

**Agenda Item No:** 7  
**Report To:** Cabinet  
**Date of Meeting:** Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2020  
**Report Title:** The Final Report of the Digital Transformation Task Group  
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**Portfolio Holder** Cllr. A Pickering  
**Portfolio Holder for:** HR & Customer Services



**Summary:** During budget scrutiny at the beginning of 2020, it was recommended that a task group was formed to review the digital transformation programme embarked by Ashford Borough Council.

This report concludes the findings of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group from its review into Digital Transformation; and makes 8 recommendations to Cabinet.

**Key Decision:** NO

**Significantly Affected Wards:** ALL

**Recommendations:** **The Cabinet is recommended to:-**

- I. Note the implementation of the digital strategy to date and endorse the emerging digital programme to be delivered up until 2025.
- II. That a digital survey regarding homeworking and virtual meetings is conducted for Members, to find out what lessons have been learnt since new arrangements were introduced in March 2020 as a result of Covid-19 and what can be improved for the future.
- III. To continue to support homeworking, virtual meetings and hybrid meetings as valid ways of running council services and meetings in the future and ensure that there are adequate IT systems in place to deliver these efficiently.
- IV. Create a Corporate Etiquette protocol for Microsoft Teams that covers making calls, leaving messages and showing availability.

- V. That the online calendar function on Mod.gov is updated regularly to inform Members of future meetings for at least the next six months.
- VI. Proceed with creating an online central database for local and national data that residents are able to access and view statistics regarding Ashford Borough.
- VII. That a fact sheet is produced for all Members and staff with advice on broadband and how to check your connectivity whilst working remotely.
- VIII. Prioritise completion of an IT asset register to ensure that all council owned equipment is logged and returned to the Civic Centre when appropriate.

**Policy Overview:** The digital transformation scrutiny review has formed part of the O&S work programme for 2020/2021. The work programme is set at the beginning of each year and is reviewed regularly by the Committee. This topic was initially recommended by the Budget Scrutiny Task Group in early 2020.

**Financial Implications:** None

**Legal Implications:** Not applicable

**Equalities Impact Assessment:** Not required because equalities impact assessment would be carried out at the point of the implementation for each of the recommendations as necessary.

**Data Protection Impact Assessment:** Not applicable

**Risk Assessment (Risk Appetite Statement):** The recommendations from the Task Group are within the council's risk appetite.

Some of the recommendations have been designed to reduce potential risks to the council in areas including homeworking and IT equipment security.

**Sustainability Implications:** The recommendations endorse the digital programme which looks to reduce paper consumption and the need for travel. Recommendations also look to improve homeworking arrangements which contributes towards the council's aim to achieve carbon neutrality.

**Other Material Implications:** Not applicable

**Exempt from  
Publication:**

**NO**

**Background  
Papers:**

**Digital Transformation Strategy, 2017 to 2020.**

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## **Report Title: The Final Report of the Digital Transformation Task Group**

### **Foreword from the Task Group Chairman**

1. The Overview and Scrutiny Task Group has reviewed how far digital transformation has progressed across the council's services. In an increasingly digital and online society, the digitisation of council processes has become essential to delivering services.
2. The review has highlighted that substantial progress has been made towards Ashford Borough Council's digital journey. The Digital Transformation Strategy adopted in 2017 has been implemented and its action plan has few outstanding actions. Furthermore, the review has looked at how data has been used by the council for digital transformation and the importance of having access to accurate data has been noted by the Task Group.
3. Considering the Covid-19 crisis, the need for digital transformation for effective remote working and virtual council meetings has been significant during the review and has shaped some of the recommendations made by the Task Group.

### **Introduction and Background**

4. During scrutiny of the Budget for 2020/21, the Task Group recommended to the full Overview and Scrutiny Committee that digital transformation should be included as a scrutiny review on the work programme. At the time, concerns were raised regarding the resourcing of the digital programme. An in-depth review has been conducted to ascertain how far digital transformation has progressed during recent years and what the challenges and success have been throughout this process.
5. The Task Group felt that investigating the progress of digital transformation would benefit all staff and Members by assessing ways of improving the digital aspects to remote working and virtual meetings. Also, the group saw the benefit of reviewing the digital programme prior to Full Council's adoption of the Recovery Plan in October 2020.

### **Scope of the Review**

6. The Task Group assembled 4 Members; Cllr Ovenden (Chair), Cllr. Iliffe, Cllr. Ledger and Cllr. Spain to examine the progression of the digital transformation so far and, if required, make some recommendations to the full Committee.
7. The group met initially to scope the review and establish where scrutiny could be beneficial. A scoping document was agreed which listed five key questions

the Task Group wanted to address during the review.

What progress has been made so far with digital transformation and what are the challenges facing this process?

- a. To consider how the digital progress made during Covid-19 can be built upon and further aid the council's recovery.
  - b. What is the council hoping to achieve with digital transformation in the next 5 years and what is the overall goal?
  - c. What is the roadmap setting out how the council plans to achieve its digital goals in consideration of the recovery plan, and are the goals resourced appropriately?
  - d. To look at best practice from other local authorities (through desktop research).
8. The group discussed the ways they could capture the progress of digital transformation. It was agreed that there would be a focus on the three-year digital transformation strategy 2017 –2020, which was coming to an end.
  9. During the preparation stage of the review, the council was still responding to the Covid-19 crisis. The Task Group noted that the demands of Covid-19 would impact Officer's capacity to assist in this review, nevertheless Members felt it was important to undertake the review imminently. As the government guidelines encouraged remote working and council meetings were being conducted virtually, it was felt that a major digital shift was taking place across the council and that this had potential to kick-start future transformation. The Task Group believed that a scrutiny review could positively contribute towards the next stages of this transformation.
  10. The Task Group agreed that details of the individual projects would be excluded from the review and that this topic needed to be looked at from a wider perspective. Although the group would receive information regarding the projects that have been undertaken as part of digital transformation to-date, these would not be looked at in detail so that the review was timely.
  11. The subject of broadband is a part of ongoing digital transformation that the Task Group felt would not benefit from further scrutiny at this time. Also, the wider Committee received an update in March 2020 on broadband and promotion of fibre to the premises and so felt that looking at this again may duplicate work of the wider Committee.
  12. The role of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group in conducting this review is therefore twofold – first, to review Ashford Borough Council's journey with implementing Digital Transformation to establish what the successes are and what lessons have been learnt through implementing the Digital Strategy and those resulting from our COVID-19 response. Secondly, to provide recommendations that will be of benefit for future transformation of council processes.

## **Task Group process**

13. Following an initial meeting to discuss the scope of the review, the Task Group conducted several evidence sessions. The purpose of these meetings was to gather information about the council's digital transformation journey and establish what plans had been considered for the future of digital. The following documentation was considered as evidence:
  - a. A report detailing Ashford Borough's digital transformation journey to date.
  - b. A report to inform how the council has used data to further the digital transformation agenda.
  - c. A summary/debrief of the IT departments role in the Covid-19 response
14. Key officers involved with developing digital attended the meetings to provide evidence to the review. The Task Group met to discuss findings and recommendations during a final meeting of the Task Group. The Task Group would like to thank all Officers and Members who gave up their time to participate in this review.

## **Review findings**

15. The Task Group looked at written evidence over three sessions that included detail of the council's journey with digital transformation.
16. Overall, it was clear to the Task Group that the implementation of the Digital Transformation Strategy had been successful. A report was presented to the group that summarised the four key strands of digital transformation:
  - Website and Accessibility
  - Technology
  - Staff culture
  - Digital inclusion

The digital action plan highlighted to the group what actions had been completed and what was left outstanding. The Task Group noted that there were few outstanding actions, and this was continuing to be monitored by the IT & Digital Transformation Advisory Committee.

17. The Task Group were informed of the challenges that came with digitising manual processes that services were providing. There is still more work to be done to progress the staff culture strand of transformation and the encouragement of staff to embrace change. Members were pleased with the adoption of Abavus, a Digital Customer Platform, and how many manual processes had already been digitised to create more efficient services.

18. The Task Group reviewed the emerging digital programme that was expected to be delivered up until the end of 2025. A few of the projects that were noted a priority were:
- a. The implementation of a new planning support system.
  - b. The garden waste project which looks to reengineer and simplify the current process.
  - c. Lifeline procurement to convert the platform from analogue to digital.
  - d. Progress with Automatic Parking Payments (ANPR) and starting with Elwick Place.
  - e. The Garage Commercialisation Strategy that looks at all garage sites to improve the way we get rent in and streamline the process.
  - f. Review and implement the New Corporate Website by working with Visarc to review the content and the structure to deliver a new site.

**Note the implementation of the digital strategy to date and endorse the emerging digital programme to be delivered up until 2025. (Recommendation 1)**

19. The group were advised that Covid-19 had created a situation where technology and software quickly became fundamental to delivering council services and Member meetings successfully. Evidence reported to the task group included the results of a survey sent to all ABC staff regarding remote working and showed that a large proportion of staff had a positive experience with this and would like to continue with a home working arrangement post Covid-19. The Task Group felt that a similar survey aimed at Members would help find out what lessons have been learnt from digital working during Covid-19, from a Member point of view. These findings could then be used to establish what was needed going forward for Councillors as well as Officers.

**That a digital survey regarding homeworking and virtual meetings is conducted for Members, to find out what lessons have been learnt since new arrangements were introduced in March 2020 as a result of Covid-19 and what can be improved for the future. (Recommendation 2)**

20. Members acknowledged that during the main transition to remote working, the council's IT systems had coped successfully so far. Measures were introduced quickly by the council's IT Team to ensure remote working could be carried out easily. For example, new servers were purchased to support the large number of officers and Members working remotely and arrangements were made for IT equipment to be sent home where necessary. Overall, it was felt that the continuation of flexible working arrangements and virtual meetings would benefit the council's digital transformation goals. However, Members felt that some work was required to ensure that the IT systems we have in place can sustain the delivery of council services and meetings.

**To continue to support homeworking, virtual meetings and hybrid meetings as valid ways of running council services and meetings in the future and ensure that there are adequate IT systems in place to deliver these efficiently. (Recommendation 3)**

21. The Task Group discussed how using Microsoft Teams had been central to communication with Members and Officers throughout the Covid-19 crisis. However, it was highlighted in the evidence report that there were multiple ways of displaying your availability, for example, through the Microsoft Outlook Calendar, Skype For Business and Microsoft Teams. Members felt that it would be useful to have some clear guidance over what is expected of Members and Officers regarding the display of their online/offline status. This would provide clarity about when people were working and could be contacted.

**Create a Corporate Etiquette protocol for Microsoft Teams that covers making calls, leaving messages and showing availability. (Recommendation 4)**

22. Members of the Task Group agreed that the online calendar function on mod.gov could be improved as a digital tool for Members. Issues were raised with the contents of the calendar as some future meeting dates were not being displayed.

**That the online calendar function on Mod.gov is updated regularly to inform Members of future meetings for at least the next six months. (Recommendation 5)**

23. Part of the review looked at how Ashford Borough Council has used data for digital transformation. The group were advised how having access to accurate data was key to identifying vulnerable residents in the Borough during the Covid-19 crisis. Our current system, ACORN, was used to identify groups of residents who were likely to match indicators for vulnerability to Covid-19. The Task Group discussed the use of ACORN data in the future and were advised that using the system to map out groups of residents is something that the council is currently exploring to help provide a targeted approach to delivering services.
24. The data evidence session also informed the group of the work undertaken by other local authorities to create an online public portal to display data about their local area and population. Members felt that it would be beneficial to have a central data source that drew on national and local data and delivered statistics about Ashford Borough. This could also act as an online portal that could provide access to the results of local surveys and consultations.
25. An example of a council which has successfully used data to better understand its residents to inform service delivery is Hull City Council. They have published their data and statistics about their residents online via an online 'Data Observatory'. A range of data is provided regarding housing, health and wellbeing, economy and employment and the environment. This also acts as an engagement centre which provides access to results of local surveys and consultations.

**Proceed with creating an online central database for local and national data that residents are able to access and view statistics regarding Ashford Borough. (Recommendation 6)**

26. During the final meeting of the Task Group, the group discussed the response of the IT department during the Covid-19 pandemic and specifically what lessons could be learnt. Members were presented with a summary of what did and didn't work well for the service during Covid-19 and some recommendations to resolve the issues that were identified. Members suggested that some more information could be provided to Members and Officers that included broadband and connectivity advice, for example, how to set up broadband at home effectively.

**That a fact sheet is produced for all Members and staff with advice on broadband and how to check your connectivity whilst working remotely. (Recommendation 7)**

27. The Task Group queried the number of council IT assets that were taken from the Civic Centre when staff were initially instructed to work from home. The group were informed that managers and team leaders had been asked to record what equipment was taken by staff in their own teams, and this had been successful so far. Members were concerned that an asset register was still being compiled and it was felt that this should be a priority to ensure all council owned equipment could be returned in the future.

**Prioritise completion of an IT asset register to ensure that all council owned equipment is logged and returned to the Civic Centre when appropriate. (Recommendation 8)**

## **Recommendations**

The Task Group would like to endorse the following recommendations to the full committee:

Recommendation 1: Note the implementation of the digital strategy to date and endorse the emerging digital programme to be delivered up until 2025.

Recommendation 2: That a digital survey regarding homeworking and virtual meetings is conducted for Members, to find out what lessons have been learnt since new arrangements were introduced in March 2020 as a result of Covid-19 and what can be improved for the future.

Recommendation 3: To continue to support homeworking, virtual meetings and hybrid meetings as valid ways of running council services and meetings in the future and ensure that there are adequate IT systems in place to deliver these efficiently.

Recommendation 4: Create a Corporate Etiquette protocol for Microsoft Teams that covers making calls, leaving messages and showing availability.

Recommendation 5: That the online calendar function on Mod.gov is updated regularly to inform Members of future meetings for at least the next six months.

Recommendation 6: Proceed with creating an online central database for local and national data that residents are able to access and view statistics regarding Ashford Borough.

Recommendation 7: That a fact sheet is produced for all Members and staff with advice on broadband and how to check your connectivity whilst working remotely.

Recommendation 8: Prioritise completion of an IT asset register to ensure that all council owned equipment is logged and returned to the Civic Centre when appropriate.

## **Consultation**

28. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee were consulted on the recommendations and support. The Council MT were also supportive of recommendations and their advice to cabinet is set out at Appendix 3. Council's Management Team support all recommendations.

## **Conclusion**

29. The Task Group have examined how far digital transformation has evolved at Ashford Borough Council as related to the scope of the review. The recommendations made will assist further digital transformation of services and enhance the digital experience for Customers, Members and Officers, and the Overview & Scrutiny Committee commend them to the Cabinet.

## **Contact and Email**

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| <b>Priority 1 : Website</b>                         |   |  |  |                           | <b>July 2020</b>  |
|---|---|--|--|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Draft website transformation plan 2017- 2020</b> |   |  |  |                           |   |
|   | <b>What we will do</b>  | <b>Who</b>   | <b>Budget required</b>   | <b>When</b>               | <b>Update</b>   |
| Website   | <p>We will redesign our website (ashford.gov.uk):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensuring we follow the best practice guidance issued by GDS on digitally inclusive language</li> <li>ensure the content is written in plain English</li> <li>introduce options for web-chat, skype and other digital assistance tools</li> <li>building on the success of the Benefits video and, where possible produce video content to help people with low literacy skills</li> <li>regularly ensuring the website meets required accessibility standards using tools such as site improve etc</li> <li>refresh content regularly</li> <li>seek feedback from user testing at all stages of the process</li> <li>hold service workshops to disseminate and interpret feedback and analytics.</li> <li>ensure that our pages are mobile enabled.</li> </ul> | Web team/<br>IT/<br>Communications<br>/<br>Customer Services | Y<br><br>Some additional resource may be required, to assist on this project further details to follow with a project plan | July 2017 - December 2018 | Website went live 3 <sup>rd</sup> August 2020   |
|   | <p>Customer accounts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance the MyAshford functionality.</li> <li>Better use of email address data to communicate with our customers.</li> </ul>   | Web team/<br>IT/<br>Communications<br>/<br>Customer Services |  | December 2019             | My Ashford being redeveloped, plugins and widgets being tested. Issues around authentication of users |

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|           |  |                       |  |                               |         |
| Analytics | We will use analytics and feedback to improve and inform our service design, whether those services are digital or face-to-face. | Web team/<br>services |  | Ongoing<br>from April<br>2018 | Ongoing |

| <b>Priority 2: Technology</b>                          |  |                                   |  |                             | <b>July 2020</b>  |
|--|--|-----------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|---|
| <b>Draft technology transformation plan 2017- 2020</b> |  |                                   |  |                             |   |
|  | <b>Update</b>  | <b>Who</b>                        | <b>Budget required</b>   | <b>When</b>                 | <b>Update</b>   |
| Digital Customer Service Platform                      | Procurement of a “Digital Customer Platform” (DCP) to help integrate new ways of working digitally and process improvements with back office systems.  | IT/Customer Services/Digital team | Y<br>Circa £100k, level to be confirmed on conclusion of procurement process | August 2017 – August 2019   | Live and being used significantly   |
|  | Develop a priority list of services / process to be delivered in a Phase1 development of the DCP. Priority will be given to any service being run from a similar solution as part of any trials depending on final decision.<br><br>We will implement a digital group that will help shape the priority list for approval from the newly formed IT and Digital Transformation (ITDT) Advisory Committee. | Digital team and ITDT Committee   |  | August 2017 – December 2017 | ‘Tag teams’ established and allocated to services. List developed and with ITDT end of March 2018 |
| Collaboration  | We will explore online collaboration tools that will improve cross service working.  | IT/Digital team                   |  | Ongoing                     | Microsoft products being used   |

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|                     |   |                       |   |            | (SharePoint) by Digital team. Other options being explored.                              |
| Communications      | Complete rollout of Skype for Business (SfB) Unified communications platform across the authority and communicate the functionality and benefits to the organisation  | IT/<br>Communications | Y<br>£10k for replacement handsets from existing hardware budgets | April 2018 | Complete – Microsoft O365 including teams has now been rolled out across whole authority |
| Cloud               | Develop a “Cloud Strategy” to formalise our strategy for making decisions around what services and solutions will be provisioned in “the Cloud”.  | IT                    | Y<br>From existing software revenue budgets                       | March 2018 | O365 Installed   |
| Mobile and Flexible | <p>We will ensure that mobile friendly is the starting point of all system developments and new software.</p> <p>We will ensure ABC buildings (e.g. Civic Centre, Sheltered Schemes) have public/guest Wi-Fi connectivity where appropriate using the Govroam service.</p> <p>We develop a programme to rollout hardware upgrades to mobile workers that will support flexible working.</p> | IT                    |   | Ongoing    | GovRoam. Phase II anticipated testing will be by ABC. Date to be determined.             |
| Social media        | We maintain a review of the functionality presented by social media accounts to   | IT/Digital team       |   | Ongoing    | Will be considered at  |

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|  | simplify customer log-ins to help remove barriers to use of digital channels. |  |  |  | appropriate opportunities. |
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| <b><u>Priority 3: Inclusion</u></b>   |                               |                        |                                | <b><u>July 2020</u></b>  |
|---|-------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>Draft Digital Inclusion action plan 2017- 2020</b>   |                               |                        |                                |  |
| <b>What we will do</b>  | <b>Who</b>                    | <b>Budget required</b> | <b>When</b>                    | <b>Update</b>  |
| <p>ABC will adopt a new planning policy within the local plan for all new developments to install fibre to the premises to ensure inhabitants are able to access superfast broadband within these developments in the future.</p> <p>ABC will work with Kent County Council to maximise the impact of the roll out of the BDUK project and other grant schemes to bring superfast broadband to existing residents and businesses through the delivery of fibre to the cabinet in existing residential and business areas.</p> <p>In addition, ABC will work with other telecoms providers to maximise private investment in telecommunications networks within the borough.</p> | Economic Development/Planning |                        | Linked to Local Plan approvals | <p>1. We have been consulting with central government and are currently in the process of commissioning a consultant to compile an evidence base to justify the policy at Examination in Public in May. We will work with them to put forward a compelling argument but Ashford is the first authority in the country to do this.</p> <p>2. We have been working</p> |

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|   |  |  |  | <p>with KCC on the progress of BDUK and are currently looking to put together a project to apply for the LFFN (Local Full Fibre Networks) scheme.</p> <p>3. We have been working and meeting with telecoms providers to stimulate a range of provision in Ashford. We are currently working with a supplier on extending their infrastructure in the area.</p> |
| <p>We will explore the feasibility of creating a database of Wi-Fi hotspots across the borough so that people with connectivity barriers have options for getting on-line (e.g. pubs, cafes, shops, community centres etc.)</p> <p>We will publicise where local access points are available through Gateways/libraries etc. so that people without the</p> | <p>Communications and Digital team</p> <p>Communications</p> |  | <p>2019 post completion of phase II of website</p> | <p>This action removed by IT advisory board due to access to this information</p>  |

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| <p>equipment to go online know where they can get access to equipment.</p> <p>We will allow a public Wi-Fi access point in ABC buildings (e.g. Civic Centre, Sheltered Schemes) using the Govroam service.</p>   | <p>IT</p>  |  |                         | <p>from external sources</p>   |
| <p>We will redesign our website (ashford.gov.uk):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensuring we follow the best practice guidance issued by GDS on digitally inclusive language</li> <li>ensure the content is written in plain English</li> <li>introduce options for web-chat, skype and other digital assistance tools</li> <li>building on the success of the Benefits video and, where possible produce video content to help people with low literacy skills</li> <li>regularly ensuring the website meets required accessibility standards using tools such as Site Improve</li> </ul> | <p>Web team<br/>IT<br/>Communications<br/>Customer service</p> |  | <p>Late<br/>2018/19</p> | <p>Website live<br/>August 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020</p>   |
| <p>We will review the conditions applied to the community grants scheme to ensure that the conditions for funding for digital projects are simple for the voluntary and community sector to navigate and access.</p>   | <p>Cultural Services</p>                                       |  | <p>Post web project</p> |  |
| <p>ABC will investigate developing a volunteer programme to help individuals gain digital confidence; the intention will be that the volunteers can take these skills into their communities beyond any organised events.</p> <p>Partner organisations could be schools, the local college, community &amp; voluntary sector partners and local branches of private sector organisations who are signed up to the</p>  | <p>Digital team</p>  |  | <p>Completed</p>        | <p>Partnered with Barclays and One you to deliver a digital surgery to residents that have difficulty using IT</p> |

|   |                                     |  |         |  |
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| UK's Digital Inclusion Charter (e.g. Argos, Asda, Barclays, BT, EE, Lloyds Banking Group, Remploy, Three).  |                                     |  |         |  |
| We will signpost and publicise services and information that help with Digital skills (e.g. The tech partnership, Age UK, Housing Associations, etc.,)  | Communications and Digital teams    |  |         | Social media and internet comms undertaken and will be ongoing |
| <p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• will remind people of the benefits of using ABC's digital services</li> <li>• remind our customers of the assistance that is available from ABC (assisted self-help customer services model)</li> <li>• signpost customers to economic and social reasons for accessing online services (e.g. genealogy, staying in contact with distance family, money comparison sites for saving money, accessing online weight loss or healthy option services)</li> <li>• link into national campaigns that support digital inclusion such as Get Online Week (2 – 8 October 2017)</li> </ul> | Communications                      |  | Ongoing | Social media and internet comms undertaken and will be ongoing |
| <p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• signpost and highlight how to spot secure sites and how not be to be caught out by fraud</li> <li>• Use our website to notify the public of any scams we are made aware of (in conjunction with Kent Police and the wider community safety partnership)</li> <li>• We will use a range of tools including social media/text/website to assure our customers that communication from the council is genuine</li> </ul>  | Communications, IT and digital team |  | Ongoing | Social media and internet comms undertaken and will be ongoing |

| <b>Priority 4: Culture</b>                         |  |                 |   |             | <b>July 2020</b>   |
|--|--|-----------------|---|-------------|--|
| <b>Draft Digital Staff Culture plan 2017- 2020</b> |  |                 |   |             |  |
|  | <b>What we will do</b>   | <b>Who</b>      | <b>Budget required</b>                      | <b>When</b> | <b>Update</b>  |
| <b>Skills</b>                                      | Skills Audit:<br>We will conduct a skills audit of all staff to ascertain whether there are basic skills gaps that need addressing and also to identify more capable staff to share their knowledge with others.   | HR              | Possible training budget requirement<br>TBD | Nov 17      | Audit Completed, needs being identified and built into the 18/19 training plan |
|  | Introduce digital champions:<br>Having highlighted the more digitally skilled staff we will approach this group to become service digital champions that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide support to less digitally capable people (internally and externally),</li> <li>• contribute to digital projects</li> <li>• contribute to drop-in sessions designed to help build confidence with technology as well as social media and other on-line tools</li> <li>• help to develop how to guides and videos.</li> </ul> | HR/Digital Team |   | Jan 18      | Plan developed and comms out asking for volunteers                             |
|  | Introduce digital member champions:<br>These members will lead the way and support how new technologies and  |                 |   |             | TBD, following Modern  |

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|                   | systems will be rolled out and used by members.  | Member Services/Digital Team/IT |  | Gov test launch   |   |
|                   | <p>Recruitment:<br/>To attract and test digital capabilities of potential new recruits we will introduce greater use of digital tools in recruitment and selection, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of social media such as Twitter/Facebook/Glass Door</li> <li>• Use of on-line testing and better assessment of digital skills during recruitment.</li> <li>• Update competency based questions database to include digital competence questions</li> </ul> | HR                              |  | <p>Q4<br/>2017/18</p> <p>April 2019</p> <p>Q1<br/>2018/19</p> | Social media being used for recruitment.  |
|                   | <p>Appraisals:<br/>We will include digital objectives in annual appraisals; these will be to develop either a digital capability or skill, to support someone else in becoming proficient, or to take part in a digital project.</p>   | All managers                    |  | Q4<br>2017/18   | Mandatory field in appraisal system now asks for digital objectives to be identified. |
|                   | <p>Service Plan:<br/>Services will be required to include at least one digital objective/project in their annual service plan.</p>   | Policy team                     |  | 2017/18<br>Service planning                                   | Included in service plans   |
| <b>Leadership</b> | <p>Digital channels to communicate key corporate messages:<br/>The Chief Executive and other senior managers will consider the use of video</p>  | Communications                  |  | Q1<br>2018/19   | CX using video in her internal comms  |

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|  | messages and Blogs to complement face-to-face communication methods.  |                              |                                  |                      |   |
|  | Corporate Twitter accounts for leaders:<br>We will consider how we can support senior leaders in communicating externally though social medial channels.  | Communications /Digital Team |                                  | Q1 2018/19           | @AshfordDigital, a closed Twitter account for staff set up  |
|  | Digital skills:<br>It is important that the leadership of digital transformation is seen as authentic and managers will be encouraged to undertake training to use digital tools in-order to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be able to role model</li> <li>• understand the potential benefits</li> <li>• gain insight into how easy it is to overcome challenges</li> </ul> | HR                           |                                  | During 2017 and 2018 | Training highlighted such as Google Analytics and specific digital products has taken place over past two years |
|  | A range of digital tools are available managers will be required to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consistently apply good practice principles of using tools such as Skype, email and other online tools</li> <li>• use and promote the use of technology as a tool for efficient working</li> </ul>  | All Manager/Digital Team/ IT |                                  | During 2017 and 2018 | All MT using surface pros and Modern.gov for committee agendas  |
|  | Promote a customer centric approach to problem solving as well as collaborative working (using SPACE) to review services and processes.   | Digital Team                 | Budget required for training TBD | Q1 2018/19           | 'Tag Teams' established which include a Customer Services officer to ensure customer is at                      |

|                          |  |                                 |                                  |            |   |
|--------------------------|--|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------|---|
|                          |  |                                 |                                  |            | the centre of process redesigns.  |
| <b>Change management</b> | Agile working methods:<br>Agile working enables problem solving to be achieved in a swift and iterative way, this is important in IT development projects where low-level prototyping and testing are often easier in a live environment. We will provide staff with training on how to use agile working techniques to problem solving.                                 | Digital Team/HR                 | Budget required for training TBD | Q2 2018/19 | Workshop attended by 4 of the 'Tag Team' on Agile, process mapping and Lean methodologies |
|                          | Customer centric service design: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will develop a range of persona's that can be referred to when reviewing a service or process to encourage services to focus on the service from a customer perspective rather than the council's perspective.</li> <li>We will provide training on how user based service design.</li> </ul> | Digital Team/HR/ Communications | Budget required for training TBD | Q1 2018/19 | Personas currently being developed  |
|                          | We will include a field on the PID template where digital transformation and implications can be highlighted.  | Policy team                     |                                  | Q3 2017/18 | PID updated   |
|                          | Corporate values:  |                                 |                                  | Q3 2017/18 | Values launched and comms to  |

|  |   |                                 |  |                                  |   |
|--|---|---------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|---|
|  | Newly articulated corporate values to be launched as part of the communications we will ensure that the link with digital services is explicit.   | HR/<br>Communications           |  |                                  | help embed<br>underway  |
|  | Include standard digital operational competency in all new JDs as a tangible indicator to all existing and potential staff that digital services are intrinsic to our way of working.                                   | HR                              |  | Q4<br>2017/18                    | JD updated  |
|  | We will carry out workshops with services to establish staff ideas on service improvements on the top areas of focus for digital transformation (build into 2019/20 service plans).                                     | Digital team/HR                 |  | Spring/<br>Summer<br>2018        | Workshops<br>taken place to<br>inform way<br>forward with<br>Digital  |
|  | Digital project communications through Root & Branch:<br>We will ensure that the progress, successes, and learning from failures of digital projects are regularly shared through the council's on-line staff magazine. | Communications<br>/Digital Team |  | From<br>Autumn<br>2017           | Ongoing<br><br>Examples<br>include comms<br>on Modern.Gov,<br>Digital Skills,<br>Lean workshop.             |
|  | Communications:<br>We have a range of electronic communication methods including the intranet; we will review these to ensure they remain relevant, responsive, up to date and easy to use.                             | Communications<br>/HR           |  | Ongoing<br>from<br>Q4<br>2017/18 | Ongoing<br><br>Branding for<br>digital project<br>established.<br>Blogs being<br>shared.<br>@AshfordDigital |

|  |   |                       |  |             |  |
|--|---|-----------------------|--|-------------|--|
|  | <p>The staff benefit platform My Ashford Rewards has capability to become an internal communications hub that supports blogs, video content, online polling, recognition schemes and discussions we will review this capability with a view to launching an enhanced offer.</p> <p>Social media:<br/>There is an expectation that we will use social media channels to communicate with our customers. We will ensure that we include social media in all communications plans and on literature and publicity where possible include social media logos and QR codes that direct customers to the appropriate URL.</p> <p>We will also work with services to support them in developing their own social media feeds and campaigns as a communication channel.</p> |                       |  |             | a closed Twitter page for ABC staff established. |
|  | <p>Annual Staff awards:<br/>A new category that reflects the priority of digital transformation will be created to recognise and celebrate good work and outcomes.</p>  | HR/<br>Communications |  | 2018 Awards | New category included in last two year awards    |

# The Future Digital Programme – Priority Projects

| Project Name   | Project Background  | Expected Finish Date |
|--|---|----------------------|
| <b>Lifeline Procurement to convert the platform from analogue to digital.</b>  | Procurement to convert the platform from analogue to digital.   | April 2020           |
| <b>Automatic parking payments (ANPR)</b>   | Starting with Elwick Place  | September 2020       |
| <b>Virtual parking permit 'Permit SMARTI' to allow customer to create an account and pay online. No permit is displayed.</b> | Digital tickets   | September 2020       |
| <b>Lifeline online application process</b>   | Digital applications  | November 2020        |
| <b>Review and implement New Corporate Website</b>  | To work with Visarc to review the content and the structure to deliver a new site                       | November 2020        |
| <b>Planning System</b>   | Current system support is coming to an end so a new system is required                                  | April 2021           |
| <b>Contract Management Tool Kit</b>  | Digitalize the ABC Procurement and Contract Management Toolkit; and Single Source supplier process      | April 2021           |
| <b>Update systems for procurement categories to help with contract management</b>  | Procurement led project   | April 2021           |
| <b>Improving CS by reducing demand by service</b>  | Look at all processes between CS and services to make improvements for our residents to access services | May 2021             |
| <b>Garden Waste</b>  | To revisit the Garden waste process looking to reengineer and simplify current process                  | June 2021            |
| <b>Garage Commercialisation Strategy</b>   | Looking at all garage sites , improving the way we get rent in, streamlining                            | March 2022           |
| <b>Corporate Web page update</b>   | Estate agent look and feel of promoting our Commercial Property Portfolio “ on the Council website      |                      |

## O&S Review of Digital Transformation – Management Team Advice for the Cabinet

| No. | Recommendation  | Resource Implications                                 | Management Team Advice  |
|-----|---|---|---|
| 1   | Note the implementation of the digital strategy to date and endorse the emerging digital programme to be delivered up until 2025.   | Within existing resources and delivery has commenced. | <b>Note:</b> Significant progress has been made of the delivery of the Digital Strategy. The progress is shown in full at Appendix 1. A future programme to deliver further transformation has been developed and is set out at Appendix 2.                                   |
| 2   | That a digital survey regarding homeworking and virtual meetings is conducted for Members, to find out what lessons have been learnt since measures were introduced in March 2020 and what can be improved.   | Within existing resources                             | <b>Accept:</b> HR will conduct a survey that will help establish what Members are finding challenging with remote working and virtual meetings. Solutions to these problems can be suggested once the main issues are identified and therefore will encourage use of digital. |
| 3   | To continue to support the digital concepts of homeworking, virtual meetings and hybrid meetings to be valid ways of running council services and meetings in the future and ensure that there are adequate IT systems in place to deliver these efficiently. | Potential to generate savings                         | <b>Accept:</b> the use of technology whilst working remotely has enabled services to continue to run smoothly, has scope to generate financial savings and help the council deliver its pledge to become carbon neutral.  |
| 4   | Create a Corporate Etiquette protocol for Microsoft Teams that covers making calls, leaving messages and showing availability.  | Within existing resources                             | <b>Accept:</b> Creating a protocol around online etiquette will enable better communication between staff and Members if everyone is following the same guidance whilst working remotely.   |
| 5   | That the online calendar function on Mod.gov is updated regularly to inform Members of future meetings for at least the next six months.  | Within existing resources                             | <b>Accept:</b> Keeping the online calendar function updated will enable user experience with mod.gov and  |

**O&S Review of Digital Transformation – Management Team Advice for the Cabinet**

|   |   |                           |   |
|---|---|---------------------------|---|
|   |   |                           | encourage using the technology rather than paper copies.  |
| 6 | Proceed with creating an online central database for local and national data that residents are able to access and view statistics regarding Ashford Borough. | Within existing resources | <b>Accept:</b> Members and the public will be able to access an online hub for all available statistics about Ashford Borough. This would pull internal and external data sources together and store them in a central place. |
| 7 | That a fact sheet is produced for all Members and staff with advice on broadband and how to check your connectivity whilst working remotely.                  | Within existing resources | <b>Accept:</b> the production of some guidance by the council's IT team will help to ensure Members and officers can access council systems online.   |
| 8 | Prioritise completion of an IT asset register to ensure that all council owned equipment is logged and returned to the Civic Centre when appropriate.         | Within existing resources | <b>Accept:</b><br>The IT service will prioritise completing a register of all equipment taken for remote working purposes   |