well as a helping to introduce residents to council online services.
5. Collaborative working with partners and network providers has delivered improved connectivity options for Allerdale residents and businesses.





Future Customer

Improving Lives through Connected Futures

We believe it is important that in a modern connected world, our consumers are able to carry out their interactions with the council using whatever means they wish.

To enable this we will implement services to provide consumers with the opportunity to interact with the council electronically.

A website that focuses on transaction rather than information will provide the foundation of consumer interaction.

We will further enhance consumer interaction opportunities through the introduction of Chat Bots, Voice Forms and the integration of voice assistants such as Amazon Echo or Google Home.

We will review our customer platform and contact centre solutions to ensure that we are making best use of automation, omni-channel and self-service opportunities.

Future Customer - Strategic Outcomes

Customers will benefit from improved access to services and information through a 24x7x365 interactive environment.

We will:

- ❑ Develop always-on 24x7x365 public services available to customers on virtually any device from any location e.g. payments, bookings, and requests.
- ❑ Continue to develop our website to make it clearer and easier to transact with the council.
- ❑ Use tools such as social media and SMS text messaging to provide updates and feedback.
- ❑ Design online services that are accessible and provide a good user experience. Further enhance these services through the use of voice- based artificial intelligence and audio forms.
- ❑ Continually develop self-service facilities and enable the use of direct debit and other modern payment methods.
- ❑ Continually review and improve navigation services to inform how information and services can be organised around the needs of our customers.
- ❑ Offer customers the opportunity to register for an account that will provide a customised dashboard along with quick access to the information and services they use.
- ❑ Develop how we collect and analyse data to better understand the needs of our consumers.
- ❑ Improve communication with our consumers through the use of social media and associated workflow.

Future Customer - Measuring Success

Measures of success for the Future Customer theme:

1. Increased online transactions by 10% per annum
2. Within first year of deployment reach targets of £1K per annum from bookings and advertising
3. Customer Platform solution reviewed, procured and successfully implemented.
4. Improve the availability of systems and services to the public to the level of 99.999%, enabling them to access services at their pleasure.
5. Implement contact centre solutions that will enable 90% of customer queries and transactions to be handled at the first point of contact, reducing the need for call back and repeat calls.
6. By 2021 Implement a modern cloud based payment system that will remove the need for duplicated services , and improve customer experience



Future Workforce

Improving Lives through Connected Futures

An efficient council requires a workforce that has the knowledge, skills and tools to enable them to carry out their duties effectively from anywhere and at any time.

We will:

- ☐ Develop services that make flexible working the norm.
- ☐ Standardise hardware and software provision based on job role e.g. office, mobile, field, home.
- ☐ Introduce a single point of access and a standard interface for staff access to all services. This will enable services to be delivered in a manner that will make them platform agnostic. It will simplify access to services and enable staff to use their own hardware as well as that of the council from any connected location.
- ☐ Deliver applications through browser-based facilities, thereby removing the shackles of needing client-based software installations.
- ☐ Provide an identity and access management solution to ensure that the person using the software is one that is authorised to do so.
- ☐ Improve access by implementing single sign-on and multi-factor authentication, thereby reducing the number of passwords required.
- ☐ Review of applications to ensure that staff are provided with the digital tools and skills they need to deliver services more efficiently and effectively.
- ☐ Implement the latest technologies to improve service delivery e.g. Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things.



Future Workforce - Strategic Outcomes

Staff will have the digital tools and skills to deliver services more efficiently and innovatively.

We will:

- ❑ Give staff access to the devices and software they need to deliver high levels of service and the skills to use them.
 - ❑ Work to automate processes that are currently handled manually, leaving only complex issues to be handled by a member of staff.
 - ❑ Actively seek ways to implement digital technology, promoting a digital-first approach.
 - ❑ Assist councillors in working in a mobile and efficient way, embracing digital channels such as social media to more effectively engage with their electorate.
 - ❑ Keep track of emerging digital technologies and look at how we can utilise these technologies to improve our workforce.
- ❑ Align business technology with the consumer technology that staff already use and are familiar with e.g. Facebook and Workplace
 - ❑ Utilise digital channels when communicating with colleagues and partners e.g. Workplace, Skype, Teams, and GoToMeeting.
 - ❑ Establish a digital and social media training programme to deliver digital skills training to staff to give them the confidence to be creative in making their service more efficient.
 - ❑ Enabled anywhere access to files and services by completing a server file migration to the cloud by End of 2019/20

Future Workforce - Measuring Success

Measures of success for the Future Workforce theme:

Year 1

1. Electoral Management System successfully implemented.
2. New line of business platform delivered and supporting a significant range of council services. All colleagues able to access all of their applications and services from any location, on any device at any time.
3. New cloud-based Spatial Technologies solution procured and implemented.
4. The use of Microsoft Office 365 fully adopted to support anytime-anywhere opportunities.
5. All staff to have undergone New Ways of Working Training
6. All Councillors to have the opportunity to take up Digital training 2019

Year 2

1. New integrated Financial Management system procured and implemented.

2. New integrated Human Resources system procured and implemented.

3. The future provision of Revenues and Benefits and Document Management solutions identified and agreed.

Year 3

1. Spatial Technologies workflow and tools reviewed and updated..
2. A new telephony and contact centre solution procured and implemented, and BYOD and softphones introduced

Year 4

1. Emerging technologies, such as wearable technology and voice-based solutions, deployed and delivering measurable efficiency and performance improvements.
2. All remaining on-premise applications migrated to the cloud.
3. All colleagues with quick and easy access to corporate data and management information that they can use to launch new services and deliver measurable improvements to existing services.



Future IT

Improving Lives through Connected Futures



IT Services will support the Improving Lives through Connected Futures Strategy with the implementation of a wide range of initiatives and service improvements.

- The Connected Futures Technical Plan, provides further information relating to the Future IT Services and Systems improvement plan.

IT Services will:

- ☐ Develop a platform that is highly flexible and that will allow us to easily adapt to changing requirements.
- ☐ Consolidate our technology platforms and associated application suites in order to simplify the operating environment.
- ☐ Modernise our application suites through the use of cloud-based technologies, making best use of automation and workflow technologies.
- ☐ Utilise the consumerisation of IT and develop our platforms to be accessible from any device that supports the use of a browser.
- ☐ Minimise the amount of infrastructure that we need on council premises.
- ☐ Work to implement intelligent solutions that enable us to reduce third party support costs.

Future IT - Strategic Outcomes

IT Services will:

- ☐ Become 100% Cloud Based consumers, using Software as a Service as a preference, replacing legacy applications with modern solutions that reduce costs, increase scalability, improve flexibility and facilitation.
- ☐ Develop a line of business platform and improve application interoperability through the use of open API's or cloud-based modular solutions.
- ☐ Make best use of the Government Digital Services Platform, an initiative being developed within the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, through which a number of functional applications are being made available to all government services for free or at low cost.
- ☐ Improve communication, joint working and strategic awareness through business partnering.
- ☐ Introduce machine learning and artificial intelligence technologies.
- ☐ Continually enhance the security of the ICT infrastructure – the network, devices and applications - ensuring that we are protected against the latest potential risks and vulnerabilities.
- ☐ Implement Cloud Identity to secure access to our cloud-based platforms and provide the relevant assurance that those accessing services are from within our organisation.
- ☐ Rationalise and reduce the number of applications and suppliers through the implementation of consolidated application platforms.
- ☐ Provide single-sign-on and multi-factor authentication to simultaneously make applications easier to access and more secure.
- ☐ Retire the use of Windows Server operating systems, Active Directory and Citrix.
- ☐ Reduce the use of email by introducing collaborative work-spaces and in-app messaging solutions e.g. Microsoft Teams and Workplace by Facebook/
- ☐ Introduce an organisation-wide strategic technology awareness programme.
- ☐ Enable 100% of staff to work flexibly.

Future IT - Measuring Success

Measures of success for the Connected Futures Strategy:

Year 1

1. The cost of running the server room within Allerdale House to be reduced by 10% per annum
2. Reduce the cost in delivery of the wide area network through migration to a simplified Software Defined Network solution
3. Improve Information flow and engagement with colleagues through the production of bi-monthly newsletters.
4. All staff to have attended New Ways of Working Phase 1 training

Year 2

1. Information flow and engagement with colleagues improved through the production of regular newsletters and product documentation. Staff providing outstanding feedback and improved scores via annual surveys.
2. Application Governance and Technical Change Management policies introduced to support the implementation of new products.
3. Access tools implemented to deliver legacy applications via browser.
4. Multi-factor authentication tools implemented to improve authorisation security.
5. All applications including legacy application to be deliverable and

accessible using browser based technologies enabling staff to be able to access services from any location on any device at any time.

Year 3

1. Local Area Network (LAN) developed to support wireless by default.
2. Cloud Identity implemented and access to our cloud-based platforms secured.

Year 4

1. The live services of the Council to be operating on a 100% cloud based platform council whether that is through Software-as-a-Service or through the delivery of Infrastructure-as-a-Service.
2. All live applications and services available to the level of 99.999%.
3. Demonstrable ability to rapidly adapt the platform to accommodate new channels.
4. The direct and indirect costs of providing ICT services to the council reduced by £50k, and the delivery of those services improved.

