



Arun District Council Draft Digital Strategy 2020 - 2025

Paul Symes, ICT & Service Improvement Manager
September 2019



September 2019 - Version 1-2-3

1. FORWARD

Digital technology is rapidly changing our society, it is changing how we communicate, how we consume services, how we buy and sell things, how we learn and how we manage our lives.

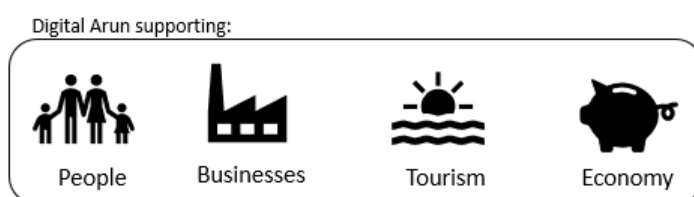
The demand for an excellent digital experience is growing exponentially and the public's perception of the quality of public services is increasingly influenced by their wider experiences as digital consumers.

The digital landscape never stands still, new technologies are constantly being developed, new ways to consume services are rapidly emerging. Our reliance on internet and wi-fi connectivity is becoming more and more important as we expect to be always connected and this is reflected in national initiatives to provide full broadband and phone coverage even in rural areas and the development of ultrafast broadband and 5G.

Digital is not a technology, it's about delivering a joined-up customer experience, it is about meeting customer expectations, it's about transforming how we work, and it is about ensuring we have the right infrastructures in place now and in the future.

It is crucial that the council sees digital as much more than a technology, although the technology that supports it is important, we need to fully embrace digital so that we can harvest the social and economic benefits it offers.

This strategy has been written as an extension to the Council's five-year *Information Communications Technology (ICT) Service Strategy* and builds on its 'delivering digital' approach, it is designed to support other council strategies including the Council's *2020 Vision* and emerging new five-year *Customer Access Strategy*.



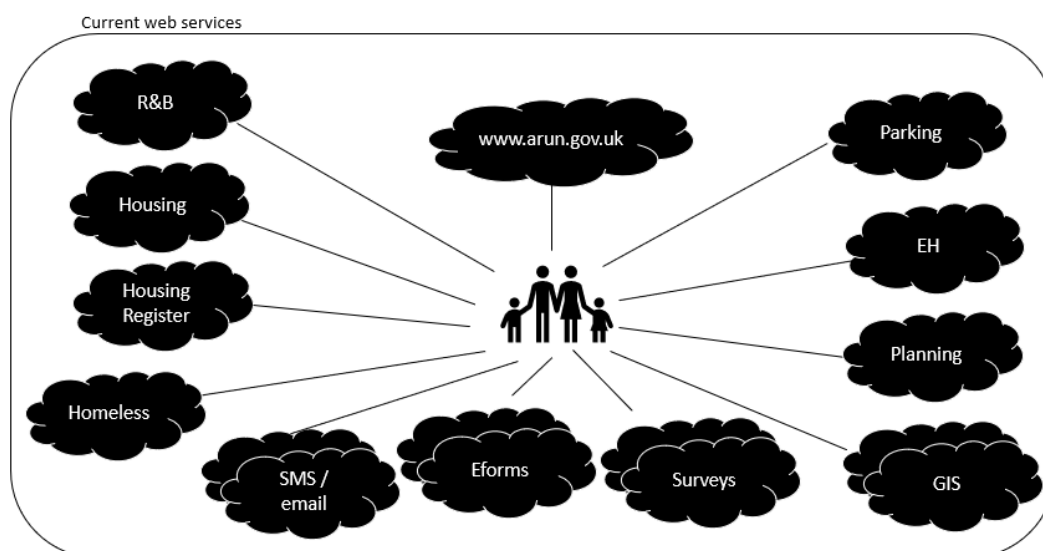
2. WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Talking to officers and members there are many different understandings of what digital means, what it can achieve and what is required to support it. There is a common understanding that digital means websites, social media, mobile working and automated computer systems although the level of understanding and vision varies across different groups.

This thinking has been reflected in our delivery of a digital Arun which so far has mainly focused in three areas (1) delivering internet services to its citizens, partners and more recently its elected members (2) implementing computer systems and technologies that support officers to deliver efficient back-office services, mobile working and more recent the use of text messaging (3) providing an information point, self-service and communications channel internally through the use of SharePoint (intranet).

A redesign of the main website was completed in 2015 and since then limited technical development has taken place, content is primarily maintained by one person with input from the individual services. The site is adaptive to screen size and so offers scaling for mobile devices however it was not designed to deliver the mobile experience now expected by consumers today. It provides the digital shop window for the Council and delivers both information and transactional services along with a social media presence.

The organisation has made some good progress in providing public facing digital portals however this has generally been on a service by service basis creating separate portals and resulting in inconsistent looking services, multiple user accounts and different places for customers to manage their digital business.



Website Stats

	Hits	Sessions
2016	2,000,000	600,000
2017	2,300,000	685,000
2018	2,500,000	750,000
2019	2,800,000	845,000

2019 predicted

hits = page views

sessions = visits

A number of service areas have adopted other digital working practices in their back-office either through solutions provided by back-office suppliers, using corporate technologies or combining both. We have seen a move to more automated processes, mobile working, online surveys and electronic communications such as SMS and email. Like our digital portal this approach has introduced inconsistencies in how our customers receive services.

Internally a staff and member intranet site using SharePoint has been developed which contains a wide range of information and services that help users to self-serve. It includes dynamic content to keep staff updated with important issues, the content is maintained by various officers. The design approach is kept less formal with no design templates allowing services to project their own personalities through their pages, this can sometimes make it harder to find information although a good search engine is included. There are additional restricted subsites within SharePoint for service areas to share customer information with their teams or other relevant services.

The Council has been working in partnership with the other authorities across West Sussex and central government to connect its public buildings (25 sites) using superfast full fibre gigabit technology. Although initially not connecting homes and businesses the County Council are committed to providing full fibre to homes and businesses in the future by working with the market.

The Council is also part of a county initiative called 'Everything Connects' which is designed to develop understanding of the `transition our economies are undertaking in the digital age, and ensure strategy and actions are in place for urban and rural public services, businesses and communities to fully exploit new technologies, drive productivity and economic growth and deliver strong social and environmental benefits'.

3. WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE?

The *2020 Vision* identifies digital as a key theme ‘providing more digital opportunities to make dealing with us easier’, the vision also talks about providing an improved customer experience and becoming smaller and more efficient; the emerging *Customer Access Strategy* also talks about using digital to support customers particularly around self-service.

Digital is key to a number of our goals, when done well it can deliver on all of these, it is generally understood across the organisation that digital can lead to an improved customer experience, can support a more productive workforce and ultimately reduce costs.

With the pace of change in digital capability and ways for consumers to access services it is sometimes difficult to foresee what future direction digital should take to maximise opportunities. It is our role to deliver excellent digital services that are able to support and influence consumer demand although we need to recognise that while the population is becoming increasingly digital-enabled, some groups will not be able to use digital services and so we must continue to provide services in a way they can still access them.

For digital to be successful we need to build frictionless services that are integrated into our customers lives, they need to be served up in a way so that customers will want to use them again and again and once they are using them we need to keep them engaged by ensuring we can fulfil their needs without having to step outside of digital.

The Arun Contact Centre has a target of completing 80% of enquiries at ‘first point of contact’ so our digital channels must be at least as good as that otherwise customers will choose to ignore digital and contact us directly. Digital has the added advantage over other traditional channels in that it can extend our hours of business beyond physical opening hours and so deliver services to customers when they actually want them and allow them to track progress.

Our customers, businesses and the economy are becoming more and more reliant on connected technology and we need to actively engage with our partners and work with the private sector to ensure we are not a digitally disadvantaged district and become an uncompetitive place to live, work and visit.

We need to recognise that our back-office services also play an important role in helping to deliver services to customers and our internal support services which administer council functions also come at a cost. We need to streamline their process and automate where possible to release resource from our day-to-day work.

It won’t be possible to deliver everything at once and as we progress with this journey the digital landscape will change, and we will need to adapt and change too; as digital is constantly evolving there may well be no final destination.

4. DIGITAL PRINCIPLES

A robust and effective strategy is built on a strong set of principles which will help maintain direction and focus.

The following principles were developed as part of the Councils *ICT & Service Improvement Strategy* and are echoed in the emerging *Customer Access Strategy*.

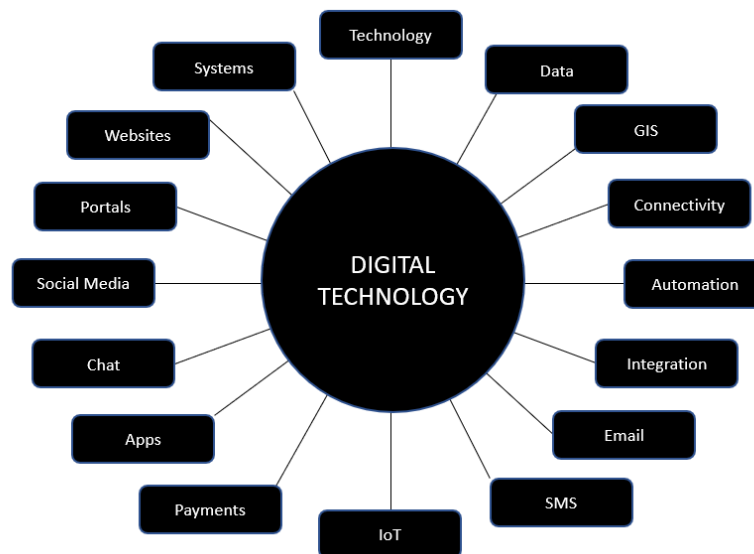
- Invest time and money in developing digital channels, by identifying costs and benefits, investing in the best technologies and recognising investment also includes having skilled people that can make the changes.
- Provide self-service via our website, by providing interactive web services that are engaging, targeted to customer needs and that add additional value to the customer.
- Make self-service easy to use via a mobile device, by providing scalable technologies that can be re-used on multiple device platforms and considering the additional value a dedicated app could provide.
- Offer a 'My Arun' where customers can sign up and access all of their services and transactions all in one place.
- Simplify existing processes then make digital, by working with the services to understand the customer journey and considering the processes that sit behind them before applying any technology.
- Complete interactions using a digital channel, by looking at automation technologies that can support end-to-end processing, avoid manual handoffs and that keep the customer informed throughout.
- Make digital channels customer friendly, by delivering solutions that are convenient to our customers, reliable, easy to use, intuitive and saves them time and effort.

As this strategy is looking much wider than the technical areas of digital our principles need to widen too and so we will adopt the following:

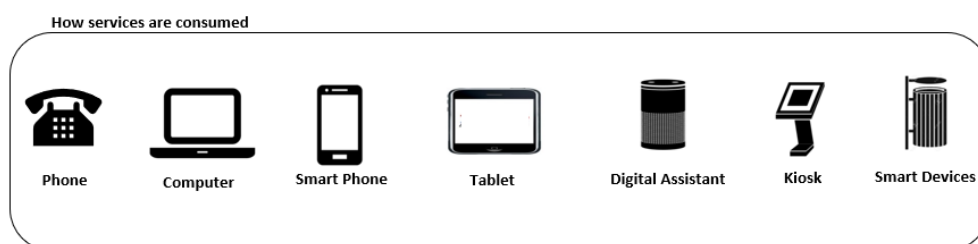
- Actively engage with our partners on the digital agenda to ensure we benefit from joined up thinking and shared / national initiatives.
- Provide help and support for our customers to become digitally skilled and where help is needed give assistance so they can do it themselves next time.
- Ensure our customers are able to be connected and access digital services, encourage those that can to use them, and still support those that can't.
- Do not ask customers to provide information where they have already given it and only collect what we need; ensure GDPR compliance by asking to share at the point of need.

5. TECHNICAL COMPONENTS

Digital technologies can be broken down into a number of components, each one playing a part in supporting digital services. The choice of technologies is complex and will often require integration with other components to deliver a seamless digital service. This makes it all the more important that we have a clear vision of what a digital Arun should look like and wants to achieve before we invest more time and money in them.



Digital services can be consumed in many different ways, not only do we need to pick the right digital components to deliver functionality we also need to consider how they are to be used and how they can be flexed and scaled for various delivery platforms.



We have found that as our consumers become more digitally enabled their device habits are shifting and smartphones and tablets are becoming the device of choice with increasing numbers no longer having access to traditional computer.

6. DIGITAL BLUEPRINT

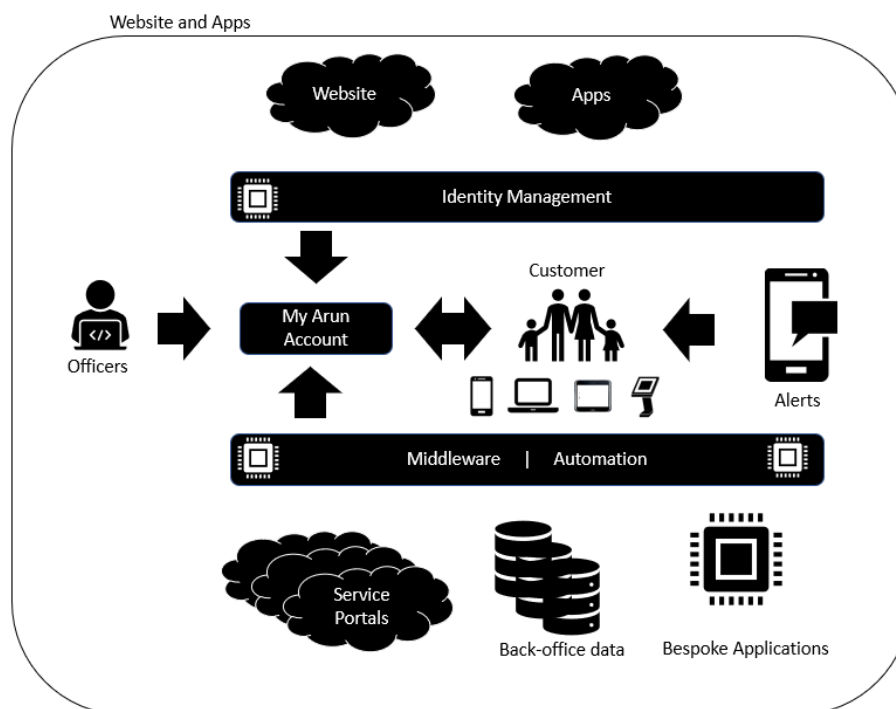
Our digital blueprint is based on our vision, it is our aspiration for the future and not a fixed destination; how far we go on that journey will depend on how much we can afford to invest, the improvements we can make and our appetite to transform. The blueprint will provide direction so that we build firm foundations to support our future vision and not have to rebuild them as we progress.

Our website is our shop window and would benefit from a redesign, it should focus on transactional services and make it easy to self-serve, we should ensure consistent branding and design and take direction from the government digital standards and design guides to engender public trust.

Where separate portals exist, we should look to reformat them to meet our design style for a consistent experience and bring in additional information from back-office systems where this adds value.

Developing a customer 'My Arun' facility would provide a customised user experience and a central portal for a customer to manage all their information and dealings with the us. Customers should be able to sign up for email and text alerts to help keep them informed and remind them when they need to do things.

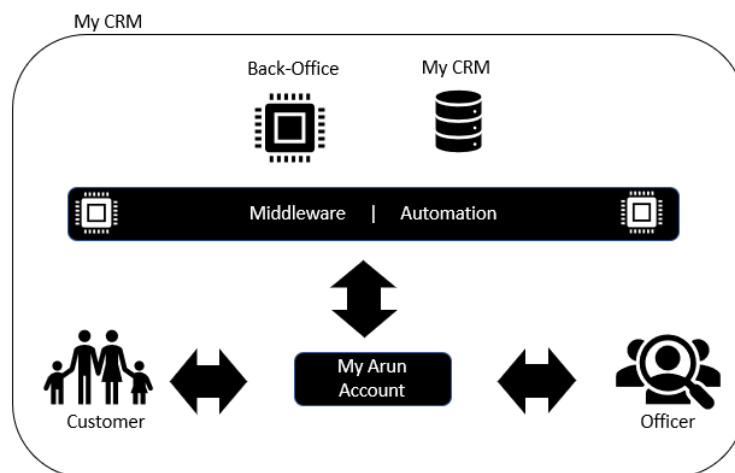
We should offer the same level of digital services on other platforms such as mobile phones and tablets and these should be designed to be device friendly and easy to use.



We should aim for customers to complete their transactions within our digital channels, however if they need to break out at any point, we should still maintain a common thread by making updates back into the channel so that 'My Arun' remains the single place for everything they do.

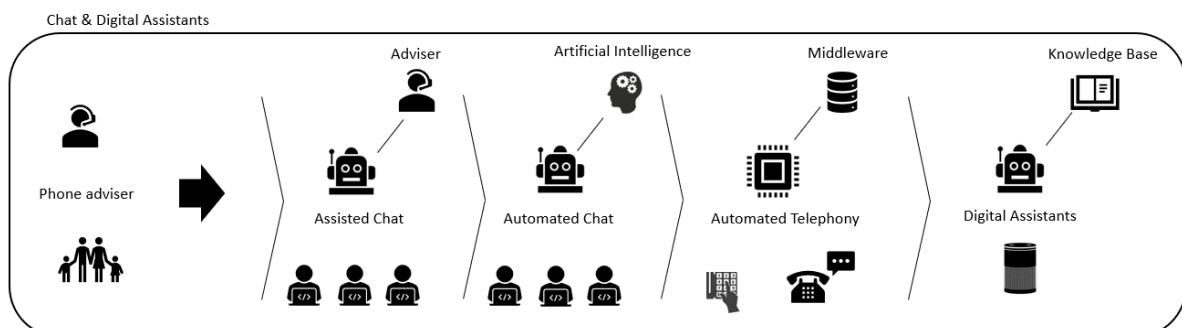
If customers need help whilst in a digital channel this should be available through in-channel help and/or remote assistance to keep them engaged.

We may need to keep a 'My CRM' for those customers that use the 'My Arun' to provide transaction data if it can't be sourced from other systems and this should be available to authorised officers when dealing with customers via other channels.



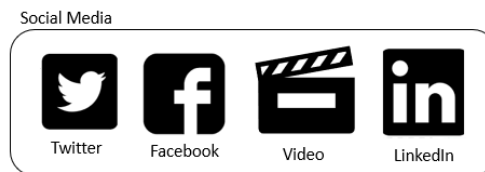
We need to recognise some customers will not want to sign up for a 'My Arun Account' and if this is the case, we still need to be able to provide easy to use digital services for them.

We will look at ways to extend the options for customers to digitally interact with us, some of these will still have human interaction such as assisted chat but others could be automated using smart technology and artificial intelligence.

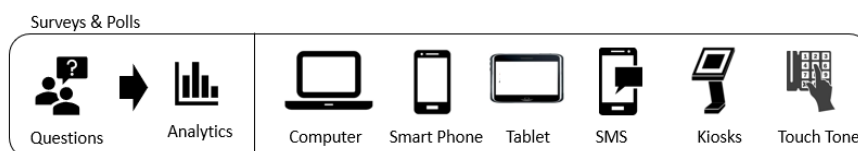


Social media will continue to be an important communication tool that allows fast and easy communications, it is seen as a 24/7 access channel by the user community at large and we need to consider how to meet this expectation.

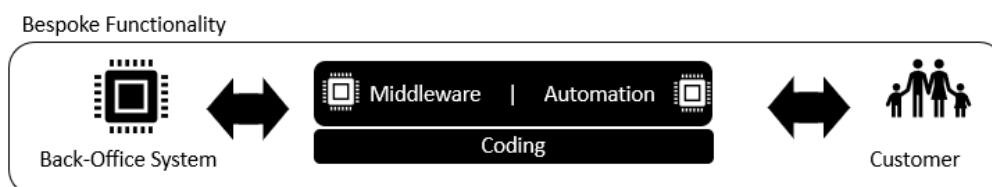
Video content is a rapidly expanding in popularity with a large section of the digital community watching on-line videos daily and we need to look at providing this style of content where it adds value.



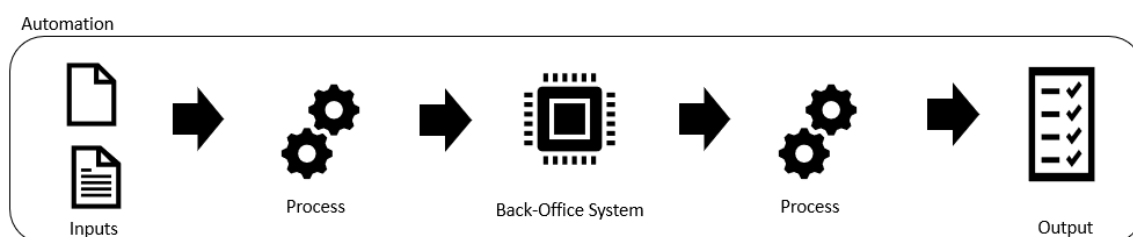
Surveys and polls are a good way of getting feedback from our customers and understanding their experiences and views. We should look at ways that make it easy for us to create campaigns and that are engaging for our customers to complete using a digital channel of their choosing.



We will always need good quality back-office systems at the heart of what we do, in many cases it is not feasible or practical to develop these ourselves. Where we can add value by developing our own add-ons that integrate with these systems we should and provide functionality beyond what they can offer.

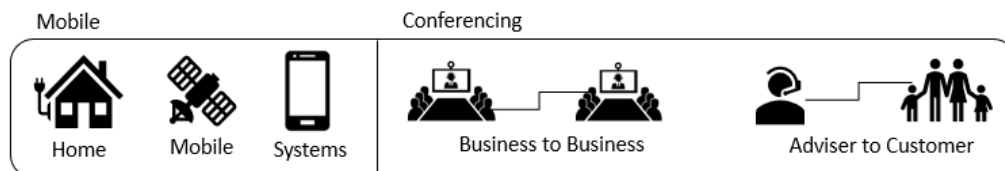


Digital is not just about providing front-office services there are many services in the back-office that support the delivery of front facing services. We will look to apply automation technologies to these processes to speed them up and reduce human interaction, this same principle will be applied to back-office processes that support the administration of the organisation too.



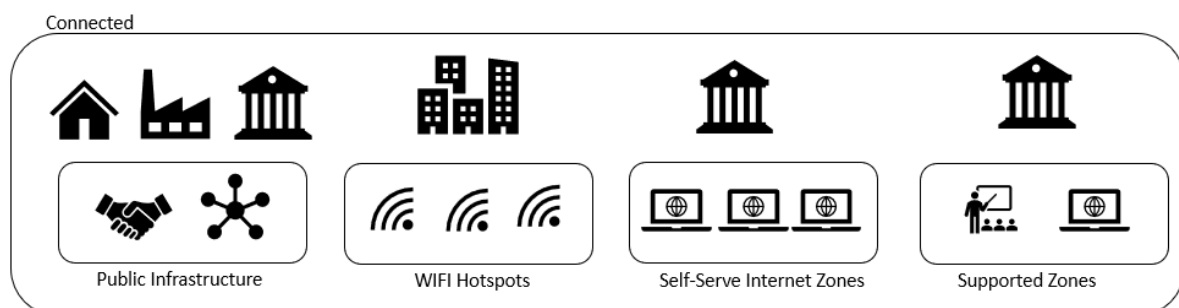
A flexible workforce can work more productively and deliver an improved customer experience and we need to look at providing the right tools that empower officers to do their job from a non-office base, when mobile working they should be able to complete work without needing to return to the office; reducing travel and unproductive time.

We also need to be less mobile! What we mean by that is we should allow officers, members and customers to communicate from their normal location in different ways such as video conferencing and webinars.

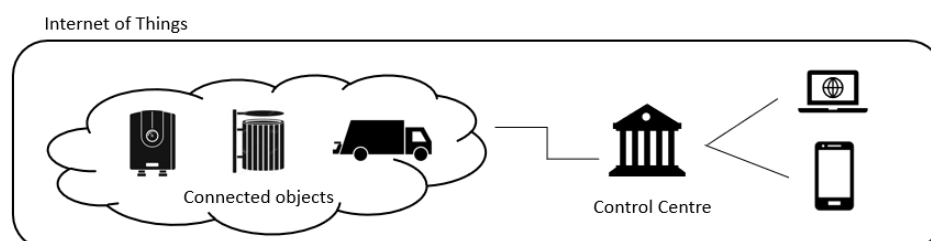


Digital relies on being connected, this applies to us as an organisation and also for our customers, businesses and visitors to consume services. We should engage with our strategic partners and work with suppliers to ensure we are a digital connected district, even in hard to reach places.

Not all of our customers have access to the internet, or have digital skills, some may have the skills but can't afford to connect and we should look to help them get connected by working with our partners or providing publicly available connections.



As part of our approach to innovate we will consider the Internet of Things (IoT) this is where we connect physical objects to the internet and allow them to securely communicate with us; allowing remote monitoring, reduced visits and efficiencies through proactive actions.



7. IMPLEMENTING & DELIVERY

For a digital transformation to be successful it will require investment and vision, it will need the right people leading it, the right resources and at the right time, and will require energy and drive. A new approach is needed if we want to move forward with digital in a cohesive fashion and at a faster pace than before by encompassing strategic and delivery elements into one.

This transformational change will bring disruptive technologies and new ways of working into the work place and we will need to gain momentum and deliver some early successes to win over hearts and minds and embed digital into our cultural thinking; we will try and overcome any resistance but may need to accept not everyone will come along on our journey but regardless that journey must still happen.

We need to fully engage with our partners, sit at the same tables as them, talk the same language, if we don't then opportunities may be missed, and we may put ourselves at a digital disadvantage for decades to come.

How far we take the digital agenda and how quickly will depend on how much we can afford to invest and our appetite to transform. As we generate savings we will need re-invest some of it back into the programme to support what we have built and continually move forward.

We will use the digital blueprint to produce a detailed technical design which will avoid building disconnected solutions, we can then identify the products and development resource needed to deliver this new capability and from that build an investment plan and resourcing model.

The digital agenda is there to support other service strategies and it is those strategies that drive the need for funding and delivery capacity, we need to ensure that as we build solutions these services are able to realise the benefits. We always welcome new ideas and so we will listen to others and adapt as we progress with our plans.

We are not planning to carry out major consultation as this is the role of the other services strategies, we will however work alongside them to ensure close synchronisation and undertake our own validation against data analysis and market trends so we can prioritise delivery.

To support the initial phases of digital we have some 'one-off' pump priming funding available, however this is unlikely to be sufficient to deliver everything we have identified. We may need to seek further funding and generate savings to cover further phases and ongoing operating costs:

8. DIGITAL ROADMAP

PROGRAMME MOBILISATION			
	NOW	NEXT	LATER
	Agree Strategy	Communicate Vision & Outcomes	Prioritise Portfolio & Delivery Order
	Agree Transformation Leadership	Discovery Of New Ideas	Agree and Communicate Priority
	Agree Steering Board Membership	Engage Partners (Everything Connects)	Develop Transformation Plan
	Agree Staffing Structures	Research Market and Suppliers	Create Delivery Capacity
	Implement New Structures	Build Technical Design	Engage Services Prepare for Change
	Release Capacity to Move Forward	Identify Products & Services	Validate Timetable
	Mobilise Programme	Develop Investment & Resource Plan	Beginning Transformation

AREAS TO PRIORITISE				
CHANNEL	COMPONENTS / CONSIDERATIONS		PRIORITY	£
Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Platform / Hosting Design & Content Digital Standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis Eforms Arun Direct 		
Social Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operation Hours Video Content 			
My Arun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identity Management Security / GDPR Middleware 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transactional History My CRM Promotion / Signup 		
Portals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identity Management Middleware / API's Integration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Security 		
Bespoke Functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coding methods Middleware / API's Integration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agile Development 		
Mobile Apps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apple / Android Progressive Design Security 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transactional Content My Arun 		
Chat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Web Adviser Web Assisted Web Automated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Telephone Automated Digital Assistants Telephony Voice 		
Surveys & Polls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Platform Website / Email SMS (text) feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data Analysis 		

	Automation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Front Office ▪ Back-Office ▪ Automation Tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Process Analysis ▪ Process Redesign 		
	Mobile Workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Connectivity ▪ Systems ▪ Devices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Security 		
	Video Conferencing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staff ▪ Members ▪ Public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Video / Voice ▪ Technology ▪ Facilities 		
	Alerts (SMS/ email)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identity Management ▪ My Arun ▪ Middleware 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Security / GDPR ▪ Spam 		
	Connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Council Buildings ▪ District Infrastructure ▪ Public Hotspots 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Self-Serve Zones ▪ Supported Zones 		
	Internet of Things (IoT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Connectivity ▪ Security ▪ Automation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Connectivity ▪ Signage ▪ Tracking 		

As the strategy progress the roadmap will be updated with indicative costs and undergo prioritisation, then each are of work will be planned and costed in more detail.