

ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO AND DECISION OF THE CORPORATE SUPPORT COMMITTEE ON 19 July 2022

PART A: REPORT

SUBJECT: Update on progress with the Council's ICT & Digital Strategies.

REPORT AUTHOR: Paul Symes, Head of Technology & Digital
DATE: 19 July 2022
EXTN: 01903 737585
AREA: Corporate Support

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Council's ICT Strategy was adopted in 2019 and Digital Strategy 2020.

This report is the annual update of progress with the strategies and has been provided to give the committee insight to the delivery of key themes.

Excellent progress has been made with advancing the strategies including significant enhancements in digital services and the adoption of cloud computing.

The technical specialists have extended operational hours for internal users and continue to support and improve a stable, available, and secure technical estate.

The development team have made many improvements to our online presence including adding new digital offerings for customers.

Our IT Support Desk have adapted to support a more mobile workforce and continue to deliver a high-quality service for our end-users.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- i. The Corporate Support Committee to note the report and continue to receive annual updates.

2. PROPOSAL(S):

Within the lifetime of these strategies we faced a global pandemic which had a significant impact on how the council needed to work and how customers could access services.

Pre-pandemic we had embarked on a number of initiatives that would support new ways of working and improve customer self-service, the pandemic saw the adoption of these new capabilities accelerated.

The infrastructure and desktop support teams rapidly mobilised to make changes to increase homeworking capacity, expedite the rollout of collaborative working platforms and offer extend operational hours.

Staff are now able to seamlessly switch working between office and home, collaborate and share online, and access internal services for longer periods; work is no longer seen as a place we go, it is a thing we do.

This step change in operating model is now embedded into business as usual and provides the foundations that can support future operational changes around how we work and how we use our assets.

The development team have adopted agile working to improve existing services and speed up time to market for new capabilities. They continue to develop using open-source technologies and utilise central government digital platforms.

We have increased the number of customer contact channels and online services allowing access to some services 24/7, we have improved inclusion and accessibility for more customer groups and developed new offerings to keep customers better informed and allow us to receive feedback.

To ensure our buildings are fit for the future we have equipped our main offices with video conferencing rooms allowing flexibility and mixed use. Work has also been completed on improving the webcasting system in the council chamber to support remote attendance.

Our strategy to move services to the Cloud is progressing well, this has allowed us to start reducing our reliance on internal hardware, improve security and at the same time provide greater resilience and business continuity. It will also help us reduce our energy consumption and deliver greener technology.

As part of our mobile connectivity refresh, we foresaw a demand for increased mobile data, so we moved to a pooled data model this has supported increased remote working where a physical internet connection is not available and seen savings on data costs.

There is a high demand to access spatial data and we are continually improving the quality and depth of data that our Geographical Information System (GIS) provides. The team have also been developing secure open data connectors which allow us to share data securely and in real-time with external service providers and contractors.

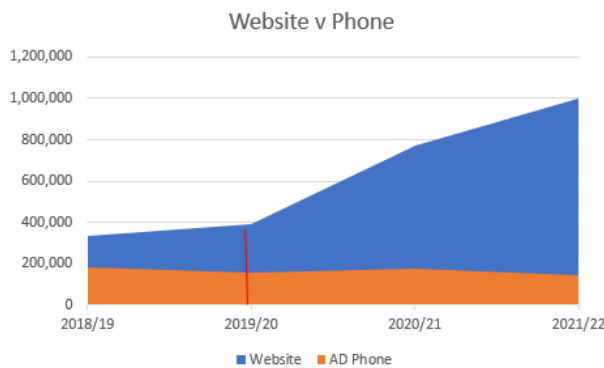
We have been working with a number of telecom providers to create a fibre connected district. A new fibre exchange has been built in Bognor and a site is currently being sought in Littlehampton. Engineering work has started on rolling out ultra-fast gigabit capable internet to homes and businesses and this will future proof Arun for the digital age and ‘the internet of things’.

In partnership with the county council we are working on a Digital Connectivity Infrastructure Accelerator (DCIA) programme. Funded by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) this will deliver a digital management solution for the use of publicly owned assets and ultimately encourage the market to provide high quality mobile connectivity wherever people live, work or travel.

Through our local school network we have been able to recycle old redundant IT equipment so that it can be re-used by children who may otherwise not have access to technology. Our latest delivery included around 100 laptops that had reached their end-of-life for business use and may have ended up as landfill.

Going forward we will continue to improve our self-service offerings, move more services to the Cloud, and progress a digitally connected district. We have other big projects in the pipeline such as replacing our corporate telephony and contact centre systems and hope to add more digital customer contact choices.

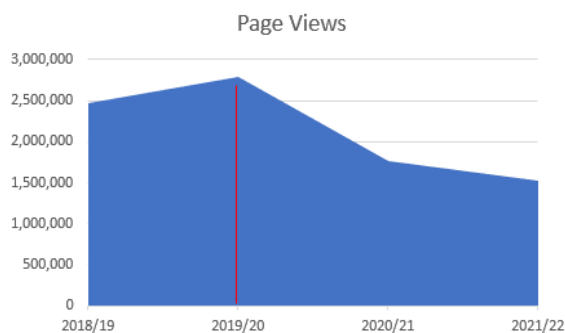
To improve usability of services for elected members we will also be exploring end-user device options in preparation for the next municipal year which may include the choice of a laptop computer or iPad.



Website Visitors (high is good)

Two and a half years ago Technology & Digital took on ownership of the main website. Since then we have been focusing on improvements, adding more interactive functionality and self-services options.

Since then we have seen the number of visitors increase by over 150% and in 2021/22 for the first time the website received over one million visitors.

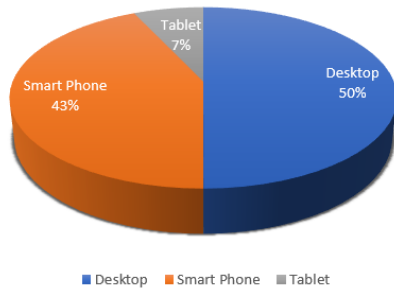


Page Views (low is good)

As part of the website improvements we have been working on customer journeys, making content easier to read, grouping services more logically and making it quicker to find information.

Over the same period as the increase in the number of site visitors we have managed to achieve a 75% ratio reduction in individual page views per visit.

Device Usage

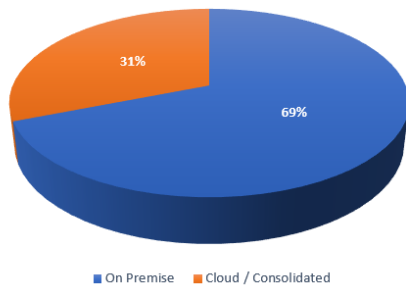


Device Use

In the last few years, the types of viewing device used to access digital services has remained relatively constant and is split equally between full size screens and smaller portable screens.

For this reason when developing digital services we have adopted responsive web design, this allows the same content to be dynamically optimise based on the user's device and provides for a better user experience.

Server Migration / Consolidation

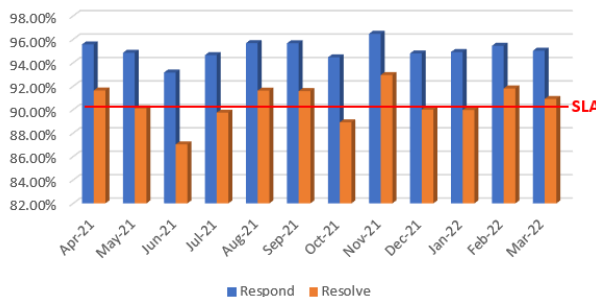


Cloud First

Work has been progressing well on moving services and systems to the Cloud. We have built our own public cloud ecosystem; this allows us the flexibility of using either third party hosted environments or our own based on the best business advantage.

Studies by Microsoft indicate that cloud computing can be 79% more energy efficient and generate 92% less carbon emissions.

Respond & Resolve SLA



Support Desk SLA's

The IT Support Desk has an SLA target of **90%** to responded with 8 hours and 5 days for resolution.

Remote working, staff using their own home networks and longer opening hours means issues are more complicated and sometimes requires a home visit and/or return of equipment.

During the overall period, the support desk has exceeded their SLA with an average of **95%** within target.

3. OPTIONS:

- i. The Corporate Support continue to receive annual updates.
- ii. The Corporate Support Committee stop receiving annual updates.

4. CONSULTATION:

Has consultation been undertaken with:	YES	NO
Relevant Town/Parish Council		X
Relevant District Ward Councillors		X

Other groups/persons (please specify)		
5. ARE THERE ANY IMPLICATIONS IN RELATION TO THE FOLLOWING COUNCIL POLICIES: (Explain in more detail at 6 below)	YES	NO
Financial		X
Legal		X
Human Rights/Equality Impact Assessment		X
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime & Disorder Act		X
Sustainability		X
Asset Management/Property/Land		X
Technology		X
Other (please explain)		X
6. IMPLICATIONS: None		

7. REASON FOR THE DECISION:
To review the progress being made with the Technology & Digital Strategies and continue to receive annual updates.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS:
None