



## Havant Borough Council and East Hampshire District Council

# DIGITAL STRATEGY 2020-2024

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# 1. Executive Summary

## The aim of this strategy:

To create a 'digital council' with digitally 'savvy' staff and councillors and services designed to be accessible and convenient for our customers.

We are signed-up to the **Local Digital Declaration**. This is about us working with central government and other local authorities to:

- Design services that best meet the needs of our residents.
- Challenge the technology market to offer the flexible tools and services we need.
- Protect residents' privacy and security.
- Deliver better value for money.

## Why do we need a digital strategy?

Customers expect to do things online when it is convenient to them. They are used to operating in a 24/7 world when they access other services e.g. bank accounts.

According to an Ofcom study, in 2018 72 per cent of us accessed the internet via our mobile phones.

Our websites are growing as more customers expect to access their services online. Between 2017 and 2019 EHDC's web traffic increased by 217,000 visits and HBC's by 180,000.

Digital is becoming the norm in many areas of our lives. As councils we have committed to design our services in line with the needs of our own customers, as laid out in the Customer Access Policy.

## Our approach to creating a digital council can be summarised as:

- ✓ **Digital by default:** if it can be done digitally then it should be. We will invest in our websites and our online channels to meet residents' needs and then target our resources more effectively to help those who cannot access digital channels.
- ✓ **Customer first:** using insight we will better understand our customers' needs and design simple and effective services to meet them.
- ✓ **Invest in digital:** if it makes customers' lives easier and is cost effective (with a business case to demonstrate this) then we will invest to future-proof our systems.
- ✓ **Customer convenience:** we will redesign services so they are convenient to our customers (i.e. available 24/7 - not just in office hours).

- ✓ **Council in the cloud:** we will use cloud-based systems, where possible, to increase access, reliability and versatility. This will allow staff and councillors to work more flexibly.
- ✓ **Digital savvy:** we will create a 'digital mindset' with staff and councillors so they are confident and able to use self-serve systems.
- ✓ **Collaborating:** we will work with partners to embrace new technology, making our services more effective and efficient.
- ✓ **Pursue funding opportunities:** we are already part of a joint local digital fund application to help local authorities work with customers to transform our services to become digital.
- ✓ **Digital environment:** we are creating a 'paper-lite' environment to help reduce our carbon footprint and reduce fixed workspaces so we can work in a more flexible environment to meet customer needs.
- ✓ **Safe and secure:** we will ensure our services are secure and compliant with data protection and other regulations.

## 2. An Introduction to Digital

'Digital' is a critical transformation tool for the councils and our customers. Digital is a way of '*doing*' things. It looks to:

- Unlock value.
- Use current and new capabilities to deliver the best possible customer experience.
- Establish a Digital mindset and tools that connect devices, data and people.

Digital will create the conditions to provide dramatic improvements in service delivery; enable more transparent, customer-focused services; drive efficiencies and form part of wider council strategies, such as regeneration.

### 2.1. Drivers for Digital

We recognise that our customers expect more from our public services – for some time they have been living in a world where:

- Use of social media is a given.
- Data provides the opportunity for demand-led, evidence-based service design.
- Smart technology, such as voice-activated personal assistants like Amazon's Alexa sets high expectations around easy self-service and quick one-step fixes.

- Customers increasingly expect services to be available 24/7.
- Cloud-hosted platforms and software provide an opportunity to move away from costly, locally-hosted solutions towards better value, access and service reliability.

Market research<sup>1</sup> shows local government's main ambitions are to optimise operations, improve the customer experience and to transform services. Conversely the top barriers to this are budget constraints, lack of digital agility and cultural issues. Unsurprisingly, this is comparable to our councils' position and provides the backdrop to the formulation of our digital planning.

Excellent service design, based around customer need and want, is one way to meet customer expectations. However, the most effective way of transforming our services is through harnessing existing and emerging technologies. This Digital Strategy will detail how this can be achieved.

### 3. Our Digital Vision – The Digital Transformation Design Principles

These 19 guiding principles will help the council achieve Digital transformation by 2024. The council will also remain flexible to the changing and fast-paced technological and customer service landscape.

#### Digital Design:

- Digital by Default** — If a process or service can be digitised, it should be. Each change should aim for the highest proportion of people to move from traditional to digital channels. Bearing in mind our resident demographics, we should be careful that Digital by Default does not create exclusion.
- Embedding Digital Design in the Transformation Framework** — The councils will apply Digital as part of the established Transformation Framework (Appendix A). This will ensure data is shared across services and that outwardly 'Digital' services are fully automated and not reliant on manual or unnecessary processes.
- Redesign via Customer Insight** — Using evidence of our customers' needs, service use and customer journeys, we will establish the current gaps in service provision and opportunities for improvement. Services and communications must be targeted to provide customers with the right content at the right time. We will identify easy ways for our customers to access services, while trying to reduce the cost of delivery.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.pwc.co.uk/industries/government-public-sector/local-government/insights/local-state-we-are-in-2019.html>

## For our Customers:

- d) **Efficient and Simple Design** — Good digital design will provide tangible improvements to the customer’s experience and the efficient operation of the councils’ services.
- e) **Enabling Customer Digital Access** — Services will be designed around delivering what the customer needs when they need it. Shifting services away from office hours, face-to-face contact and telephone-based services toward automation will allow customers to use our services 24/7.
- f) **Building Digital Trust** — Customers will access secure systems to complete online transactions in a simple, user-friendly and privacy-friendly way. Where appropriate, we will collaborate and consult with our customers to ensure our offer is ‘just right’.
- g) **Data as an Asset** — Data will be analysed to inform decisions and build customer profiles. Data will be anonymised and shared with the community so it can be used in innovative ways. Data will be held securely and used in line with Data Protection legislation and GDPR and our data retention schedules.

## Via Systems & Infrastructure:

- h) **Digital Security** — Security will be paramount across our digital plans. We will work with our IT service providers, public sector partners and specialist agencies, such as the National Cyber Security Centre, to ensure arrangements are sound and proportionate to the level of threat.
- i) **The Council in the Cloud** — We will move to cloud-based technologies, which will lower costs and improve system access and reliability.
- j) **Open, and Flexible Systems** — When it comes to investment, systems will use open technical standards, be inter-operable and scalable. These will be steadfast procurement criteria for all new solutions.
- k) **Digital Investment** — Our application of Digital must be pragmatic, with decisions based on businesses cases and clear benefits to the customer and the councils. Digital change requires investment. The cost benefit analysis must reflect the fact that investment can save the council money.
- l) **Follow our Commitment to the Local Digital Declaration** — We will play our part in ‘fixing the national plumbing’ across the public sector, using the ‘Technology Code of Practice<sup>2</sup>’ when we implement our systems.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/technology-code-of-practice/technology-code-of-practice>

### Across the Organisation:

- m) **A Digital Mindset** — Culturally, our organisations must embrace Digital as the standard way of working. Staff should think digital-first and have the confidence to self-serve and self-fix. Excellent workspace design and IT tools can remove the reliance on traditional office desk arrangements.
- n) **Funding Opportunities** — The councils will pursue national funding opportunities. For example, the councils were recently part of a joint Local Digital Fund Application to help local authorities successfully implement transformation to digital systems.
- o) **Digital Workstyles** — Officers and councillors must have the equipment they require to work in a flexible manner and, as part of a ‘paper-lite’ environment, be less dependent on a fixed workspace. Digital will ensure that modern ways of working can be utilised to full effect to support individuals and teams.

### In Partnership:

- p) **Innovation and Collaboration** — The councils will continue to be ambitious and innovative with new technology. We will continue to be early adopters, reaching out to peers and networks to harness technologies and ideas, and to sharing the benefits with partners.
- q) **Impact on Place** — East Hampshire is building on the concept of Whitehill & Bordon as a ‘connected town’ and the regeneration strategies for that area. Similar opportunities will be pursued through the Regeneration Strategy of Havant Borough where we will harness existing and emerging technologies alongside our development and sector partners to enable our residents, visitors and our local businesses to work and live well in the Digital Age.
- r) **Partnership** – We will work with all our third-party providers and partners to deliver the shared infrastructure needed to create economies of scale and accommodate growth.
- s) **Digital Responsibility** — In the ‘Digital Age’ we must play our part in combatting the Climate Emergency that our energy-driven technologies and public services contribute towards. We will choose technology partners who share this sense of responsibility.

## 4. Our Digital Starting Point in 2019

In 2019/20 the council implemented a variety of flexible infrastructure projects. Working with our technology partners we are confident we understand our digital opportunities and our key strengths at an organisational and technical level.

For example, East Hampshire has increased calls capacity and system stability to support the new waste contract, automating missed bin notifications. East Hampshire has also

increased services available on its Customer Relationship Management system (CRM) to include abandoned vehicles and domestic nuisance complaints. Both councils have instigated video conferencing for all staff to avoid unnecessary travel, free up staff time and reduce our effect on the environment. Both councils have delivered cyber security training and have adopted digital skills assessments and training in the Organisational Development workstream.

Through our in-house IT User Group and other stakeholder groups we have identified important requirements when developing plans for IT and digital delivery. These include:

- Continuing staff and service IT engagement.
- Flexible remote-working practices and support structures.
- Increasing digital skills.
- Removing system constraints.
- Delivering reliable site infrastructure and connectivity (such as WiFi and secure print services).

We have also started reviewing older legacy data, purging duplications and unnecessary information. We have taken advantage of other Office 365 applications and hope to move the councils' intranet to SharePoint to deliver wider communications to staff.

When redesigning our systems, we use focus groups, workshops and customer journey mapping to improve the customer experience. These insights help us develop specific solutions but also inform broader principles of digital delivery. This can be seen in our development of the new shared Building Control service customer portal.

An independent review of the councils' information management systems has presented recommendations about retention, accessibility and disposal of data. This will also shape our implementation of new systems, with research into the drivers for digital, encouraging our approach to managing platforms and software (software as a service)<sup>3</sup>.

It is important to note that the Digital Strategy is designed to evolve, adapting to customer requirements and technological changes. In partnership with the councils' Customer Access Policies it will reduce, or even remove, customer digital exclusion.

## 4.1. The Role of the Core IT Service

An important factor to be managed when setting and delivering this strategy is our service model ICT, which is delivered through a third party. This should not present a significant barrier, but there are constraints in the current model which will require review and management as part of the delivery of the strategy. Research has been carried out to

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<sup>3</sup> <https://governmenttechnology.blog.gov.uk/2016/08/02/why-we-use-the-cloud-security-and-efficiency/>

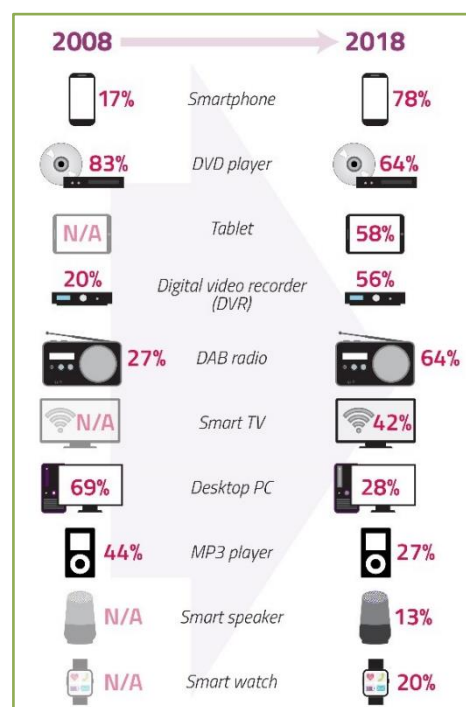
understand how the IT service can be adjusted to meet the needs of the council, and to understand Central Government strategies for IT delivery.

## 4.2. Our Customers in 2019

The Ofcom study 'A Decade of Digital Dependency'<sup>4</sup> shows a dramatic shift in behaviours, with older technologies rapidly replaced with new. The diagram on the right shows this decade of shift in our behaviours.

In 2018, 72 per cent of us were accessing the internet via our mobile phones, spending almost 2.5 hours online each day. We have catered for this change by ensuring council portals and websites operate across popular platforms.

The growth of website usage alone is significant when we compare 2017/18 to 2018/19. At EHDC, the number of website visits has increased by more than 217,000 and the total number of pages viewed has increased by more than 240,000. At HBC there is a similar trend with the increases being more than 180,000 and 300,000 respectively.



The MyEastHants Portal, driven by the council's investment in CRM technology, is equally impressive in terms of take-up, with more than 4,500 resident accounts created since January 2019. The portal offers a variety of services but fundamentally it offers users an automated one-stop self-service, including functions such as booking appointments and making payments.

This example highlights how our digital services can fulfil customer need, and that take-up for new digital channels can be quick.

The Customer Access Policy details the significant amount of work undertaken by the shared Insight Team in understanding our customers and the likelihood of them accessing services online. As a result, six different online personas have been identified. These range from *Techy Terry* and *Confident Kate* – those customers who will happily conduct all their business online – through to *Offline Olive*, who would really struggle under a wholly-digitised service approach.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/about-ofcom/latest/features-and-news/decade-of-digital-dependency>



The Tech Partnership has also carried out research into digital exclusion due to infrastructure or social factors. In East Hampshire there is a medium likelihood of digital exclusion due to 36 per cent of the district being rural. In total seven per cent of homes have under 10Mbps broadband access. 4G coverage is another challenge in rural areas.

In Havant the likelihood of overall digital exclusion is low, mainly due to better infrastructure, however a slightly higher percentage of people in Havant than East Hampshire have not been online within the last three months (over 9 per cent).

Profile analysis will be used to establish why and how customers contact the councils and identify opportunities to include customers as we become Digital by Default. We must ensure there are policies in place to reduce the numbers of those who may be digitally excluded.

The Customer Access Policy also considers those that are no longer capable of operating digitally. Our population profiles show an increased likelihood of age-related diseases that affect cognitive ability (Alzheimer's, Dementia for example).

The Customer Access Policy sets out how services should operate and how they will be guided by this Digital Strategy.

## 5. Digital Delivery to 2024

The Business Solutions Unit and the Digital Design Team will lead on the delivery of this strategy. However, success depends on all services across the councils buying in to the strategy and we will require strong ties with Organisational Development to achieve our digital mindset and cultural shift.

The newly-created HLOWLA Digital Collaboration Group and direct engagement with the Cabinet Office and MCHLG will provide a professional network to inform and improve local delivery.

### 5.1. Themes

The delivery of this strategy is layered across the following themes.

- Council in the Cloud
- Technical Design
- Security & Compliance
- Contract Management

Each of the council's digital aims, projects and actions can be attributed to these connected themes which will be delivered via the Councils transformation goals.

## 5.2. Measuring the Outcomes

In line with the Councils strategic transformation goals, the implementation of the Digital Strategy will be measured against the delivery of the following outcomes, as described in the POTI (Processes, Organisation, Technology and Information) or blueprint below.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>PROCESS</u></b> (and customer experience)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digital by Default and Cloud First in action</li> <li>• Insight-driven and evidence-based improvements to the customer experience</li> <li>• Refreshed procurement criteria</li> <li>• Channel shift taking into account customer needs and digital self-service</li> <li>• Co-design with our residents</li> <li>• Business case driven decisions</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>ORGANISATION</u></b> (and financial sustainability)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transferable skills base which enhances employee experience</li> <li>• Business case-based approach</li> <li>• Digitally-skilled workforce displaying a digital mindset.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>TECHNOLOGY</u></b> (and assets)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workstyle-driven IT solutions</li> <li>• Use the Technology Code of Practice</li> <li>• Majority of users are not dependent on fixed workspaces</li> <li>• IT arrangements are future proofed – scalable and inter-operable</li> <li>• IT Assets are rationalised</li> <li>• Evidence-based customer access models in use</li> <li>• Follow the 19 digital design guidelines</li> <li>• Automation workflow, AI (e.g. Chatbots, Workflow etc) is in use to redistribute resources to add value and/or complete complex work</li> <li>• Customers trust our online services</li> <li>• Security is monitored and adapted to resist new threats</li> <li>• Collaborative approach with partners</li> <li>• Place Shaping priorities seek out digital infrastructure (E.g. 5G infrastructure)</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>INFORMATION</u></b> (and data)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compliance</li> <li>• Single version of the truth</li> <li>• Secure data sharing</li> <li>• A paper-lite working environment</li> <li>• Reduction in electronic file storage and rationalised secure data storage</li> <li>• Appropriate access to information sets</li> <li>• Data and intelligence used by all services to inform design</li> </ul>

## 5.3. Resources

The Digital Strategy is entirely based on business cases and evidence. As such, resources for the projects will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The councils will pursue national funding opportunities where available to supplement business cases. We will seek to share costs with partners, drive return on investment as a result of released costs, undertake sound procurement and adhere to the Finance Strategy (MTFS).

Delivering these initiatives alongside staff's day-to-day roles will require flexible, cross-departmental working. It will be managed as part of the Councils transformation goals and supported by team leaders, line management and project managers.

Heads of Service will ensure that annual Business Planning complements the digital transformation guidelines and that resourcing is considered as part of this process. As is the case with our dedicated Digital Design Team resource, there will always be a corporate balance between BAU requirement and project commitment.

## 6. A Digital Opportunity

The Digital Strategy will bind all forthcoming council transformation and digital projects and initiatives to our 19 design guidelines. It will ensure our continued commitment to the Local Digital declaration and Technology Code of Practice.

As a result, the council will be less reliant on physical places and centralised system support. It will move both our colleagues and customers to a trusted way of working that is based on customer need and truly accessible 24/7.

The strategy will deliver joint-working across the sector and will enable operational resilience through the formation of a digital mindset and workstyle. It will create flexible work practices and support to ensure we make the most of becoming a Council in the Cloud.