



**Herefordshire Council
Digital Communication Strategy (R3 0)**

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1. Executive Summary

There are a number of reasons why it is important now for Herefordshire Council to consider how we will use technology moving into the future;

- More than ever before the Council needs to deliver performance improvement and cost reductions and technology can help to do this.
- Whilst our resident surveys tell us that their experience of interacting with the Council and their satisfaction with us is improving there is still significant room for improvement.
- There is now a plan agreed to implement super fast broadband so that by 2018 Herefordshire is one of the most digitally connected counties in the UK. It is important that we exploit this opportunity.
- The Council has invested in new technology over the last two years which provides a good platform upon which to build and achieve further performance improvement.

There are a number of principles that were used to inform our proposed direction of travel and how we will get there. We need to;

- Deliver services that are digital by default as this is a far more cost effective way for residents to communicate with the Council; this means we need to provide digital ways of working that residents prefer to use over and above face to face and telephone contact.
- Support our residents and workforce in the use of new technologies. This does not mean however that we will create a group of people excluded from communicating with us because they cannot use technology. We will work with these people to understand what needs to be in place so as not to exclude them.
- Continue to bring together, standardise and reduce where possible our Council owned technical infrastructure where this provides performance improvement and cost reduction.
- Continue to exploit the technology that we already have whilst also working with the new technology advancements that may provide further performance and cost reduction opportunities.
- Make sure that the information that we have is accurate and secure, observing data protection requirements as well as making the best use of it.

Using these principles to align our programme of work will achieve on-going change in the way we do things, which will have a positive impact on our residents and employees.

What does this mean for our Residents?

- Independence with residents taking greater control because they can access the information they need when they need it.
- A reduction in unnecessary contact whilst making contacting the Council and wider services as easy and stress-free as possible.
- Enabling access to our services remotely and at a time of our residents choosing.

- Provision of support to enable residents to use digital channels and the requirements of those unable to do so understood so as not to exclude them.

What does this mean for our staff?

- More flexibility in the way that they work; where they work from and when they work.
- Improved access to information which enables staff to make better decisions and provide an improved service.
- Maximised learning opportunities.
- Improved ability to handle and share resident information safely.

What does this mean for our organisation?

- Reduced costs and improved performance.
- Continued development as an agile organisation; which is flexible and can continue to move with the changing environment.
- Improved reputation, trust and confidence in Herefordshire Council.

How will this happen?

We will deliver this by concentrating on the following four key areas:

1. The ways that residents will interact with us in the future that emphasises the use of more costs effective digital channels
2. Better use of information for residents and our staff
3. How we enable staff to do their job even better and more flexibly
4. How we continue to ensure our technical infrastructure is most cost effective

Further details about these four critical delivery areas, the risks and the plan to deliver this are provided in the remainder of this report.

2. The Strategy

The following sections summarise how the key areas will be delivered.

2.1 The way that residents will interact with us in the future

Moves to a truly customer-centric approach is fundamental to our transformation journey. This is challenging because people now expect public services to be delivered with the same customer focus they can expect to experience as private consumers.

New technologies, improved information management and the right skills will support us to meet these expectations.

This is not about forcing customers online but about providing excellent online transactions. We will build products and services that work elegantly for residents using digital channels that they want to use whilst over time scaling back other ways of communicating with the Council.

Open access to data and engagement with residents is going to be critical to ensuring this works for residents. This will require us to open up all our depersonalised data and make this useful to residents. Engagement and on-going conversations with residents are also going to be critical; being responsive to their feedback in order that we continually improve.

Our new internet platform will be in place by the end April 2013 and will play a fundamental role in future communications with residents. The rollout of super fast broadband and the support to communities to use it is also very important if we're to fundamentally change the way we communicate.

We will manage the risk of excluding those who cannot use technology through a range of approaches to be linked with the Broadband rollout plan. We will work with our communities to identify opportunities to develop the required technical skills and identify those who are unable to use or access technology and provide appropriate solutions. This will include using our staff and others who have personal interaction with affected groups i.e. older people and lower income families/individuals, to assist in accessing necessary resources.

2.2 Better use of information

A clearly defined approach to information management will improve access to information, as well as the storage and destruction of irrelevant information. Better classification and rationalisation of information will enable the Council to store information safely and cost effectively. With more information stored digitally by using scanning technology, much less paper will be held and the costly disposal process will be automatic.

We have organised our approach to this work into three areas;

Holding information in context

Herefordshire Council has developed an Organisational Information Model (OIM) focused from our residents' perspective rather than the organisations. This work is in its early stages and needs building upon. This approach for example enables residents to establish an account with us and more easily transact on line whilst also ensuring that our staff have all of the appropriate information available to them to assist with decision making and improved service delivery.

Managing our information safely

Herefordshire Council is committed to being transparent and open in how it delivers services. However we also need to ensure that access to information is managed within legal boundaries and balances competing human rights for example around individual privacy and our statutory obligations. We will always be clear about how we will use and share any information that we collect. This is linked to our Organisational Information Model above requiring different levels of access to personal information. We will start by opening up our depersonalised information and making it more relevant to residents. There are a significant number of standards that we need to take account of;

- Data Protection Act 1998
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Environmental Information Regulations Act
- Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulation (PECR)
- Public Records Act
- Protection of Freedoms Act
- Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act
- Human Rights Act
- Common Law Duty of Confidentiality
- Children's Act 1989 & 2004
- Health and Social Care Act
- Access to Health Records Act 1990
- The NHS Code of Practice on Confidentiality
- The NHS Code of Practice for Information Security
- The NHS Code of Practice for Records Management
- BS ISO/IEC 27001/27002 Information Security

- PD0008 (Records Management) & PCI: DSS standards (Credit cards).

It is critical that the personal information we deal with every day is used appropriately and stored securely, however an overly restrictive approach due to data protection risks can be counter-productive. We will look to provide maximum flexibility whilst also managing information securely.

The security of networks and the way we collect, hold and share information is of paramount importance to our residents and whilst unable to guarantee that advancements in technology are 100% secure we will take all appropriate steps to ensure that personal information is managed safely. This will require close engagement and monitoring with new technologies such as the PSN¹ and G Cloud² solutions to ensure that all possible steps have been taken in this area.

Making sense of our information

Making sense of our information will help us to make better decisions and improve performance. Therefore we will continue to build on our role to provide expert County insight into what people in Herefordshire need. . 'Understanding Herefordshire' (the overall Integrated Needs Assessment) is helping us to make sense of our county information in an integrated way so that we can design joined up services for our localities.

2.3 How staff will be enabled to do their jobs even better

We are already part way through a work programme that is providing staff with the right devices and telephony to do their job; we are standardising this where ever possible so that staff can work from any location (including) home; working more flexibly, reducing travelling and the number of costly buildings from which the council currently operates from. This includes the introduction of a standardised desktop environment providing data, voice, video and conferencing capability with access to applications according to the users profile and follow-me telephony technology so that staff can more easily be contacted.

¹ Public Services Network (PSN) is part of the Government ICT Strategy providing an assured ICT network where services can be shared safely between public sector organisations

² A government led datacentre solution providing secure data storage for government, local authorities and the wider public sector

Investment in mobile working solutions for specific field based roles will also assist with more timely access to information and support inter-agency collaboration.

The flexibility for staff to be able to use their own devices is included in this strategy and not something that is currently possible. This can be at odds with our principle to standardise in order to reduce costs and can also bring information security issues; we are however committed to work through these to ensure we have the most effective approach.

Technology and information management can also support better collaboration, helping break down professional silos and promoting closer working.

Staff will notice a number of major improvements:

- Provision of a device ranging from a desktop, lightweight laptop, standard laptop and mobile device – helping employees to work flexibly and be more responsive to residents.
- The technology will be managed and maintained remotely - IT will be invisible to the end user and will just work.
- Security will be tighter, driven by clear information governance, moving to role based security.
- Necessary systems will be accessible remotely.
- Mobile working solutions will be widely deployed, wherever they can deliver efficiency savings, customer service improvements or improved data management. Real-time data capture will reduce transcription and duplicated data entry and lead to improved data quality.
- Tools, including Cisco Jabber³ and SharePoint 2010⁴ are being exploited helping staff work together virtually, improving productivity.
- The virtual desktop environment will be accessible from non-HC devices and under an Enterprise Licence Agreement, enabling a 'bring your own device' (BYOD) packages to be designed.

In order to enable the above as well as support residents to use the technology training for staff will be key.

³ A Cisco Product for Instant Messaging, presence awareness and Video communication through devices such as personal computers and laptops

⁴ A Microsoft product providing an environment to organise and effectively share work and documents safely with people inside and outside the organisation

2.4 Most cost effective technical infrastructure

Herefordshire Council aims to achieve less dependence of physical technical infrastructure by 2018 in order that we can flex capacity as required by business demands without the need for capital investment / disinvestment. To achieve this we will:

- In the shorter term achieve maximum utilisation of our current infrastructure including our Business Systems that support of critical services such as children's and adult's social care.
- Make progress on shared infrastructure services. Herefordshire already has a maturing model through Hoople Ltd for the provision of a range of technical services, including networks, equipment and software. We will continue to achieve more progress on shared infrastructure services, using Framework Agreements to procure and deliver technical services which will realise economies of scale and increased buying power, opening up opportunities for further joint service provision.
- Where appropriate and over time, migrate our Business Systems to Secure Cloud services (e.g. Public Services Network (PSN)) which can be purchased as products as required. The key to the success of these migrations will be the approach to integration ensuring that we optimise the improved sharing of data from a single source.

3. Delivery

The programme of work that will make this strategy happen over the next five years is outlined in Appendix A.

4. Risks

Risk	Mitigating actions
The underlying strategy and the speed of delivery is reliant on available resources with the appropriate skills. There are particular risks aligned with technical delivery of the Digital by Default web capability.	Current activity is focussed on creating a robust web team which contains the broad skills necessary for effective delivery and maintenance, comprising of Hoople and Herefordshire Council employees. This will be an area requiring investment over the next 12 – 18 months.
Financial constraints continue to impact the ability to effectively invest in technology which will deliver benefits.	Ensure that budgetted funds available are allocated to priority areas of investment through uncomplicated governance procedures. Areas requiring further investment will need to be supported by a robust Business Case.

The five year plan will inevitably need to flex over time particularly in the current environment	Regular reviews of the five year plan with annual refresh activity as appropriate to ensure that areas of focus remain valid.
There are risks around partnerships which will affect collaboration and cost saving opportunities.	A proportion of these risks can be mitigated against by negotiations and relationships developed with regards specific partnership objectives.t.

The plan will therefore need to be regularly reviewed to ensure it remains relevant.

Appendix A – The Delivery Plan

2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Information Management and Information Governance				
Understanding the Business Need – Understanding how information and data is stored on our systems				
Managing Information and Data Assets – Implementing the Information Programme to make sure information is held in context, is managed safely and can be effectively used				
Managing Information Flows – Connecting information to improve the customer experience				
Access Control and Management – Managing how our staff access our systems, safely and securely				
Devices and Telephony				
Mobile Device approach and implementation – Looking at how our staff can more flexibly access our systems using a range of devices				
User Controlled Device Management – Provide staff with more self management on devices				
Single Desktop Rollout – Implementation of the standardised desktop environment				
Telephony rollout – to include voice, video and conferencing capability				

2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Infrastructure Light				
Network and Infrastructure provider selection – Review network and infrastructure options for procurement in 2014				
Network rollout – Implement changes to networks				
Data Storage/Cloud and Hosted solutions options and implementation – Migration of business systems to secure cloud services				
	Printing as a Managed Service – Review options for print services			
Review Infrastructure Requirements and Options				
Local Partner Engagement – Collaborate with local partners for Infrastructure and Network requirements to reduce costs				
Collaboration				
SharePoint implementation and team sites – Enable staff to share information safely using SharePoint Team site functionality				
	Collaboration and Multi Agency Working – Enable safe data sharing between local partners, including Social Care, Health and Police			
	Collaboration for Businesses – Review how the Council interacts more effectively with local business using technology			
On-line Collaboration – Using technology to work more effectively with staff, residents and businesses				
Local Partner Engagement – Collaboration with local partners to reduce costs				

2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Digital by Default				
Digital by Default Channel Shift – Improving and increasing communication with residents through digital channels				
Digital by Default, Alternative Options – Identifying residents who are unable to use digital technology and how to support them				
	Wi-Fi and Public Access – Increased access to Wi Fi provided in public areas			
Employee Lifecycle – Further improving the HR and business processes and systems supporting a member of staff, reducing paper forms, more timely employee data and how staff are managed.				
Skills and Capacity				
e-Learning – Increasing access to learning through technology providing flexibility to manage time and training				
Learning Management Systems – Ensuring that learning and development for our staff is managed appropriately				
Staff, Members Empowerment and Confidence Building – Supporting staff in the use of technology to enable increased confidence and improve service delivery for our residents				
Digital County and Residents support and capability – Enabling our residents to use broadband technology more effectively to communicate with the council				

2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Application Solutions				
License Review – For Council applications				
Applications Rationalisation Review – Review applications used across the Council to rationalise where appropriate				
Enterprise Renewal Strategy – Review Microsoft products used and propose alternatives where appropriate				
Business Systems Optimisation and Upgrade Planning (Frameworki, Agresso, Civica, CRM, Performance Plus) – Review of all major business systems to ensure they are delivering value				
Directorate Application Reviews – Review all Business Systems across the organisation to ensure they are delivering value				
Strategic Commissioning				
Contract Management – Managing and negotiating our contracts more effectively				
Procurement Collaboration – Partnering with organisations an groups on contracts to reduce costs				

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References

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