ADUR & WORTHING
COUNCILS

Joint Strategic Committee
6 November 2018
Agenda Item 9

Key Decision [~~Yes~~/No]

Ward(s) Affected: All

Update on Digital Strategy: Delivering Better Outcomes For Our Communities

Report by the Director for Digital & Resources

Executive Summary

1. Purpose

1.1 This report provides the Committee with an update on the implementation of the Council's Digital Strategy. It summarises the outcomes that are being delivered, and sets out the priorities for the next two years.

2. Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to note the contents of the report

3. Context, Strategy & Principles

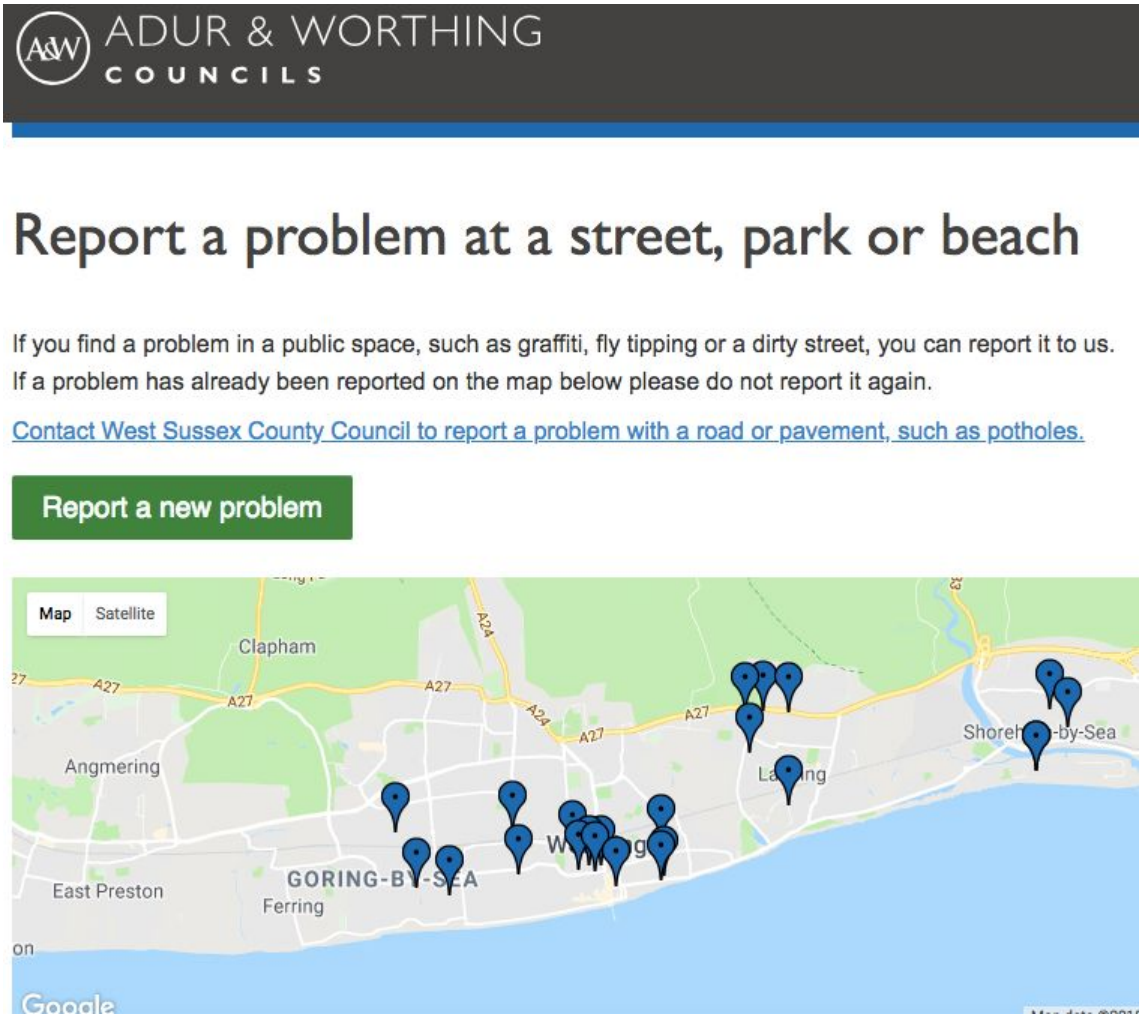
3.1 In late 2014, Adur & Worthing Councils took a bold and strategic step to invest in new digital technologies that set the councils on a different path. The investment, now repaid through reported annual revenue savings, has established Adur & Worthing as national leaders in local government digital, with significant benefits being delivered using innovative and award-winning technology platforms. The programme has already saved over £1m in revenue costs through reduced software expenditure and cashable service efficiencies, and is expected to continue to deliver savings year on year.

3.2 The digital strategy successfully stabilised basic IT provision within a few months of inception, bringing and end to the chronic outages that had been affecting day to day operations for some time. The implementation of Google for Work in April 2015, delivered

reliable and highly accessible email, calendar and document services.

3.3 The most ground-breaking element of the strategy - our low code platform - has provided a reliable digital service for waste management since 2015 with numerous applications built by our in-house team since then, including housing register, housing repairs, complaints, FOI, HR, asset management, emergency SMS, business continuity and more. With a fixed and low cost enterprise licence fee, the more applications built on the platform the greater the value for money is being delivered.

3.4 The low code platform, brought into the local government sector by our councils from the financial services industry, allows our in-house team to design and build fully featured (end-to-end) applications at significantly reduced costs compared to off the shelf alternatives, something very few councils are able to do and none, we believe, at such low cost. The team works with services to undertake research with customers and designs and build what's needed, step by step. In recent months, the digital team have launched a new "look and feel" for customer facing apps, following Government Digital Service guidelines.



3.5 Key to our approach is making sure that digital services are designed for the customer. Councils have historically been poor at focusing on customer needs and delivering digital services that help them get things done simply and efficiently. Our approach seeks to:

- Ensure it is easy for people to get what they need from us first time with a minimum amount of effort
- Use our new technologies to design services around the needs of individuals and communities rather than around organisational silos
- Build understanding and experience in our service managers to reshape their services using digital operating models, driving efficiency and customer satisfaction.

3.6 This document sets out the progress that has been made in these areas, providing case studies and outlining our strategy and plans for the next two years.

Customer & Digital

3.7 At the end of 2017 the Customer Service and Digital Teams were brought together within the Digital and Resources Directorate. The restructure has enabled us to focus on delivering customer commitments using our digital platform as the key enabler. Bringing the services together has further supported a change in culture from delivering 'digital' change projects to customer centred whole-service redesign.

Technology Strategy

3.8 Our Technology Strategy is based on some simple principles. We recognise that for our organisation to adapt and thrive into the future, we need to make the best tools available to our staff and redesign and digitise our service operations using the latest flexible and reliable cloud-based technologies.

3.9 Because technology innovation is moving at such a fast pace, it is important that the tools we adopt can be easily integrated and data shared between them. Our low code development approach helps us address the problem of council services being 'stuck' using relatively old, inflexible technologies provided by third parties. These legacy systems are hard and costly to integrate, but even more importantly prevent services changing the way they operate or experimenting with more digitally enabled operating models.

Human Centred Service Design

3.10 In parallel to developing our technology strategy we have honed our Same Room service design approach. Same Room service design brings people together around a shared challenge to create, test and grow solutions that work for our customers and communities. It uses human centred collaborative approaches, engaging with people who live in Adur and Worthing, staff, members, our partners and peers.

3.11 Human-centred design is increasingly used in the public sector to understand and solve complex challenges. We connect with the experiences of people who live and work here then generate, test and develop solutions that meet their needs and make the most of their strengths. See the Design Council's Double Diamond for more on this approach.

4.0 The Digital Service

4.1 Digital and ICT services are now fully integrated following the dissolution of the Census partnership. The Digital Team is highly skilled and well organised, working across the Councils to:

- Provide operational support to services by proactively managing the Council's ICT infrastructure including hardware, applications, security, connectivity and telephony. The skills in the team are being developed to support the migration to cloud hosted solutions as part of the Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) project as the Data Centre in Worthing Town Hall is significantly reduced in scale to remove operational reliance.

- Develop innovative digital solutions on our digital platforms through customer centred service redesign techniques. Our developers have rapidly built their skills and knowledge to deliver complex applications on the MATS platform that deliver excellent customer outcomes.

- Work collaboratively to develop the council's approach to project management and customer centred service redesign. Effective governance is in place to support the development of strong business plans through to the delivery of successful outcomes.

5.0 Key Technologies

Google for Teams

5.1 In order to start providing modern, flexible technologies to the benefit of all staff, a foundation of the strategy in 2015 was to implement a new productivity suite (email, calendar, documents), Google for Work. This was achieved in April 2015 for all staff after a successful six week implementation.

5.2 We intend to remove Microsoft Office for the majority of users in spring 2019, providing further training to staff on the Google suite during 2018/19. This will result in further savings in Microsoft licensing costs and avoid significant data storage costs as well as improving efficiency and reducing risks associated with data protection. The project will engage users to give them the knowledge and skills to use Google effectively and confidently.

Devices and access

5.3 Our staff expect and deserve good equipment and easy access to their applications. Telephony has been a weakness for Adur and Worthing, however, major improvements have been delivered including a new mobile solution which was rolled out across the councils in May 2018 resulting in high levels of satisfaction from users. The resilience of the existing enterprise telephony system has greatly improved with the appointment of a new managed service provider resulting in a major improvement in the overall stability of the system since July 2018, and an annual cost reduction of £19,000.

5.4 The business plan for future telephony and alternative contact channels is being developed for roll out in 2019/20.

5.5 Much of the council's hardware (laptops and desktops) is in need of replacement with a renewal programme being rolled out in 2018/19 and 2019/20. This will include the introduction of more cost-effective Chromebooks for users who mainly use cloud based applications.

MATS Platform

5.6 The MATS Platform is now well embedded within the Digital Development Team. The team are usually involved in projects from the early discovery phases to identify the challenge that services are seeking to address and the customer needs that need to be met. They have become skilled at working in an agile way to develop scalable applications within short time-frames on the platform. As the team gain more experience and the portfolio of applications grows; the speed of delivery increases. This is due to economies of scale being realised realised through shared data sources and the avoided need for replication.

Infrastructure as a Service

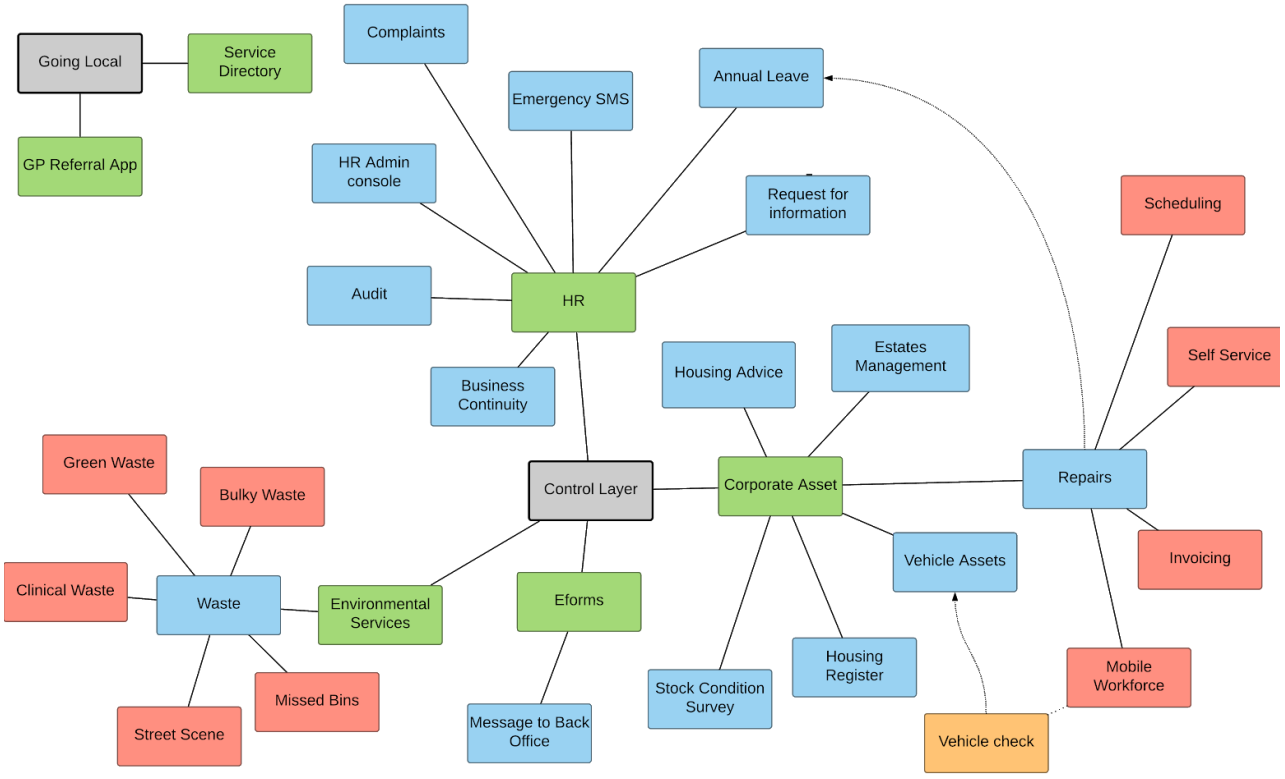
5.7 The Councils are delivering the strategy to move the remaining application (software) estate to the cloud as part of the Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) project. This will enable us to achieve an excellent level of system availability and resilience in the event of a disaster and improve security. It will give us a flexible data centre, where our capability can be 'dialled up' to increase performance when demand is high, and 'scaled down' to save money when systems aren't in such great demand. The data centre in Worthing Town Hall will be decommissioned reducing risks associated with on premise solutions (such as fire and flooding). The project is in the delivery phase with completion expected in 2019/20.

6.0 Progress to date

6.1 With the technology building blocks in place, progress has been made in delivering outcomes through our strategy. A diverse range of applications has been built from simple solutions that enable us to send SMS messages to all staff mobile phones to an end-to-end redesign of the Adur Housing Repairs Service. The SMS system took a day to build and saves £600 in annual licence costs while the Adur Repairs Service redesign was a two-year project that avoided £132,000 of capital expenditure and £56,000 annual licence fees. Figure 1 shows the applications that have been built by the team to date.

6.2 The work has realised cashable savings and avoided procurement and licensing costs from external suppliers. Designing services around the customer is now the norm rather than the exception, resulting in improving levels of customer satisfaction. Self-service options are starting to have an impact on reducing the volume of customer contact increasing the availability of officers to support customers who are not able to access services online or who have more complex needs.

Figure 1 Summary of MATS Applications



6.3 The remainder of this report summarises the progress that has been made to date in terms of service design and improvement, the challenges that need to be addressed and the plans to drive the strategy forward over the coming two years.

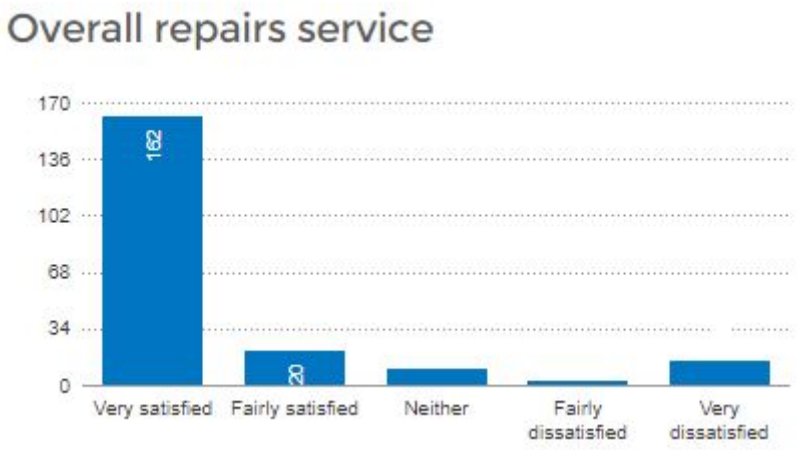
Improved customer outcomes

6.4 The integration of digital as an enabler in the design process has resulted in a significant shift towards designing services around customer needs. The development of all the apps is preceded by a discovery phase mapping out customer needs. User Experience (UX) is embedded in relevant processes to create products that provide meaningful and relevant experiences to users.

6.5 Through the new Adur Repairs system customers are asked for feedback on the quality of the service. The feedback since the launch of the system has been very positive. Overall 85% of customers were satisfied or very satisfied with the repairs service, up from 67% at the start of the project.

Improved process efficiency

6.6 Our approach is releasing significant process efficiencies across services reducing the administrative burden and enabling officers to focus on tasks where they add value and supporting service redesigns which have been implemented to meet the ongoing budget pressures.



6.7 The Adur Homes Repairs app has enabled a redesign of the end-to-end repairs process from the customer reporting the repair to it being signed off by them on completion and the request for customer feedback. The project aims to improve operational efficiency and reduce the cost of repairs as a result of recording what repair (and trade) is needed more accurately, getting it right first time avoiding the need to send out multiple operatives and having improved management information to drive efficiency. It also seeks to reduce avoidable telephone contact by 20% through customers using self service and as a result of customers being kept up to date with progress being made. The service was launched to the public at the end of September and these indicators are being monitored and will be reviewed as the system beds in.

6.8 The new Adur Homes Repairs system has significantly reduced reliance on paper. Prior to go live each job required approximately 6 sheets of paper amounting to more than 53,000 sheets per year for just under 9,000 jobs.

'It used to take me a whole day to process 100 invoices, now I process 150 in three hours' Adrian Wilgoss, Building Service Manager, Adur Homes

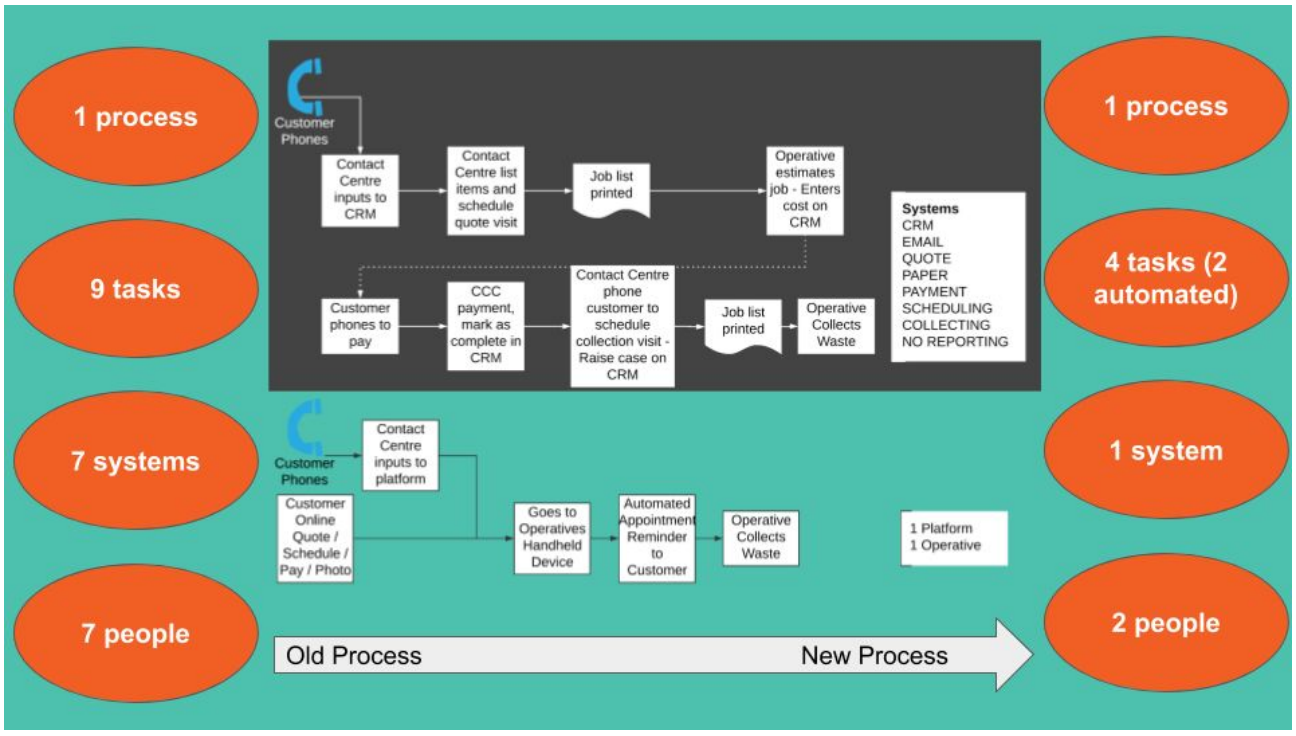
6.9 The AWES project has resulted in the development of self service options for customers wishing to report a missed bin, request a bulky waste collection or request a clinical waste collection. The contact centre receives between 600 and 700 calls a week for the AWES service the majority of which are transactional. Since going live approximately 40% of service requests for clinical waste and missed bins have been made on line. This equated to 95 transactions which would have taken 8 hours of call handler time if made by phone. These figures are expected to increase significantly as missed bins and bulky waste have only been launched very recently. Email contact to the service has also declined significantly since the launch of self service.

6.10 The old and revised process for bulky waste is summarised in the figure below. Prior to the redesign a bulky waste request involved nine tasks, seven systems and seven officers. The new process only involves four tasks (two of which are automated) and two officers.

6.11 Similar efficiencies have been realised through the missed bin and clinical waste processes. The work has been key to support the restructure in AWES that was agreed

for and implemented in 2018/19. As part of the next phase of the AWES work the green waste service will be addressed which while significantly automated at the back end in a previous phase, still results in high call volumes as a result of people wishing to sign up for the service or make payments.

Bulky waste Before // After



6.12 Self service applications are driving down avoidable contact particularly in the contact centre and face-to-face teams. Customers no longer need to contact us for simple transactions. Improved communication and monitoring of services ensures customers are informed of the progress of their case (eg repairs customers are notified by text or email of their appointment and when an operative is on their way, similar to Amazon's delivery tracking system). The challenge is to drive more customers to use the self-service channels which is being done through proactive communication. The AWES work is reducing email volume and is starting to have an impact on contact centre demand which will support the delivery of savings.

Data rationalisation

6.13 The platform approach facilitates the breakdown of organisational data silos. A good example is the work being done around the Council's built infrastructure: council offices, council owned social housing, and commercial properties leased or rented out by the estates team. These buildings are managed by different services: Estates manage commercial properties including leases and rent reviews, Technical Services carry out compliance inspections and commission repairs and maintenance work while Adur Homes work with Technical Services on the management and maintenance of the council-owned housing stock. Without an integrated approach built around a '*single version of the truth'* services duplicate data and sharing of information becomes inefficient and increases risk of issues falling between services.

6.14 The approach of developing asset management applications around a single shared source of data has the following benefits:

- Monitoring of compliance is more robust, reports can be drawn down for individual properties or a specific type of compliance inspection (eg fire safety) avoiding the need to trawl through multiple spreadsheets and/or filing systems
- A risk-based approach can be adopted to managing built assets
- Maintenance and capital expenditure can be prioritised based on the most up-to-date condition surveys
- Duplicate systems can be decommissioned
- Resilience is improved through reducing reliance on spreadsheets and paper based systems
- Administration is reduced and staff resource can be used more proactively.

Same Room & Systemic Design Projects

6.15 Our Same Room design approach provides a framework to work with partners to deliver community outcomes, whether digitally enabled or not. Our approach is being applied to tackle some of the biggest challenges in our communities around homelessness and loneliness with a focus on prevention. We are delighted to confirm that Adur & Worthing Councils have been selected to received support from the Design Council for a multi-agency project on Work & Skills which will be a joint project between the Well-being and Economy teams, involving DWP and GB Met Further Education College among

others.

In the digital sphere we have delivered the award-winning Going Local app which provides a directory of community services helping refer patients to services more effectively. Building on this work we have been successful in getting through the first stage of an application to the MHCLG Local Digital Fund to work with other authorities to develop a national open standard for local service directories in partnership with the Open Data Institute, who have agreed to fund their own involvement. The final application will be submitted on 15 November 2018.

Delivery of savings

6.16 The implementation of the strategy is delivering significant savings. A target of £200k revenue savings per year was set. The programme has saved over £1 million years from reduced software expenditure and cashable service efficiencies as summarised in the table below.

	Annual savings		
	Target saving	Actual	Cumulative saving
	£	£	£
2016/17	200,000	197,840	197,840
2017/18	200,000	180,740	378,580
2018/19 to date (month 6)	200,000	126,100	504,680
Total saved 2016/17 to date			1,081,100

6.17 In the coming financial year savings attributable to the digital strategy include:

- £30,000 in Microsoft license fees and data migration cost as a result of delivery of Phase 2 of the Google work (Google for Teams)
- £26,000 in 2019/20 and £52,000 in 2020/21 in customer service as a result of reduced call volume in the contact centre and improved process efficiency in business support.
- £25,000 in 2019/20 and £50,000 in 2020/21 as a result of process improvements in Revenues and Benefits.

Avoided costs

6.18 As well as delivering direct savings to the revenue budget the digital strategy is resulting in avoided costs. The Adur Repairs Service was market tested before the decision was made to build in-house. An externally procured system would have cost £132,000 in capital investment and £56,000 per year in licence fees. The estimated in-house build cost was £113,500 based on development and project management costs, and the annual licence fee is incorporated into the overall cost of the MATS platform which is £60,000 per

year (covering all MATS applications). The estates, compliance and stock condition survey systems were not market tested but the in-house build cost of £20,000 for each is significantly lower than any externally sourced system of similar scale and complexity.

6.19 As the team gains experience and templates are in place, the rate of development of apps is increasing, and the cost of development reducing further.

6.20 The team of developers carry out a range of tasks, from contributing to the initiation of ideas and concepts as part of discovery work through to the building and testing of new applications, and then managing them as part of business as usual. They work closely with the Digital Operations Team on issues around security, audit and support a number of legacy systems including the Academy system for Revenues and Benefits.

7.0 Next Steps

7.1 For the three-year service planning period, the council's focus on designing services around the customer, will continue. The pipeline of digitally enabled projects is managed through internal governance processes from business case development to post project evaluation. The key projects for the remainder of 2018/19 and 2019/20 are summarised below.

Infrastructure as a Service

7.2 As detailed in section 5 the IaaS project is a core element of improving resilience and flexibility of our services by moving services out of the Town Hall to cloud hosted solutions. The first servers have been migrated and the project is working to a completion date of December 2019. On completion only five servers will remain in the Town Hall for services that relate directly to the building or low-risk functions e.g. printing & authentication.

Google for Teams

7.3 The next phase of the Google project will be rolled out over the next 12 months. The work will deliver improved file management through the adoption of Google Team Drive and the rollout of new Google products to enhance collaboration and efficiency.

7.4 Success of the project depends on having excellent support for staff using Google products; from their induction through to day-to-day support and advice. The work will result in a reduction in the number of staff who need Microsoft products resulting in a net saving in licence fees of £30,000. The switch to Google Team Drive will improve GDPR compliance and avoid the £20,000 cost of migrating and hosting Microsoft shared drives in the cloud.

MATS Strategy

7.5 Adur and Worthing have been early adopters of the MATS Platform and we have now built a range of applications which can be adapted by other councils moving to the platform. We are keen to develop a community of practice on the platform with MATS to realise

benefits for the public sector avoiding unnecessary duplication of effort. The approach to sharing apps is also a commercial benefit to MATS and officers are in dialogue how this can reduce Adur & Worthing's licence costs and raise revenue.

Revenues and Benefits Service Redesign

7.6 The Revenues service is a universal service affecting every household and business in the area with responsibility for the collection of £104,000 million in council tax and £51.5 million in business rates per annum whilst the Benefits service supports some of our most vulnerable customers. It is the highest contact volume service in the Councils. In 2017/18 the customer service team received 24,000 benefit calls and 54,000 revenue calls with approximately 20,000 visitors to Portland House and the Shoreham Centre for these services.

7.7 A redesign of the service, led by frontline staff started in May 2018. The discovery has been completed and various projects are underway. These include improving communication with customers e.g. by ensuring letters are written in plain english and empowering staff to resolve queries at first contact. The digital project strands include the launch of self-service in Adur, bringing it in line with Worthing (this has now gone live) and the launch of e-billing for council tax for the 2019/20 financial year. Work is also underway to launch integrated e-forms to reduce email correspondence, which will accelerate processing times.

7.8 The work is expected to enhance the experience for customers; enabling those who want to self-serve to do so without needing to phone or visit our offices. The structuring of e-forms will mean all the required information is included in first contact, enabling us to process customer queries without having to go back to them for clarification or additional information (eg account numbers, dates of birth etc). It will in-turn reduce customer contact volumes, processing efficiencies and savings in areas like postage.

7.9 Currently the Revenues and Benefits system is located on the Town Hall Data Centre in Worthing and as part of the IaaS project the business case for a cloud based solution is being developed.

Asset Management

7.10 As mentioned in section 5, management of council owned built infrastructure has touch points within different service areas. Significant progress has been made in delivering an integrated Asset Management system and the first phase of this work will be concluded in the coming months.

Customer Contact

7.11 With a stable telephony solution and the rolling out of online self-service across high contact services such as Revenues and Benefits, AWES and Parking, customer contact channels will be reviewed to identify how existing channels can be optimised and what further opportunities exist to improve customer access, for example, using social media and web chat. The discovery for this work will review our current systems and draw on

best practice from other industries. The focus will remain on 'Digital First' ensuring telephony and face-to-face teams are available to provide assistance with more complex case work. The work will include a review of systems in use to identify future needs and opportunities to rationalise these.

Parking Services

7.12 Customers using our multi storey car parks will soon be able to set up online accounts for auto billing enabling them to park without having to go to a payment machine. Their accounts will be debited for their parking charges on a regular basis. Customers who have signed up for the Town Centre Workers Deal will also be able to apply for the scheme and pay for parking online. This service will improve convenience for customers, reduce cash collection, and reduce queues at payment machines during peak times.

Planning, Building Control & Land Charges

7.13 The development of a new Planning, Building Control and Land Charges system has been commissioned from an external supplier to be compatible with our platform. The project has suffered delays and the focus is in the first instance on delivering a Land Charges system. The delivery of Planning and Building Control will be reviewed following further demonstrations of the system from the supplier.

Financial Management System

7.14 A replacement for the existing financial management system has been procured. The new system will support the delivery of the digital strategy. However, the implementation has been delayed due to issues with the functionality of the new system. The version of the system which was released in October 2018 contains the majority of the features committed to within the contract and the implementation is due to restart in November. Go-live is expected early in the 2019/20 financial year.

8.0 Conclusions & Recommendations

8.1 Adur and Worthing Councils have embarked on an ambitious digital strategy to modernise how we deliver services. This now delivering improved outcomes for our communities:

- Our human-centred service design approach (SameRoom) is ensuring we build services around the needs of customers bringing together all relevant services and partners in the process
- Improved efficiencies are being realised through internal processes and customer effort is being reduced.
- Services are becoming more resilient, for example through the cloud migration work reducing risks to business continuity
- More flexible services - we are working in an agile way making it easier to adapt to the changing needs of our customers.

8.2 Our strategy is delivering significant savings and supporting the release of resources for frontline services. Our approach is gaining interest at a national level, with numerous

councils wanting to learn how we are delivering our strategy. As more councils follow our approach we aim to support the creation of a network where councils can collaborate on the development of apps and share them based on open data principles.

9.0 Financial Implications

9.1 The costs associated with the digital programme are built into the revenue and capital budgets of the Councils. There are no additional financial implications arising from this report.

10.0 Legal Implications

10.1 Under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council has the power to do anything that is calculated to facilitate, or which is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of their functions.

10.2 Section 3(1) of the Local Government Act 1999 (LGA 1999) contains a general duty on a best value authority to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

10.3 s1 of the Localism Act 2011 empowers the Council to do anything an individual can do apart from that which is specifically prohibited by pre-existing legislation.

Officer Contact Details:-
Jan Jonker
Head of Customer & Digital Services
07881255291
jan.jonker@adur-worthing.gov.uk

Sustainability & Risk Assessment

1. Economic

- Our digital strategy is delivering significant savings. A target of £200k revenue savings per year was set. The programme is on course to save over £1m by the end of this financial year.

2. Social

2.1 Social Value

- The adoption of human centred design is ensuring services are designed around customer needs through improved internal collaboration and collaboration with partner organisations.

2.2 Equality Issues

- The adoption of a digital first strategy enables digitally connected customers to access services 24/7, not being restricted to phone and face to face contact available only during office hours. The design of digital solutions is based on the GOV.UK principles which have been thoroughly tested with customers and help provide a consistent recognisable approach.
- The development of self service options, and improvements in processes mean that the contact centre and face to face teams will be more accessible to customers who have more complex needs or who are not digitally enabled..

2.3 Community Safety Issues (Section 17)

- The AWES Street scene app makes it easier to report issues like graffiti and fly tipping helping improve the environment, but also providing valuable information on problem hotspots which can in turn be used to prioritise resources for prevention.

2.4 Human Rights Issues

- Matter considered and no issues identified.

3. Environmental

- The digital strategy is supporting the Council's environmental agenda in different ways. Examples include the Adur Repairs apps maximises travel efficiency of operatives by scheduling job locations and driving routes, it has also reduced paper consumption by 53,000 sheets per year. The AWES Apps enable fly tipping and littering to be addressed more quickly with reported information being available to operatives immediately.

4. Governance

- The digital strategy is reducing risks to business continuity by migrating servers to cloud hosted solutions. The Google for Teams strategy will also enhance GDPR compliance.