

Name of Strategy / Policy: ICT Strategy

Date last updated: Fully Revised (March 2020)

Links to Council Priorities:

| Priority | Linked Yes / No? |
|---|------------------|
| Environment | No |
| Housing & Regeneration | No |
| Health & Community Safety | No |
| Commercial and Democratically Accountable Council | Yes |

Links to Other Strategies and Policies

Corporate Plan / Financial Planning Strategy & Medium-Term Financial Forecast / Commercial Strategy

SMART Action Plan in this document?

Yes

Actions linked to corporate plan objectives?

Yes

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Equality impact assessment undertaken:

Any decision taken, or initiative planned using this strategy as a guide will be subject to the appropriate equality impact assessment

Sustainability appraisal undertaken:

Any decision taken, or initiative planned using of this strategy as a guide will be subject to the appropriate equality impact assessment

Version history

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Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| 1. Introduction | 5 |
| 1.1. Background | 5 |
| 1.2. Policy Context | 5 |
| 1.2.1. Local Policy Context | 5 |
| 1.2.2. National Policy Context | 5 |
| 1.2.3. ICT Standards and Approaches | 5 |
| 1.2.4. Our Strategic Aims | 6 |
| 2. Customer, Partner and Business Engagement | 7 |
| 2.1.1. Change | 7 |
| 2.1.2. Employee Shift | 7 |
| 2.1.3. Resident Shift | 8 |
| 2.1.4. The Small Business | 9 |
| 2.2. Infrastructure Change | 9 |
| 3. Digital Agenda | 11 |
| 3.1. Today's Position | 11 |
| 3.2. Challenges | 11 |
| 3.3. Digital Imperatives | 11 |
| 4. ICT Opportunities | 12 |
| 4.1. Desktop as a Service (DaaS) | 12 |
| 4.2. Internet of Things | 12 |
| 4.3. Web development and Artificial Intelligence | 13 |
| 4.3.1. Better Reply Predictions | 13 |
| 4.3.2. Website Content | 13 |
| 5. Protecting Our Data | 14 |
| 6. IT and Environmental Sustainability | 15 |
| 7. Conclusions | 15 |
| 8. Our Action Plan | 16 |
| 9. Business Services Functions and Drivers | 23 |
| 9.1. COMMUNITY SERVICES AND LEISURE | 23 |
| 9.2. CONTRACT MANAGEMENT AND STREET SCENE | 24 |
| 9.3. ENVIRONMENT OPERATIONAL SERVICES | 25 |
| 9.4. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH | 26 |
| 9.5. ENVIRONMENT MARKETING AND ADMINISTRATION | 26 |
| 9.6. LEGAL SERVICES | 27 |
| 9.7. AUDIT | 27 |
| 9.8. GOVERNANCE / ELECTIONS | 28 |
| 9.9. REVENUES | 28 |

| | | |
|-------|-----------------------------------|----|
| 9.10. | LAND CHARGES | 29 |
| 9.11. | First CONTACT | 29 |
| 9.12. | HOUSING | 30 |
| 9.13. | HOUSING OPTIONS | 30 |
| 9.14. | BENEFITS/PERFORMANCE &DEVELOPMENT | 30 |
| 9.15. | FINANCE | 31 |
| 9.16. | HUMAN RESOURCES | 32 |
| 9.17. | FACILITIES MANAGEMENT | 32 |
| 9.18. | REGENERATION | 34 |
| 9.19. | PARTNERSHIPS AND SAFER PLACES | 34 |
| 9.20. | LICENSING AND TRANSPORTATION | 34 |
| 9.21. | PLANNING POLICY | 35 |
| 9.22. | PLANNING DEVELOPMENT CONTROL | 35 |
| 9.23. | PLANNING BUILDING CONTROL | 36 |
| 9.24. | 24 Month Plan | 37 |

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

We all live in a highly mobile, social, an 'anywhere-anytime' world that permeates across business and personal boundaries. This ever increasing 'always-on' culture is reinventing and starting to dictate how service providers like the Council need to engage with customers and partners. New ways of engaging and the ability to quickly gain insight with regards to that engagement will be a key differentiator in the efficient and cost-effective delivery of our services moving forward.

The council has made significant changes with a major shift to cloud services and platforms, however this enabling technology needs further investment in training and support to allow full value to be achieved. Technology deployment without appropriate training will not allow cultural shifts from an office centric to a flexible working pattern to be achieved.

1.2. Policy Context

1.2.1. Local Policy Context

The [Castle Point Borough Council Corporate Plan of 2018 – 2021](#) details how we have identified four medium term priorities, which are:

- Environment
- Housing and Regeneration
- Health and Community Safety
- A Commercial and Democratically Accountable Council

This Strategy document should be read in conjunction with the council's corporate plan to give context and seen as an *enabling* strategy as it will support the council to deliver against these local priorities.

1.2.2. National Policy Context

This Strategy responds to, and takes forward, some of the key national drivers that have been set for local government. Implementation of the Strategy will therefore ensure that the Council is better placed to anticipate:

- Reduced public spending.
- The Government's "Digital by Default" agenda.
- The devolution agenda.
- UK wide policy changes such as welfare reform.
- The move away from PSN (Public Services Network).
- The ability to use Government Digital Services (GDS).

1.2.3. ICT Standards and Approaches

This Strategy recognises the following fundamental approaches and standards that need to be adhered to, to deliver the Council's ICT Strategy within the National Policy context. They include, but are not limited to:

- Opportunities presented by service-based providers (SaaS, Software as a Service), Cloud computing (Office 365, Hosted Telephony, Internet of Things).
- New technologies that enable different, more collaborative and flexible ways of working smarter that ultimately “make life easier” (integration with Office applications).
- The utilisation of SMART devices (portability in the field devices increasing efficiency and throughput).
- Common approaches to data and information sharing across services.
- Managed services (Desktop as a Service).

1.2.4. Our Strategic Aims

Presented in the sections that follow is a detailed situational analysis that we have used to develop the following strategic aims:

- Aim 1: Improve customer engagement, service experience and associated costs
- Aim 2: Improve operational agility and speed of change
- Aim 3: Improve decision making, organisation efficiency and service delivery
- Aim 4: Ensure the data held in our systems is protected from cyber-attack but easily accessible when required
- Aim 5: Use IT as a driver for reducing the carbon footprint of the Council

These items combine for our longer-term plans to deliver 21st century services and deeper connected experiences for our residents. We will continue to use appropriate external advice from recognised partners to help guide us through the challenges we have and work with other similar authorities to share experience and reuse proven technologies where this is possible.

In section 8, we set out a series of high-level actions that we will undertake to deliver these strategic aims.

2. Customer, Partner and Business Engagement

It starts simply with having the right tools to engage with people in the way they choose, this is a very basic premise and once in place allows for some key digital imperatives, including:

- Self Service, which is the ability for our customers, businesses and partners to service themselves.
- Channel Shift, which is the ability to service our customers and partners in the most convenient and economical way.

2.1.1. Change

Many emerging and existing technologies are driving a change in expectations and working practices. Employees, residents and businesses have had access to good technology and at the same level as that available to the council and have had it for some time, normally ahead of the council's ability to implement. This isn't going to change as the large technology companies such as Microsoft, Google and Apple deliver more services online. This is a challenge and an opportunity.

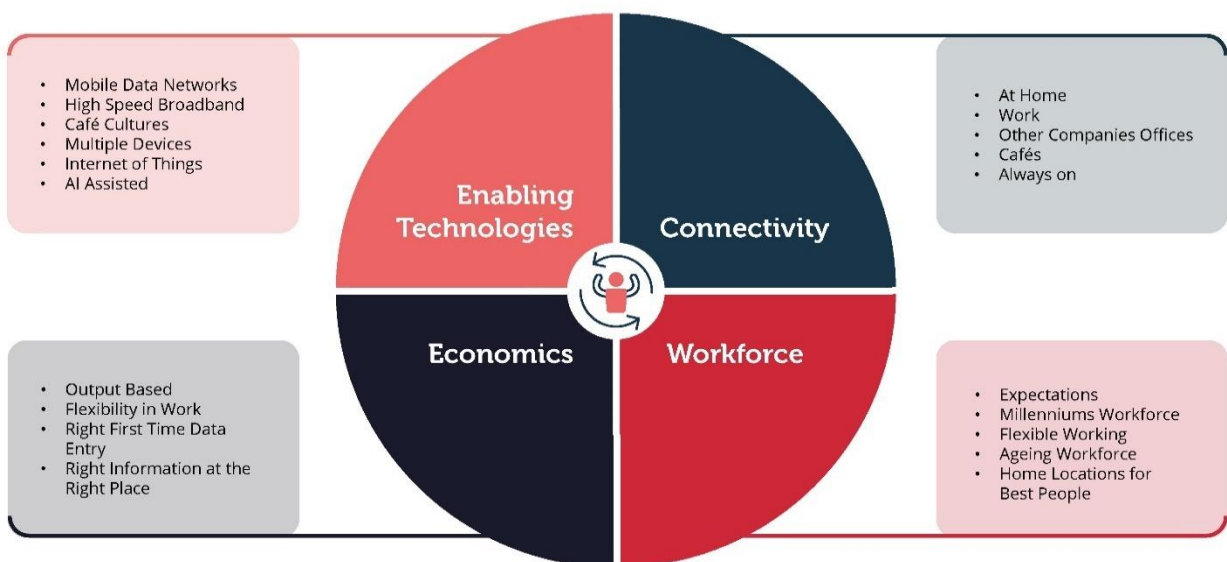


Figure 1 Enablers for Change

2.1.2. Employee Shift

The worker of the not too distant future will want and need a flexible working environment. To operate within society, it will be necessary to have working practices that allow the **work from anywhere** with high availability culture, even though many will still want and need the social aspects of an office to go to. Already the Millennial generation is unused to emails, having been brought up on mobile technology. Technologies are significantly shifting within generations and these have direct implications on the strategic direction and impact on support. To attract and retain good employees will require the implementation of flexible working practices and technology to suit. The ability to use **back office** information (as was) in the field will become the norm and the council will move to this as a target operating

model. Having the person that understands the situation, knows the information and can modify the data at the point of use is the most efficient method of collecting accurate and timely information.



Figure 2 Employee Shift

2.1.3. Resident Shift

Residents are used to the digital workspace and engagement. Many, perhaps most, use online booking, shopping and social tools. This shift is an area that the council needs to engage with to reduce the demands on 121 (face to face and telephone) contact that must be available for those unable to engage digitally for whatever reason. We have all become used to accessing services 24/7/365 and obtaining responses quickly or immediately. All new resident facing systems will need to have web and mobile interfaces as a requirement and we will want to ensure that data is only entered once to avoid repeating the same questions whilst improving the accuracy of the data collected. This doesn't necessitate all systems to move to high availability, however many of the interfaces into them will.

We will explore the use of social media applications for engagements that require some 121 interaction, minimising the need for either employee or resident to travel, and optimising time for both.

2.1.4. The Small Business

The businesses of today are moving rapidly into new technology for support and operation. Previous operations that were thought to be technology minimalist are now required to have significant exposure, such as through the demands of central government for taxation and record keeping, along with the demands of their customers who often want to interact electronically. Our smaller businesses can be thought of as enhanced residents in needs however, we also wish to provide them with business focused opportunities such as very fast broadband through central government initiatives.

In the same way that the Council is moving to a more flexible working pattern, the small and medium enterprises are also adopting this and those that don't will find that they become disadvantaged in the market-place. Smaller businesses were very quick to adopt mobile phone technology and so all relevant technologies can be expected to be used quickly. Most will expect their work with the council to be as simple as the day to day life of ordering online and have as little human interaction as possible. This re-enforces the digital and mobile support agenda.

2.2. Infrastructure Change

Some key headlines in Infrastructure drivers are:

- “As-a-service” consumption for everything
- The Cloud is Mainstream
- Cybersecurity remains a major concern and will continue to be a challenge
- Artificial intelligence and machine-learning-optimized applications are here and being used.

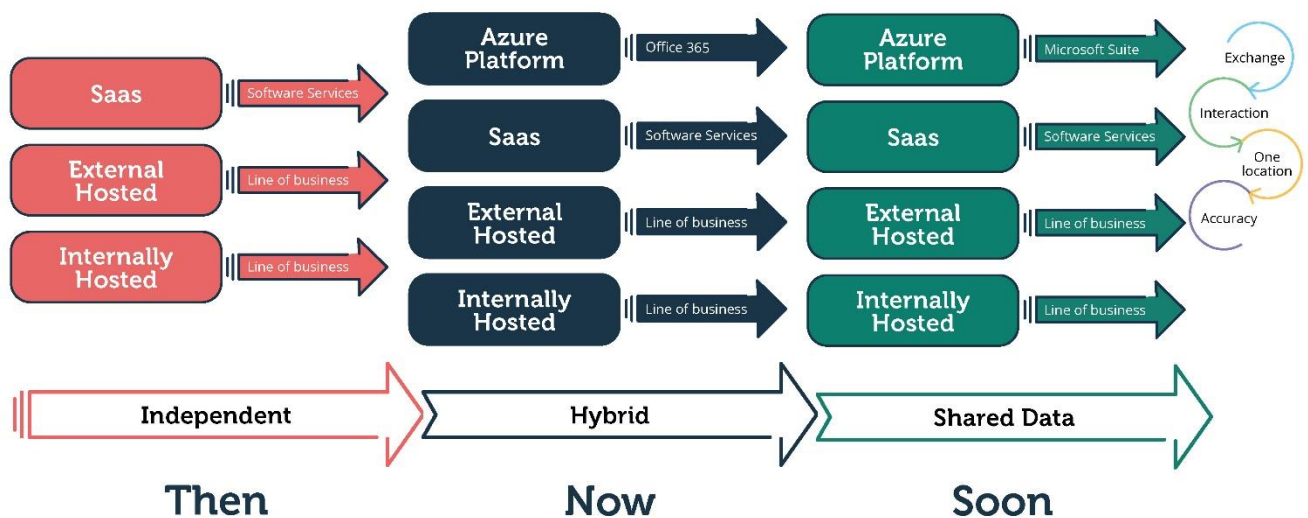


Figure 3 Move to Software as a Service and cloud-based applications

In the above diagram we show the move away from independent, locally hosted solutions to the shared infrastructure and data opportunities that cloud based services can offer. The focus is on sharing and using data, having key data stored once only and ensuring this is held securely and effectively. As more and more vendors move into Cloud or Software as

service, the focus for ICT departments is on the ability to manage data from these different systems and for the business areas to use it.

The move to a consumption based or service only model has started with the adoption in newer business applications and more recently Office365 as a platform however this is yet to be fully exploited at a user level with the opportunities it provides. It is a direction that the council is travelling in to buy the IT services it needs rather than building unique applications and internally hosting, this is therefore in alignment with industry practice. The challenge for every small council is to have enough capability to fully exploit all the opportunities that are offered in a cost effective and pragmatic manner. The third parties used for this will provide much of this intellectual and deployment capability with external checking and verification of technology strategy and direction.

Legacy systems will be modernized on a case by case basis. It is expected over time that the Line of Business systems that require hosting on specific infrastructure will gradually be phased out as vendors move to SaaS and Cloud platforms. The council will always prefer a SaaS solution if financially neutral or beneficial. As this is an ongoing activity and not high priority the council IT infrastructure is likely to remain a hybrid approach, however the internally hosted footprint will reduce.

3. Digital Agenda

3.1. Today's Position

Today, many individuals interact with businesses and governments digitally before any other point of engagement. It is the preferred method of contact for most millennials who will see a telephone call as a last resort and even an email to be avoided. Many retired individuals are significant users of technology now that there is access to easy on-line banking, on-line shopping / delivery, Amazon, Uber and repeat prescriptions etc. The thought of digital services being the domain of a younger generation have gone and digital engagement is ubiquitous. Digital expectations will only increase the pressure for ensuring all services are digitally enabled.

3.2. Challenges

The challenges are known, clear and include: -

- **Funding reductions and consequential reductions in spending** which have resulted in reductions to spending potential of up to 60% in some councils — more than any other part of the public sector.
- **Growing demands** from an ageing population and taking on responsibilities from central government and other public organisations.
- **Devolution and new powers** which are creating new opportunities for integration across public service boundaries at a local level, reflecting local needs and population profiles.
- **Changing expectations** for services to be more coherent, customer friendly and accessible, 'always on' and responsive to individual needs and preferences.
- **Changing democracy** means more people having a voice, being informed and having a real influence over local and national policy.
- **Digital** carries the potential to fundamentally change how services are designed and delivered, in partnerships with others and putting the user in control.

3.3. Digital Imperatives

Our Digital Imperatives are: -

- **Customer, Partner and Business Engagement**
 - Tell us once
 - Engage me and make me part of the team
 - Deal with me in the way I choose (online/mobile 24/7/365)
- **Information and Insight**
 - Right Information – Right Place
 - Build once and share widely
 - Predict and Prevent
- **Simplify, Standardise and Share**
 - Business capacity and capabilities

4. ICT Opportunities

4.1. Desktop as a Service (DaaS)

DaaS offers greater flexibility, mobility, and general ease-of-experience for virtual desktop users and administrators. Employees can work from anywhere they wish on any device they like.

In many instances, DaaS allows users to access their desktops on less expensive and less powerful devices, such as older computers, thin clients or smart phones, as the computing power to run the desktop service comes from the data centre servers. This could allow for longer replacement periods for refresh cycles of the desktops and laptops. By having the desktop served from a central, cloud operation we can take advantage of additional security features that will be bought as part of the service.

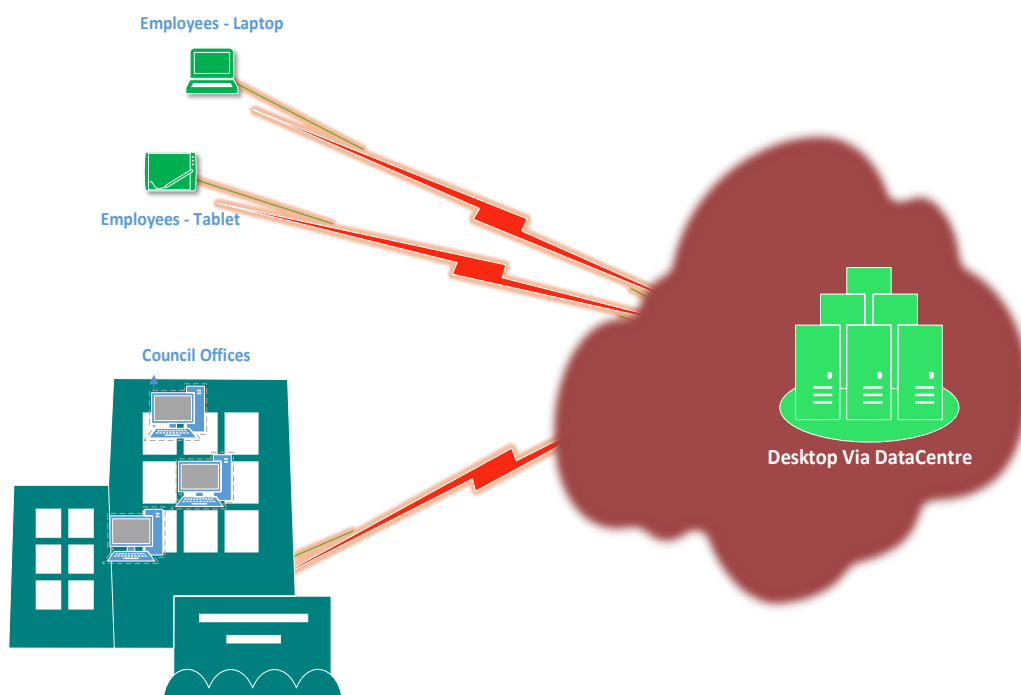


Figure 4 Desktop as a Service Diagram

DaaS enables workers to BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) employees can use any device at their disposal to log on to their desktop and still have a secure environment. This also applies with virtual smartphone environments.

DaaS will therefore be explored to determine the suitability and effectiveness for the Council.

4.2. Internet of Things

This is the Internet of computing devices embedded in everyday objects, enabling them to send and receive data.

We are seeing devices such as Hive (Heating Control), Alexa, Google Home and other automation devices aimed at users in the home becoming common place. With an ageing population and demands on social care it is prudent to look at the initiatives in this area and review suitability for the Council agenda. With wearables such as Fitbit, Apple watches etc

mobility and fitness monitoring can be performed in a virtual workspace allowing opportunities in care that are presently cost prohibitive but are increasingly required with legislative changes. To counter the advantages are the security issues present for such devices and we must be mindful of the typical deployment and access to sensitive information these devices are likely to have. The UK government has recently issued revised guidelines and regulations that aim to make this area better, however it is difficult to imagine a future where household interfaces and automations aren't ubiquitous and will have significant opportunity for an ageing demographic.

4.3. Web development and Artificial Intelligence

During 2020 much of the AI applications will be through providers of as-a-service platforms, which can allow us to feed in our own data and pay for the algorithms or compute resources as we use them. Also, in 2020, we will see wider adoption and a growing pool of providers that are likely to start offering more tailored applications and services for specific or specialized tasks. This will mean opportunities to exploit this technology will come at reduced pricing.

4.3.1. Better Reply Predictions

The use of AI can produce better reply predictions and "chat bots" can predict customer reactions in a successful way. Using these bots, it's possible for machines to decipher human emotions as communication can be made more natural than automated prebuilt response. It is possible to create websites or web-enabled devices using artificial intelligence that will communicate with some emulated emotions in an effective manner. We are seeing this technology being applied in local government as an interface into such things as reporting of waste dumping where some pre-analysis can create the right categorisation. It will be necessary to partner with appropriate organisations to get best value and we will do this by liaising with other local authorities who have implemented this technology.

4.3.2. Website Content

In line with current thinking and landing page redesign, we will look at content page formats and consider using latest approaches on content separation and continuing the split screen trend, break up the content into more parts, resulting in an array of differently sized squares and rectangles that are separated by colour. This style can express several messages at once, in an orderly and cohesive manner that should help with end user understanding and guidance to the right information.

The website will continue to be thought of as part of the digital interface for the council acknowledging the significant wish to use of mobiles to access technology.

5. Protecting Our Data

Cyber security will continue to be a significant item of risk in every Organisation. The challenges will grow as access to sophisticated cyber-attack toolsets becomes easier for criminals and those just interested in testing their skills. With Ransomware attacks on commercial organisations increasing it is expected that at some time a renewed interest in perceived weaker organisation will happen.

The use of cloud and 3rd party specialist support will be necessary and the investment these organisations have made, and continue to make in their infrastructure, would provide ongoing assurance of a reasonable level of security above that achievable by the council if it acted independently. This is an additional driver to reducing internally managed infrastructure. The investment and review of security is a balanced approach between cost and consequence of breaches and must be continually reviewed.

Cyber Security is a many layered methodology, involving; technology for boundary protection, Firewalls, end point protection with Malware software on the end user computer and infrastructure components protecting the Network. Monitoring of systems for unusual activity by software, increasing this is AI, and unusual user behaviour and ensuring only authorised individuals have access to the appropriate systems is necessary for reducing the risk of a breach, however it must be recognised that no system can guarantee full protection. The council will therefore have procedures and policies in place for data breach and security events.

The Council will:

- Have effective governance arrangements, systems and resources in place to protect data and make publicly accessible data as easy to access as possible.
- Consider implementing modern electronic document record management systems (EDRMS) integrated with collaborative portals, where cost-effective.
- Pro-actively monitor data security to safeguard the Council's information and systems.

When commissioning systems we will consider information security under the following general categories:

- Confidentiality - information should only be seen by people who are authorised to access it.
- Integrity – information should only be modified by people who are authorised to do so.
- Availability - information should be available when needed (problems or attacks shouldn't stop us getting information from the system).
- Non-repudiation - nothing should happen in a system that can't be traced back to a responsible person.

6. IT and Environmental Sustainability

Environmental criteria will be considered for all new systems and applications including energy consumption and robust energy management facilities. The move to cloud services and reducing the internal hosting infrastructure will reduce the environmental impact and the increasing regulation and demands in this area. The total cost of ownership, including energy and disposal costs, over the lifecycle of a device or system, not just the procurement cost will be considered. Where possible, efforts will also be made to reduce the total cost of ownership through leveraging existing applications and negotiating with suppliers.

“Paper-light” environments in which documents are created, shared and stored electronically rather than in paper format will be further promoted by leveraging the Office 365 deployment. The full use of this enabling technology will reduce travel, minimise paper wastage and promote higher levels of collaboration. This in turn will help to reduce the Carbon Footprint of the Council.

The Council will continue to optimise its application portfolio. Only those applications that are essential to running the organisation will be maintained. Application Lifecycle Management will continue to be applied to ensure that for all systems there are reviews in place to identify future development, replacement or cessation requirements.

The promotion and uptake of flexible working technology will reduce the need for unnecessary travel thereby contributing to the Council’s reduction in carbon footprint. With the ability to work anywhere suitable employees will benefit from the flexible approach to work and this will better support business continuity activities.

The use of existing applications and hardware will be maximised including reuse where possible and equipment disposal will meet the Waste Electrical & Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Directive. Where possible, third sector organisations are used for recycling of legacy equipment.

Improvements will continue to be made to the efficiency of existing servers to ensure resilience and performance, deploying server virtualisation.

A printing strategy will reduce the need for print through adoption of electronic-only media, extending the use of our multi-function networked device suite, reducing the local and networked printer estate and moving towards the ‘paperless’ office.

Best value ICT technical support and procurement frameworks will continue to be used.

Recycled products will be used wherever feasible.

7. Conclusions

Technology shifts happening faster and with shorter lifespans challenge the ability of mid-size organisations to implement and support. There are however trends that enable these shifts. The move to Cloud has now become common, the concept of an always on culture is now expected and flexible working is considered.

Adopting the most efficient and flexible way to engage with employees and residents, a greater demand for 24/7/365 access by residents and businesses and engagement having a digital form is a given. Where possible the continued use of cloud technologies enables this approach however not all services, especially some specialist areas, are able to be offered to this level in a cost-effective manner.

8. Our Action Plan

| Objective | Actions | Responsibility | Resources | Date | Expected Outcome | RAG |
|--|---|------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------|--|-----|
| Strategic Aim 1: Improvements in customer engagement and service and the associated costs | | | | | | |
| Enable self-service and minimise the need for 121 personal interaction. | All new resident facing systems will need to have web and mobile interfaces as a requirement. | OMT Service Management | OMT Service Management | Ongoing | Increased resident access to services. 24/7/365 access to services. | |
| | Explore the use of social media applications for engagements that require some 121 interaction. | ICT Steering Group | ICT Steering Group ICT Manager | Ongoing | Minimising travel and optimising time for both Council and resident. | |
| | Continuous review and improvement of our website - as part of the digital interface for the Council acknowledging the significant wish to use mobile technology to access services. | ICT Steering Group | ICT Steering Group ICT Manager | Ongoing | Increased resident access to services. 24/7/365 access to services. | |

| Objective | Actions | Responsibility | Resources | Date | Expected Outcome | RAG |
|---|---|--------------------|------------------------|---------|---|-----|
| Strategic Aim 2: Improvements in operational agility and speed of change | | | | | | |
| Reduce internal infrastructure | <p>Move to cloud services / hosted services.</p> <p>Legacy systems will be modernised on a case by case basis.</p> <p>Further exploit the consumption based or service only model at a user level with the opportunities it provides.</p> | ICT Steering Group | OMT Service Management | Ongoing | <p>Increased resilience and business continuity.</p> <p>Reduced cost.</p> | |
| Increase portability and effectiveness of mobile working | The utilisation of SMART devices (portability in the field devices increasing efficiency and throughput). | ICT Steering Group | OMT Service Management | Ongoing | <p>More efficient working practices.</p> <p>Officer remote access to core systems and data – speeding up processes and reducing need to be in the office.</p> | |

| Objective | Actions | Responsibility | Resources | Date | Expected Outcome | RAG |
|--|---|--------------------|-------------|-------------|---|-----|
| | Implementation of "Always on" which will streamline access to corporate systems by mobile workers. | Capita | Capita | In-progress | Easier access to the corporate network. | |
| Enable "employee shift", - mobile, flexible workforce. | <p>Employ technologies which enable a mobile, flexible workforce and move towards a "work from anywhere" culture.</p> <p>Implementation of Daas (employees can work from anywhere they wish on any device they like).</p> | ICT Steering Group | ICT Manager | Ongoing | <p>Flexible working for employees.</p> <p>More attractive employment.</p> <p>Flexible service delivery for the Council.</p> | |

| Strategic Aim 3: Improvements in decision making, organisation efficiency and service delivery. | | | | | | |
|--|---|--------------------|------------------------|---------|---|--|
| Automation of functions | Consider where appropriate the use of automation devices and explore the use of artificial intelligence | ICT Steering Group | OMT Service Management | Ongoing | Speed up service delivery. Reduce administration and cost. | |
| Enhance collaborative working | Explore new technologies that enable different, more collaborative and flexible ways of working smarter that ultimately “make life easier” (integration with Office applications) | ICT Steering Group | OMT Service Management | Ongoing | Improve processes and working practices. Potential to ensure that data is only entered once. | |

| Strategic Aim 4: Ensure the data held in our systems is protected from cyber-attack but easily accessible when required | | | | | | |
|--|---|--------------------|--|---------|--|--|
| Strong and effective IT governance arrangements | Have effective governance arrangements, systems and resources in place to protect data and make publicly accessible data as easy to access as possible. | ICT Manager | ICT Steering Group OMT Service Management | Ongoing | Resident self-serve and 24/7/365 access to information. | |
| Modern records storage and management | Consider implementing modern electronic document record management systems (EDRMS) integrated with collaborative portals, where cost-effective. | ICT Steering Group | ICT Steering Group OMT Service Management | Ongoing | Increased efficiency and accuracy of information held. Reduced storage footprint. | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|--|---------------------|--|---------|--|--|
| Effective monitoring of data security arrangements | Pro-actively monitor data security to safeguard the Council's information and systems. | ICT Manager | ICT Contractor ICT Steering Group OMT Service Management | Ongoing | Secure systems. No data breaches. | |
| Strategic Aim 5: Use IT as a driver for reducing the carbon footprint of the Council | | | | | | |
| Operate a "paper-light" environment | Maximise electronic storage and sharing of documents. | ICT Steering Group | OMT Service Management | Ongoing | Supports remote and mobile working and a flexible workforce. Efficient document management. Reduction in necessary office footprint. | |
| Maximise recycling and reuse of ITC hardware | ICT asset management and disposal programme | IT service provider | ICT Steering Group | Ongoing | Clarity of approach towards ITC asset management and disposal | |
| | Consideration to scheme to offer legacy equipment to third sector | IT service provider | ICT Steering Group IT service provider | TBC | Understanding if this is a viable approach to reuse of legacy equipment | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|--------------------|------------------------|-----|--|--|
| Flexible technology to reduce the need for travel | Feasibility study of moving towards a “virtual meeting environment” | ICT Steering Group | OMT Service Management | TBC | Technology-enabled approach to virtual meetings and cultural acceptance that physical presence is not always required to participate effectively | |
|---|---|--------------------|------------------------|-----|--|--|

9. Business Services Functions and Drivers

This section summarises the business services, functions and drivers put forward by service areas across the Council and provides an analysis of current service aspirations to be supported by this strategy.

9.1. COMMUNITY SERVICES AND LEISURE

The Leisure and Community Services Team operate Waterside Farm Leisure Centre, and Runnymede Leisure Centre, Paddocks Community Centre, Runnymede Hall and Woodside Hall. They perform the following core processes:

- Membership Management
- Marketing of Services and Facilities
- Activity and Event Management
- Customer Communication
- Community Weddings
- Facilities Management of the two locations (mix of their effort. Facilities within the council and private contractors, but in the main done by the team)
- Working to promote and improve health and wellbeing with external partners (example NHS, Sport England, and Active Essex)
- Training Centre (Various training courses are provided) Retail provision of goods and drinks (coffee bar)

New Market Pressures:

- Both Leisure Centres have been refurbished with a dry side extension added at Runnymede. Both the leisure centres are very popular and there a combined membership level of 3,100. The number of licenses available to staff is 102 and this is proving problematic. An additional 21, 23 licenses would allow all required access to staff at busy times.
- The investment in the Leisure Centre needs to be maximised. Marketing activities will target income generating activities. The team acquired Adobe Creative Suite version 6 to produce marketing materials. A new Wireless network and 50MB Fibre link have been put in place at Waterside Leisure Centre to ease bandwidth issues and provide customer Wi-Fi.
- With the increased usage of the Leisure Centres any downtime of systems has an increased impact. Manual procedures can be adopted when a system fails but data must be manually entered later. Currently there is no IT evening/weekend support provided by Capita. An option is available for Gladstone to host our services to reduce the possibility of downtimes, and the need for Capita support especially on weekends, albeit at an additional cost to the service. The option for Gladstone to host our services, will reduce the need to pay to upgrade Gladstone in the longer term, resulting in some

operational savings, but it will ultimately cost more per annum for Gladstone to host our services.

- The Leisure Centres launched a new online booking system in 2018 and would like to also launch mobile payment apps, called mobile pro to allow customers to access service information such as timetables, activities on offer, events, special offers and planned disruption to operations, and to improve access for both members and non-members to book activities online, and to join one of their many membership packages. Currently access via a mobile device is limited, and the service needs to improve this functionality to keep pace with how customers want to access our service information, and to book activities without face to face or over the phone interaction.
- The leisure service needs to keep pace with new fitness trends, especially how customers want to track their workouts and health data including connectively between the fitness team and paying customers to enhance the overall customer experience, with improvements in both customer retention, and membership sales likely. Solutions such as MYZONE, SWIMTAG, HALO, BODITRAX scanners and Virtual Group Exercise classes will improve this connectively and will enhance the customer experience.
- The leisure service launched a new HSE tablet inspection system in 2019, called I-Auditor, and wishes to launch this system across Community Halls, however mobile devices are required.
- Community Halls currently has no booking management system in place, and such a solution will be very beneficial in the future.

Both Leisure and Community Halls has no effective sales lead solution in place, with Gladstone MRM offering such a solution within Leisure's existing booking management system soon. However, Community Halls will need to adopt Gladstone as their preferred booking management solution provider to utilise the same function as the leisure service, which will also include other operational advantages and sharing of resources across both the Leisure and Community Service teams.

9.2. CONTRACT MANAGEMENT AND STREET SCENE

Key functions:

- Street cleaning and the maintenance of parks and open spaces are contracted out to a private provider Pinnacle. The Contract Management & Street Scene Team undertakes the following core operations:
- Performance of Street Inspections and grading
- Serving notices of issues to the contractor(s) (After discovery during inspection or reported by the public)
- Tracking notice resolution and calculating penalties
- Performing Vehicle Searches (abandoned vehicles and crime case investigation)
- Investigating environmental crimes (evidence and case passed to legal to act)
- Validation of Fees for Cemeteries (Outsourced to Basildon but spreadsheet and cheque validated and processed by Castle Point)
- Compilation of road mileage and open space area for contract payment terms
- Cemetery payment validation (Cemetery administration is outsourced to Basildon)

New Market Pressures:

- Street cleaning and park maintenance is outsourced to a private provider. Monitoring performance and communicating incidents is performed manually. This is an administration overhead. An application based in the cloud, where information could be shared and updated, would improve efficiency. Potentially a SharePoint or Open Source application could be used.
- Basildon administers all Crematorium activities on behalf of Castle Point. This is administered via a spreadsheet which is e-mailed to Castle Point for validation of charges. Again, this is a very manual process. Potentially a SharePoint or Open Source application could be used.

9.3. ENVIRONMENT OPERATIONAL SERVICES

Environment Operational Services breaks down organisationally into four sub departments:

- Environmental Rangers
- Waste Management / Vehicles
- Building Cleaning
- Parking

Key Functions:

Management of Refuse and Recycling Vehicles (asset management and maintenance)
Collection and Disposal of Rubbish and Recycling (Household, Trade and Bulky Items)
Financial Management of rubbish Disposal and Recycling.

- Procurement of all Environment materials (Vehicle Parts, Uniforms, Tools...)
- Refuse and Recycling staff time sheeting
- Invoicing and Payment Management of contractors
- Management of Open Spaces, Sports Pitches allotments
- Inspections and maintenance
- Facilities booking
- Provision of cleaning services for buildings and open spaces (playgrounds, buildings, public toilets...)
- Maintenance of Car Park Facilities (Surfaces, Ticket Machines, Signage). Parking Enforcement and appeals is outsourced to South Essex Parking Partnership at Chelmsford.
- Reconciliation of Ticket Machine takings collected by Jade Security Services Ltd (Cash collection is outsourced to Jade Security Services Ltd)

New Market Pressures:

- Car parking activities in the main are outsourced to Jade Security Services Ltd and South Essex Parking Partnership. Cash collection reconciliation is very manual. Improved automation of this process would deliver efficiencies. Jade Security Services Ltd should be consulted and a better solution sought.

- Car parking ticket machines in operation are relatively new. They facilitate cashless parking by credit/debit card but not by mobile phone.
- Vehicle Management activities are very manual. Most of the information is managed by data in spreadsheets. Castle Point is considering offering vehicle maintenance services to the open market. This venture into private enterprise may require the implementation of management systems.

9.4. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Key Functions:

- Food Safety
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Environment Protection
- Private Sector Housing
- Communicable Disease Control
- Licensing
- Pest Control Services.

Within these domains the Team:

- Performs proactive inspections
- Investigates complaints
- Prepares cases for prosecution (by Legal)
- Validates / verifies status
- Performs environmental monitoring
- Undertakes project-based work
- Performs research and administration
- Delivers Pest Control services

New Market Pressures:

- None identified

9.5. ENVIRONMENT MARKETING AND ADMINISTRATION

Key Functions:

- Finance and Procurement (Raising POs, Invoices, authorising payments and managing budgets).
- Manage Environmental Health (EH) service requests via LAGAN/UNIFORM and work instructions to staff and contractors

- Run various EH reports (UNIFORM and SQL)
- Enter EH Inspection reports carried out by inspectors
- Process Temp Events Notices and Licenses (ELMS)
- Open Spaces and Sports Field Booking management
- Manage Hall Bookings (Events and Weddings)
- Marketing Facilities and produce marketing materials
- Support for Street Scene

New Market Pressures:

- Provision of Halls and open spaces to the public generates revenue. Environment wish to increase their marketing efforts to increase revenue. An Adobe set of creative software would allow the department to produce better materials. This software is currently being investigated.

9.6. LEGAL SERVICES

Key Functions:

- Provision of Legal advice
- Drafting documents, agreements and reports
- Asset management (Land) including all deeds
- Management of the Contracts database (All contracts also stored)
- Finance work (internal and external for revenues)
- Performing prosecutions (Housing, Environment, Planning, Benefits)

New Market Pressures:

- Central Government's changes to Benefits leading to more internal consulting on the matter. Challenges are being made by the public.
- LEXCEL accreditation being sought (Quality mark) to enhance the service. Legal services are provided to the open market to gain revenue. The Quality Mark will help promote this service.

9.7. AUDIT

Key Functions:

The Audit Team is responsible for ensuring the Council's Governance, Risk Management and Control Framework is functioning adequately and to legislative standards. An Audit Action plan is agreed, its activities prioritised by calculated risk to the Council. Some areas such as "Finance" is audited annually other areas are audited on a less regular schedule based upon need.

The Audit function for Castle Point is delivered by Southend Council staff through a partnership arrangement.

New Market Pressures:

Southend's Audit function has started to use IDEA. This software allows data interrogation and matching. It is not currently used by this team to service Castle Point. It may be of benefit. If it was to be used a cost could be incurred. A review of the benefits of using IDEA should be undertaken.

9.8. GOVERNANCE / ELECTIONS

Key Functions:

Production of meeting agendas and minutes

Support to:

- Elected members
- Leader of the Council
- Mayor
- Chief Executive
- Strategic Director and Monitoring Officer
- Corporate Communications and Media
- Corporate Complaints / Local Government Ombudsman
- Managing FOI requests
- Registration of Elections
- Organisation/Running of Elections

New Market Pressures:

CMIS solution is being implemented

9.9. REVENUES

Key Functions:

- Billing and Collection of Local Taxation (Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates Collection) and Housing Benefit Overpayment collection
- Collection of miscellaneous income for all internal departments (Sundry Debtors); administration of periodic income and invoice administration on behalf of Revenues and Benefits
- Administration of direct debits, income, cash transfers and balances, reconciliations and suspense

New Market Pressures:

- Business Rate Retention – currently 40% of business rates collected is retained by the authority, with this potentially increasing from 2021/22 with the forthcoming local

government funding reform. Managing potential losses on appeals and maximizing revenue opportunities through identification of missing or undervalued rateable premises. Further challenged by an increase in rate avoidance schemes. New Revaluation List taking effect from 2017 combined with a new transitional relief scheme and government agenda to simplify business rate bills

- Pressure to maintain collection rates on Council Tax since the introduction of the Local Council Tax Support scheme and funding agreement with Essex County Council against a backdrop of welfare reform.
- Transformation Project to increase self-serve by customers through use of new automated technology reducing in costs of running service.

9.10. LAND CHARGES

Key Functions:

- Performance of Local Authority Searches (LAS)
- Performance of Personal Searches
- Report Production
- Invoice processing for LAS charges
- Provide Document Copies (Completion Certs...)

New Market Pressures:

None currently but a rise in the housing market would increase the number of searches being requested.

9.11. First CONTACT

Key Functions:

The First Contact Team provide first Line Contact support to the public via the phone and in person at reception. Services are provided to the following functions:

- Planning
- Environmental Health
- Environment Street Scene
- Environment Refuse & Recycling
- Environment Hall Booking
- Benefits (All)
- Revenues (Council Tax)
- Housing (Homelessness)
- All other services via General Reception and Switchboard

New Market Pressures:

Castle Point First Contact currently manage contacts, using the Verint CRM solution. This software currently does not have customer self-service, intelligent forms and a customer portal. Therefore, Castle point will be procuring a new SaaS application capable of the above, with an integrated Website (CMS) solution. An increase in online transactions would potentially allow the reduction of 1st Contact headcount.

9.12. HOUSING

Key Functions:

- Tenancy Management
- Estate Management
- Repairs and Maintenance
- Asset Management (Program and Capital works)
- Procurement
- Resident Engagement
- Housing Applications
- Contract Monitoring
- Operations that are relating to Contract Management, Repairs, Maintenance (Programme and Capital) and major service procurement is contracted out to South Essex Homes (SEH). SEH procure and manage service contracts on behalf of Castle Point. The department also manage non- technical and minor housing related contracts.

New Market Pressures:

Management of the housing estate is contracted out to SEH. However, the systems used by SEH cannot be accessed by Castle Point. Increased access to information should be negotiated. For example, the Asset Register cannot be viewed or updated. Covalent is used to jointly track milestones and KPIs.

9.13. HOUSING OPTIONS

Key Functions:

- Prevention of homelessness
- Provision of accommodation for the homeless.
- Providing housing advice and assistance

New Market Pressures:

- Increasing market rents Homelessness Reduction Bill
- Lack of affordable housing in both private and social sector

9.14. BENEFITS/PERFORMANCE & DEVELOPMENT

Benefits and Performance & Development are sub departments of the Housing & Communities organisational structure. For clarity their descriptions have been combined as they work very closely together.

Key Functions:

- Decision making in respect of Housing Benefit, Localised Council Tax Support and Discretionary Housing Payment applications.
- Decision making in respect of Housing Benefit, Localised Council Tax Support and Discretionary Housing Payment changes in circumstances.
- Payment of Benefits (multiple ways)
- Recovery of overpayments or recovery of incorrect benefit payments
- Completion and submission of statutory returns including Housing Benefit Subsidy.
- Close liaison with Internal & External Auditors.
- Performance management

Procurement support

- Business Analysis.IT Support of CIVICA OPENRevenues, Civica Automation & Civica payments: Testing, evaluation & implementation.

New Market Pressures:

Benefits legislation is continually changing e.g. Universal Credit. This places significant business burdens on the service. Additionally, the introduction of electronic datastreams between Government departments and the service places it under continual pressure, due to the quality and quantity of the data received.

9.15. FINANCE

Key Functions:

- Annual revenue and capital budget setting for the council (including involvement in efficiency savings programme)
- Annual Closure of accounts and publication of Statement of Accounts
- Monthly Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring
- Provision of payroll services (via SLA outsource via Rochford Council)
- Bank Account and Funds Management
- Management of the E-Financials solution (Accounts Receivable/ Debtors module managed by Revenues service; E-Procurement module managed by Facilities)
- Payment Processing (Suppliers weekly, Housing Benefit 2 x weekly, CT and Rates weekly)
- Provision of general financial advice and support
- Processing of Returns (Central Gov and Others) Example (grant Claims)

- Process financial aspects of housing (Right to Buy, Leaseholder Service Charging)
- Capital Accounting for the Council's Fixed Assets

New Market Pressures:

Automation of financial feed from OHMS Housing solution to eFinancials Finance Solution will reduce operational administration.

9.16. HUMAN RESOURCES

Key Functions:

- Recruitment
- Processing Variations to Contracts
- Employee Relations Casework
- Sickness Management
- Liaisons with Occupational Health
- Disclosures and Barring Checks (employees)
- Corporate Training Plan Management
- E- Learning Provision
- FOI Request processing (HR Related data requests)
- Processing Data to Payroll
- Management of the HR Policies and Handbook
- Management of Establishment Information
- Performance of Investors in People Assessments
- Management of Equality Data and participation in the Equality Working Group

New Market Pressures:

None identified.

9.17. FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

Key Functions:

Facilities Management & General Administration

- Office Building Management System (BMS)
- Caretaking service
- DX mail collections & delivery
- Mail handling and distribution (non-specific service marked post)

- Production of weekly out of hours services contact sheet
- Central office stationery, printing and photocopying recharges

Emergency Planning & Business Continuity

- Corporate Emergency Planning (EP)
- Corporate Business Continuity planning (BC)
- EP & BC training & exercising
- EP & BC internal and external promotion
- Emergency Control Centre day to day Management

Health & Safety

- Corporate Health & Safety (H&S) advisory guidance
- Development of corporate H&S policies & procedures
- Asbestos register and management & monitoring of statutory inspections for corporate buildings
- H&S training arrangements
- H&S audits & inspections
- H&S incident reporting systems administration

Procurement & Purchasing

- Central Office procurement, purchasing & invoice processing for vending machines, washroom services, and stationery
- e-Procurement & e-Portal system administration, training & development
- Procurement information & guidance on Intranet/website
- Supplier system administration
- General Procurement support
- Gas, electricity, water & sewerage utilities contracts management & invoice processing and monitoring
- Mobile & landline telephone contracts management & invoice processing (EE) & Daisy.

Reprographics & Audio visual

- Webcasting of Council meetings
- Assistance with audio/visual equipment
- Desktop publishing
- Printing jobs management

Asset Management & Sustainability

- Corporate asset management plan production
- Technical advice on corporate property maintenance

- Corporate buildings annual planned maintenance
- Corporate buildings statutory inspections & primary plant cyclical maintenance
- Assistance in Building/Land/Drainage surveys
- Office Space planning and desk moves
- Energy audits to corporate buildings, Display Energy Certificates & sustainability initiatives
- Financial management of corporate buildings Planned Preventative Maintenance programme

New Market Pressures:

None identified.

9.18. REGENERATION

Key Functions:

The core function of the Regeneration Team is to work with partners to promote, revitalise, develop, regenerate and improve Castle Point.

New Market Pressures:

None identified.

9.19. PARTNERSHIPS AND SAFER PLACES

Key Functions:

- Leading and providing guidance on community engagement and consultations
- Co-ordinating and managing the work of the Castle Point Local Strategic Partnership
- Leading the preparation and delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy
- Working with strategic partners to make Castle Point a safer and more engaging place to live

New Market Pressures:

Given increasing social pressures due to economic circumstances the likelihood of abuse towards partners or children is increasing. Team access to housing complaints and how they are recorded could be improved to allow better access to data. Improved access to partner agency systems to report concerns should also be sought.

9.20. LICENSING AND TRANSPORTATION

Key Functions:

- License Application Processing (All licenses from pubs to taxis)
- Complaints management and Licence Inspections
- Investigations and prosecutions
- Management of license consultations, license Committee Hearings and appeals

- Perform DBS checks for external staff.
- Management of information publishing via the Website (License requirements, fees..)
- Community Transport Scheme Management (dial a ride & social car scheme)
- Co-Signature for RIPA (surveillance)

New Market Pressures:

Draft LGA Guidance on Locally Set Fees advises all licenses should be available online with a payment mechanism. Castle Point currently cannot process all applications online (Taxis and scrap metal for example cannot be applied for online)

9.21. PLANNING POLICY

Key Functions:

- Development of the Castle Point New Local Plan
- Undertaking development and policy surveys
- Data Analysis (Excel)
- Report Production (Word)
- Policy Development (Objective)
- Preparation of maps (GGP)
- Provide Policy Advice
- Consult with other Councils (Duty to Corporate)
- Perform Consultations (Objective)
- Review and analyse development viability
- Perform Policy Monitoring (Excel Spreadsheet)
- Provide support for large plans and appeals
- Web publishing of policies and surveys
- Present to the public and the Council (PowerPoint and Photos)

New Market Pressures:

Agreement of the Castle Point Local Development Plan.

9.22. PLANNING DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

Key Functions:

- Pre-Application Processing
- Application Processing
- Application Validation
- Consultation Management
- Appeal Management

- Site Visit Management
- Decision Making and Notice Publication
- S106 Agreement Management (the cross over between DC and Legal)
- Recording Complaints
- Fact Finding and Resolving Minor Case
- Legal Enforcement

Historic Document Retrieval Service/Requests

New Market Pressures:

- Agreement of the Castle Point Local Development Plan.
- Volumes of applications have remained relatively high.
- New “Permitted Building” (PB) has increased application numbers going forward. PB applications must be processed within 43 days or the application is automatically approved.

9.23. PLANNING BUILDING CONTROL

Key Functions:

- Validate Application

Site Visit Management

- Site / Building Monitoring
- Agreement of Building Regulations
- Fact Finding and Resolving Minor Case
- Legal Enforcement

New Market Pressures:

Agreement of the Castle Point Local Development Plan

9.24. 24 Month Plan

Below is a high-level 24-month view of the areas of change that are understood at this time. Any work will require the appropriate business cases to be raised as normal.

Business unit information was gathered as part of the recent service reviews and will be reviewed with each business area throughout the period.

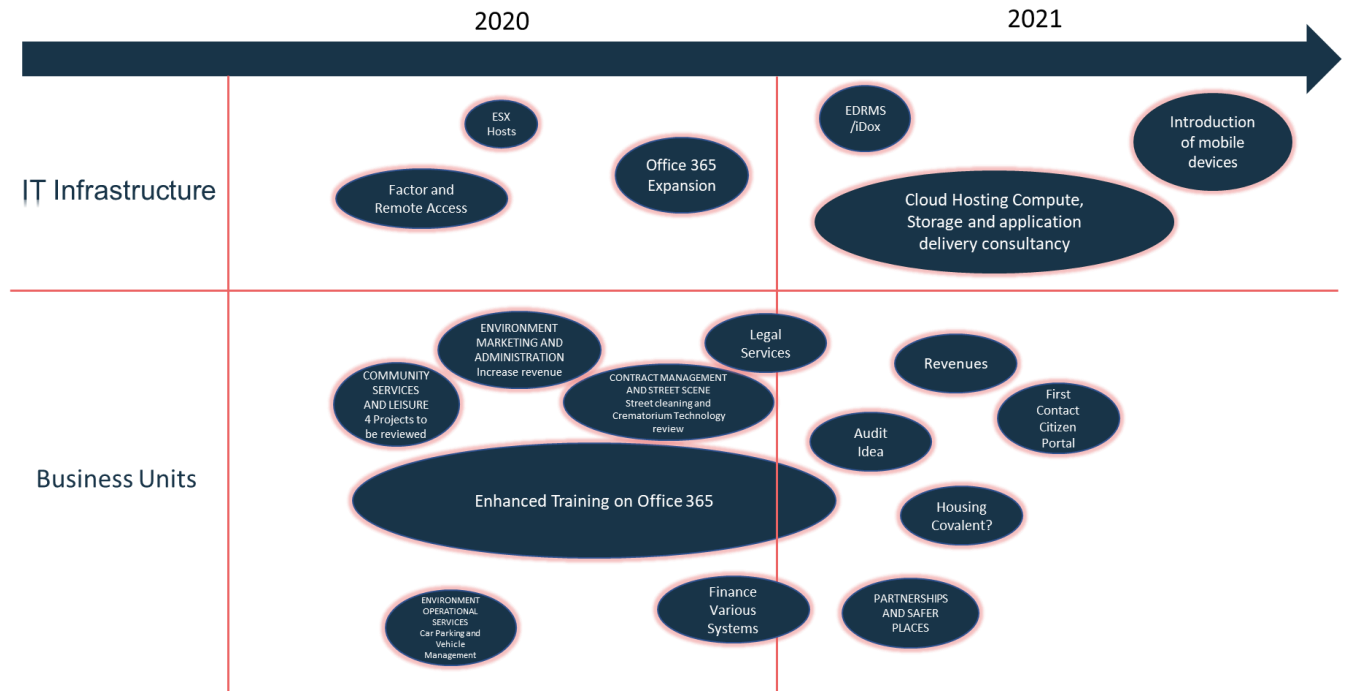


Figure 5 High Level 24 Month Plan