

## ICT Strategy 2017-2020

In this strategy 'Digital' is defined as 'Using technology to deliver quality services, better.

Underlying this is the need to make it easier for our customers [residents, businesses, visitors] to do business with us and to continue to provide cost effective services.

A key way to ensure we keep up to date and 'fit for the future' is to make good use of technology, including digital opportunities. This strategy outlines how.

Evidence leads us to believe that St Albans residents are well disposed to use digital services. The ['Get Digital' heat map](#) developed by the Local Government Association and London School of Economics identifies St Albans as a 'low risk' area of digital exclusion. (Put in Links to the Digital Heat Map and to the data)

The Council's current '**Shaping our Future**' corporate change programme has three work streams:

- Customer Service Improvements
- Workforce Development
- Digital Transformation



The three streams are designed to help the Council develop its service delivery model to be more flexible and agile. They also help the Council meet our customers' high expectations that local government will be fit for business in the 21st century as set out in Appendix A.

This Digital ICT strategy is part of the supportive framework for the '**Shaping our Future**' programme. It covers four key areas;

- Customer Experience
- Workforce Development
- Applications
- Infrastructure

## Our Vision For...

### Our Customers

- Be more responsive to customers' needs while giving them the power to do more for themselves.
- A better customer experience – giving people faster, more convenient self-serve access to our services, freeing up resources for traditional contact methods for people who need them.
- More things are done right first time and at the first point of contact. Satisfying customer expectations and reducing failure demand.
- Respond to feedback and data analysis to constantly improve the quality of our service.



### Our Workforce

- Ensure our workforce is digitally equipped and able to adopt new ways of working.
- Make digital by design the Council's standard way of working, enabling us to provide services and information more easily and more quickly.
- Further embed a culture of continuous service improvement across the Council.

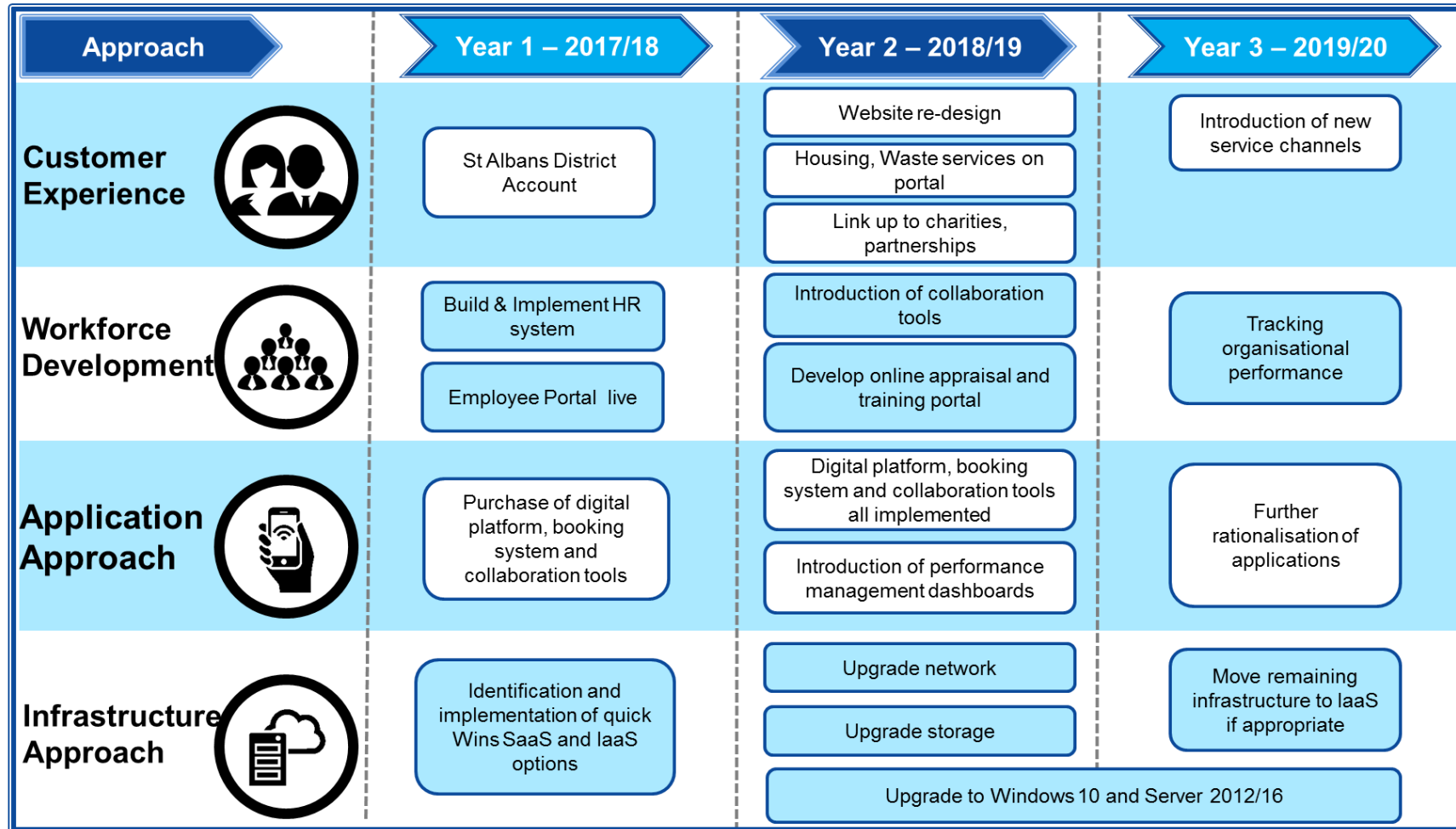


### Our Environment (Applications and Infrastructure)

- Focus on Application and Data consolidation wherever possible, providing high quality management information.
- Adopt a sensible approach to Infrastructure - using cloud facilities where appropriate to become more flexible and resilient.
- Make sure our security is robust to give people confidence that their personal information is kept secure 'Digital Safety First'.
- Use data and user insight to identify where we need to improve performance or redesign services. Make performance data available to the public for greater transparency, trust and accountability.

## Strategy on a Page

The timeline below presents a high-level overview of our Digital ICT Strategy.



## Customer Experience

The Council exists to serve our residents, business and visitors, satisfying their needs in a timely manner and to a high standard.

Technology has driven higher expectations of what customer service should be, with innovations from firms like Amazon and Uber leading the way. Ongoing technology improvements to our services will ensure we are not merely keeping up with rising customer expectations, but actively seeking to exceed them.



## Our Ambition

- Customers find it easy to do business with us, with many services available 24/7.
- Our processes are easy to use and digital designed for the majority of customers, while support for those who need and rely on face to face and telephone contact are maintained.
- Democracy and transparency are strengthened by encouraging participation among hard to reach groups through new digital channels.
- St Albans District becomes a great place to start and grow a business.

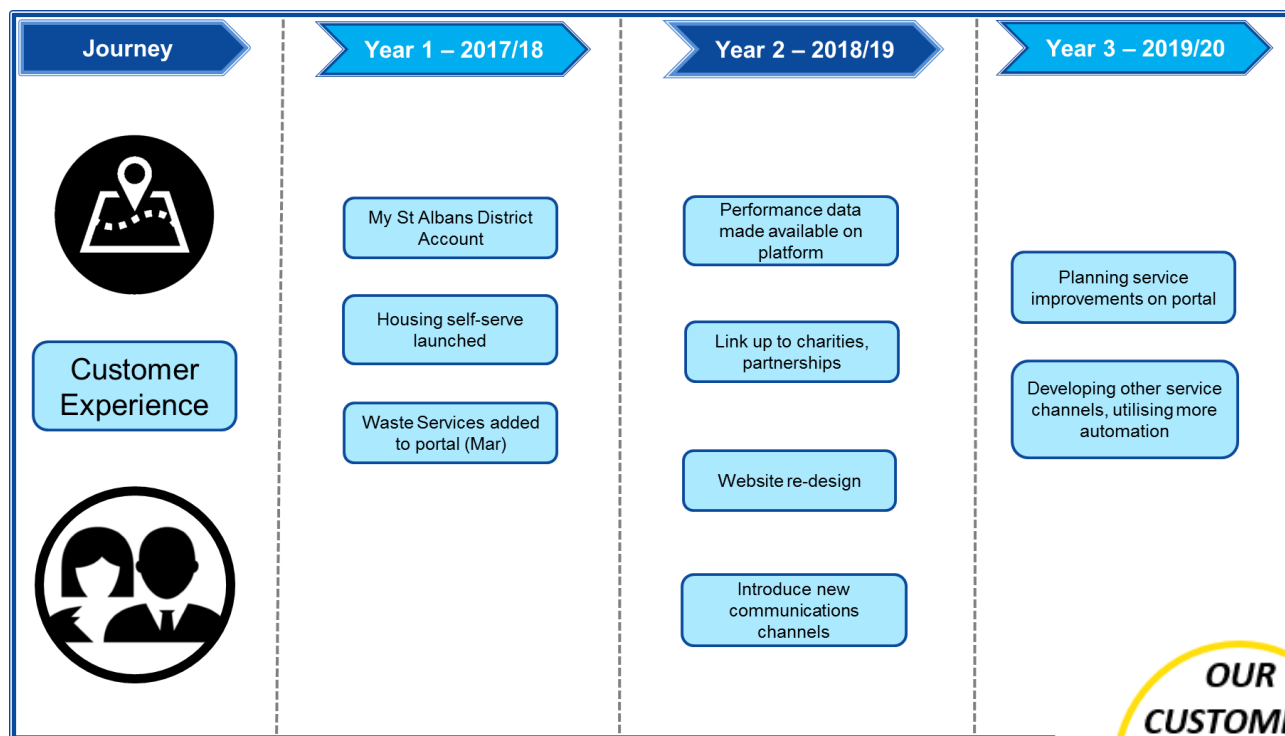
## Our Progress

- Webcasting Council meetings – engaging more people in the democratic process.
- Geographic Information System (GIS) available on website to view detailed local maps. The [‘Where I live’ section](#) shows a range of information about specific areas.
- Online payments for services including council tax and parking.
- Residents can view Council Tax information and apply for benefits online and access and use the Planning portal website.

## Next Steps

- Collaborate with partners, including Herts County Council, to improve digital inclusion among high need groups across the District and surrounding area.
- Re-design website so that it is fit for purpose, accessible and ensures a coherent experience for the customer throughout their contacts with us.
- Encourage take-up of the MyStalbans District Account. Use customer conversations to understand what help customers need to use the service and what we can do to improve inclusion. We will update our online services through an iterative approach in response to customer feedback.
- Work with partners to explore how digital tools, used by the Council, can support the wider community including increasing community engagement.
- Introduce new communication channels, for example live web chat.

## Outline Plan



## **Workforce Development - Digital People**

Our vision is for a more digitally confident and flexible workforce, ready to meet and deal with the digital challenge.

Shifting to digital channels will free up capacity for us to work more efficiently and intelligently. Increasing the level of digital skills is an important part of our Workforce Development programme. Our investment in a digital platform and case management software will enable us to redesign and streamline processes. Wherever possible, workflow will be used to automate processes, reducing the time spent on consuming manual processes. Many small-time efficiencies will be realised from digitally designing our services, enabling officer capacity to be used for more productive, customer-focused activities.

### **Our Ambition**

- That the right digital learning and development opportunities are available to all our workforce
- Our leadership team:
  - Have the skills and confidence to challenge existing processes and promote innovative ways of working - reducing departmental barriers and silo thinking.
  - Develop a “Customer First” approach – ensuring that service redesign starts with looking at what the customer needs.
  - Develop a positive, agile working environment to enable our people and leaders to deliver services while focusing on outcomes for residents.
  - Design systems iteratively, deleting things that don’t work and making refinements based on test feedback, while remaining clear about the end goal.
- Track live performance to help improve understanding of our workload, and prioritise service provision accordingly.
- A more mobile workforce able to work anywhere with access to social and multi-media channels.

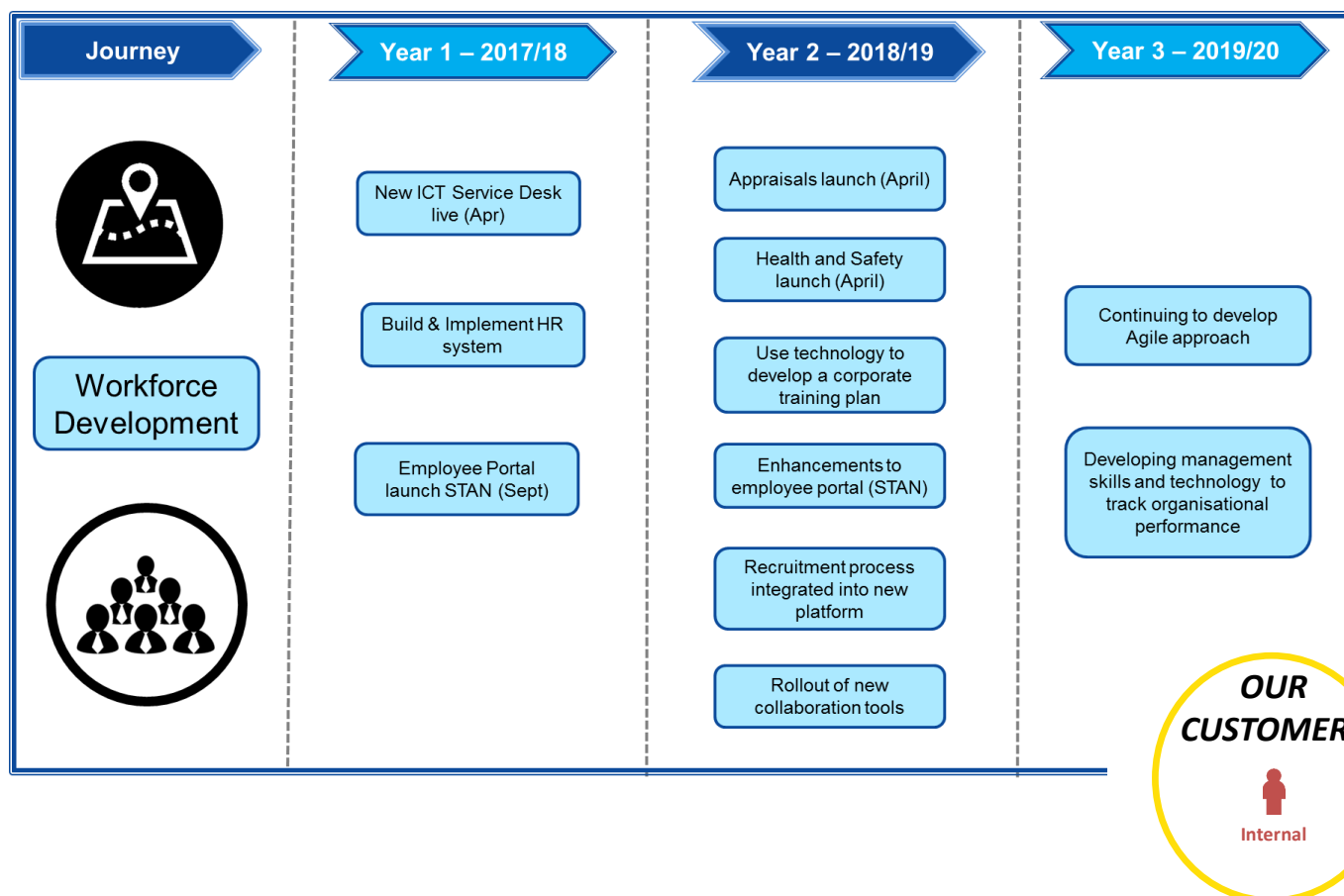
### **Our Progress**

- Invested in a digital platform including case management system (Salesforce) to enable better organisation of service delivery and streamline work processes.
- Connected with other public organisations to use their expertise to help develop ours.
- The Workforce Development stream of the Shaping our Future programme is supporting the process of recruiting digital talent, and encourage ways of working agile.
- Introduced a Digital Champions programme to contribute towards upskilling of our workforce and support delivery of digital goals.
- In October 2017, we launched ‘STAN’, our My Employee Account, this gives our people access to a range of self-service facilities associated with their employment with the Council.

## Next Stage

- We will promote further mobile working by using more portable devices, operating remotely hosted systems and investing in collaboration tools.
- Further develop our employee account, covering Health & Safety, Appraisals (performance conversations) and Recruitment functionality.
- Give managers online access to information relating to their team's performance. This will include both outcome driven performance (for example live data dashboards) and personnel performance (for example appraisals). We will focus on training and positive performance management.
- Strengthen our security regime to protect us better against malware and cyber-crime threats, allowing us to take more advantage of external digital content for staff development.

## Outline Plan



## **Applications Approach**

To ensure our services are fit for the future we need to rationalise our current portfolio of applications.

Having a large application portfolio presents a number of issues:

- High cost of managing infrastructure – for example updating licenses
- Lack of compatibility between products
- Data is in silos and traditional application programming interfaces (APIs) that enable applications to communicate with each other are expensive
- High consultancy costs for changes

## **Our Ambition**

- To reduce the total number of applications as much as possible.
- Reduce reliance on independent applications and move towards a centralised data model for customers and transactions that can be used across all areas of the Council.
- Use products and platforms that we can customise through configuration changes rather than development, and utilise Open Source wherever sensible.
- Only use software with Open APIs to easily interact and pass data between systems.
- Adopt a 'configure, not build' approach to avoid being locked into contracts for non-customisable, 'off the shelf' products. This will also reduce costs and increase flexibility, supporting agile methods of working.
- Ensure that our critical application estate is on supported versions of software at all times.

## **Our Progress in 2017:**

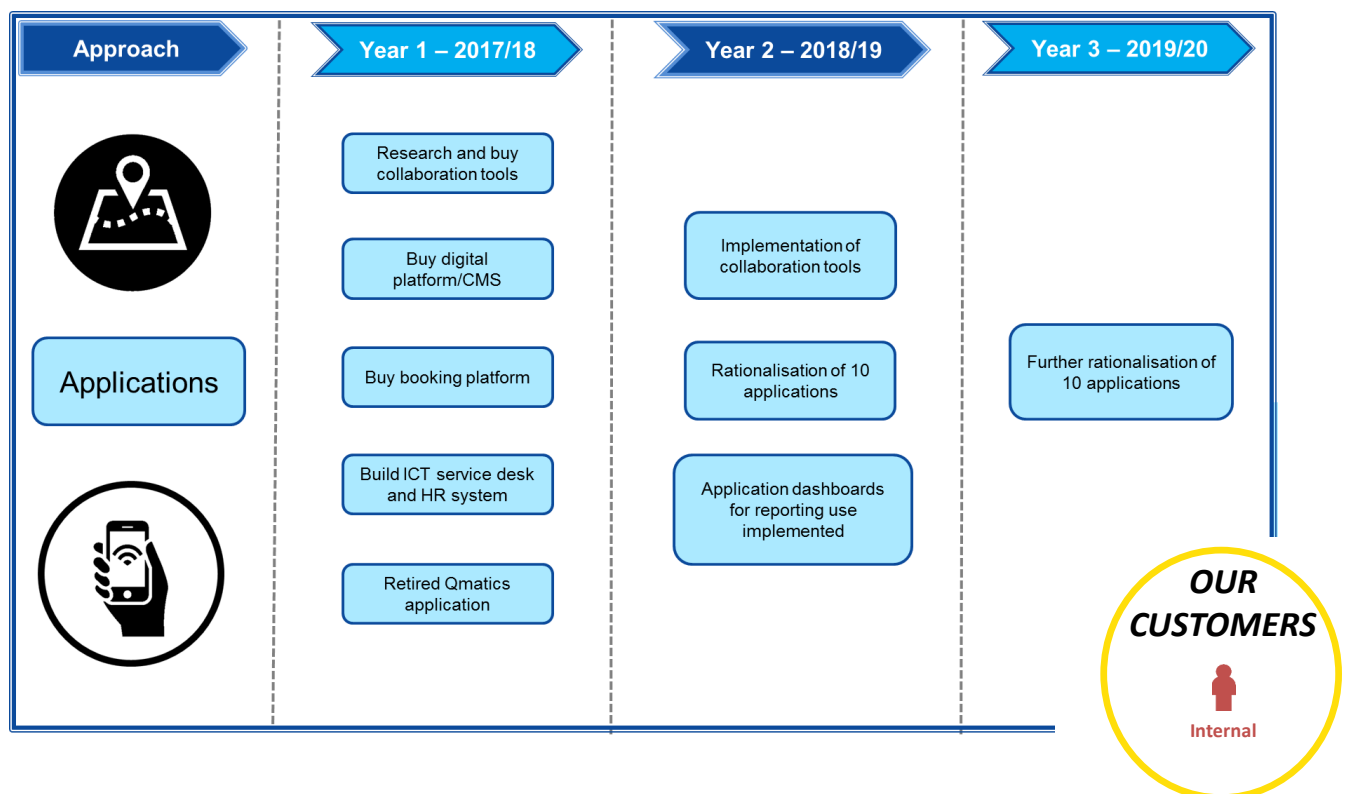
- We have bought a:
  - Case management system (Salesforce)
  - Booking system to handle all customer appointments (Booking Bug).
- Commenced a pilot of Office 365
- Retired one legacy application (QMatic)
- Moved onto SAAS for two factor authentication
- Built two applications on the digital platform (the ICT service desk and HR system)
- Implemented employee portal (STAN) and a customer portal and Customer Contact Dashboard
- Established a set of Digital and ICT principles which all new purchases of software and software must be assessed against



## Next Steps

- Support the Digital Transformation programme by continuing to review our internal processes and design digitally wherever possible.
- Have a systematic approach to reviewing all our IT applications. Application to be reviewed when contracts are due for renewal; major upgrades planned, or significant issues with an application that impact on service delivery.
- Make effective use of data following the 'create once, use many times' principle.
- Build application dashboards for internal reporting use.
- Improve the mobility of our workforce.
- Be 'device agnostic': we aim to only use applications that are available on all end-user devices. For example, we will not use an application that is only compatible with Apple devices.
- Ensure that our application estate is kept on supported software versions and operating systems by developing the following controls:
  - Application Compatibility Matrix
  - Windows 7 retirement strategy and plan
  - Server 2008 retirement strategy and plan

## Outline Plan



## **Infrastructure Approach**

A key element of this digital strategy is our desire to become as infrastructure-free as possible. This means we will house the lowest amount of physical server infrastructure that is both sensible and cost effective.

We will utilise Infrastructure as a Service, and Software as a Service technology in the following scenarios,

- Where appropriate to the needs of the business
- Cost effective
- Supporting our Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery position
- Supporting our application rationalisation ambitions.

Storage is also an issue and our current arrangements are end of life, and at maximum capacity. In addition, the Network is also reaching the end of its useful life and will need replacing within the timescales of this ICT strategy.

Addressing infrastructure dependency and storage capacity issues are priority. Another priority for the Council is the need for new communication channels to support use of web chat, multi-media and machine-based learning technology to increase the productivity of telephone-based service delivery.

In line with our application strategy to retire Windows 7, we will be developing an end-user device replacement plan to be in place by the end of 2017/18. In addition, we will be identifying options to develop a virtual desktop capacity using the Office365 platform to improve our disaster recovery position. We will also establish a full device management roadmap, covering traditional desktops, laptops and mobile devices.

## **Our Ambition**

- Become as infrastructure-free as possible.
- Retire the remaining physical application servers, with any remaining physical onsite server supporting only a simplified, virtual environment.
- Consider business continuity implications at all stages of digital service design to ensure fast recovery in the event of a major incident.
- Have flexible computer and storage capacity dependent on business need.
- Be 'client access device' agnostic wherever possible.
- Update our existing network (WAN and LAN) to provide additional resilience and capacity.
- Develop new omni-channel options within our telephone strategy.

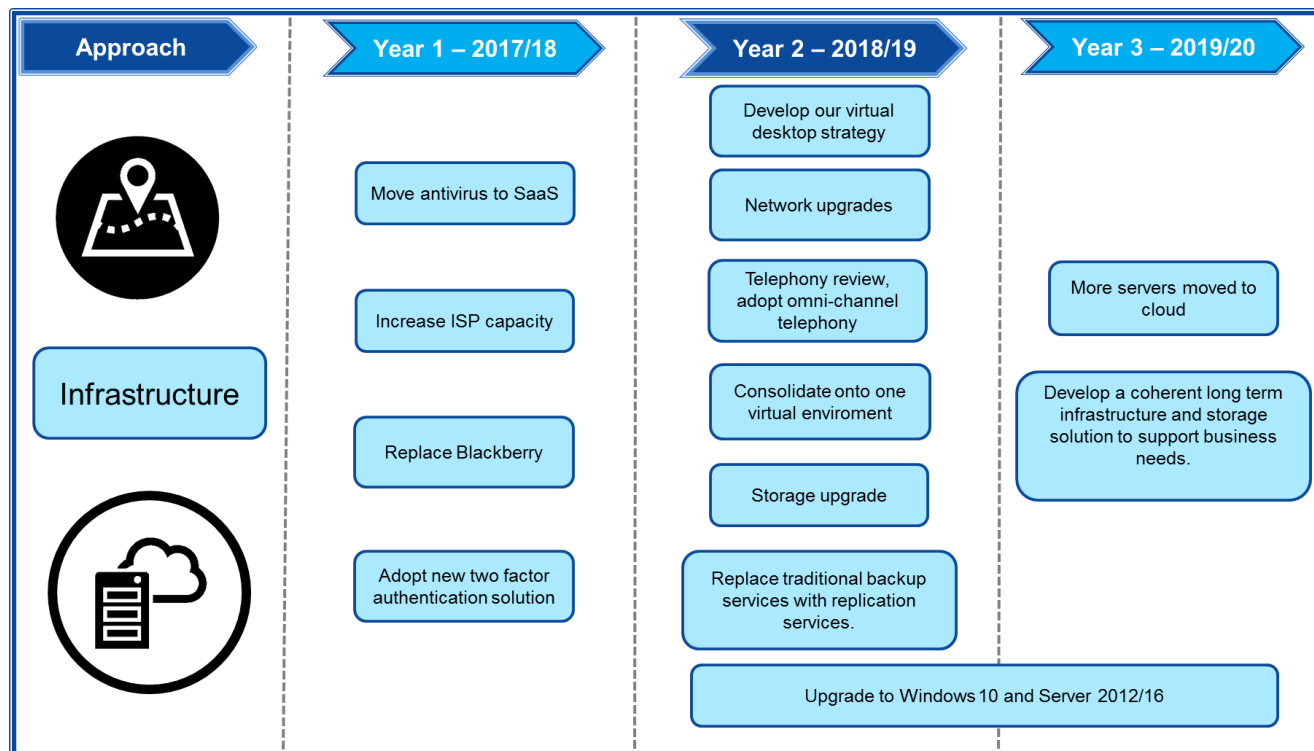
## **Our Progress in 2017**

- 97% of our infrastructure is supported on the virtual environment.
- Only 3% of our infrastructure supports physical applications.
- Disaster Recovery is in place for the entire physical environment.
- Server and client devices are on supported operating systems.

## **Next Stages**

- Adopt Software as a Service' (SaaS) and 'Infrastructure as a Service' (IaaS) working models, looking to benefit from the advantages (such as cost effectiveness and disaster recovery benefits).
- Adopt and migrate as many infrastructure services as possible to SaaS to further reduce our physical infrastructure requirement.
- Develop a coherent long-term infrastructure and storage solution to support business needs.
- Move the remaining server operating system to Server 2012/16 while consolidating onto one virtual environment product set.
- Upgrade our network to support infrastructure needs.
- Continually review our telephone service and develop it to fit business needs (for example automated responses/switchboard and omni-channel adoption).
- Develop our approach to storage and data replication.
- Develop our desktop approach covering:
  - Establishing a plan to move to Windows 10
  - Establishing an effective Disaster Recovery Option for the desktop estate
  - Establishing an equipment refresh plan
  - Improving the Mobile working and management of mobile devices

## Outline Plan



## Security – ‘Digital Safety First’

One of the seven key themes of the UK government’s Digital Strategy is ‘Making the UK the safest place in the world to live and work online’. We too recognise the importance of digital security, so we have also made ‘Digital Safety First’ a priority. It is vital that residents trust us to keep their personal data secure.



## We Will...

- Develop a cyber security strategy to keep a pace with emerging technology threats.
- Continue to ensure robust procedures are in place for the protection and disposal of data in accordance with the Data Protection Act.
- Quickly adapt to the changes to data protection legislation coming into force in May 2018.
- Continue to adhere to Public Services Network (PSN) requirements.
- Adopt a continuous improvement approach to all our services.
- Further develop our project governance framework and incorporate best practice project and risk management techniques.

## Appendix A: Outcomes & Corporate Commitments

We have identified four key outcomes that we want to see locally and that fulfill the Council's commitments as set out in our Corporate Plan 2017-22. Our ICT Strategy will help us achieve these commitments in following ways.

|                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Great Place            | Our new range of digital services such as the Citizen Portal will enable digitally active tenants to transact with us online.<br>We will create a unified approach to the customer experience and improve ease of access to information for greater transparency.     | Delivering cultural, sports, leisure and heritage facilities:<br><br>Increasing pride in the District, and engagement with culture and leisure via digital channels.                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Keeping the District clean, green, healthy and safe:<br>Quick reporting using online Waste Reporting Services.<br>Promoting healthier lifestyles through the Citizen Portal.                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Planning for the Future:<br>Making the Planning Service more transparent and accessible. Use the opportunity provided by going digital to reshape the service in order to meet ever-growing demand,                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Thriving Community     | Development of a centralised Citizen Portal to support more online customer services. This will allow us to use costly face to face resources to focus support on the people who need it.<br>Supporting community engagement through our online centralised platform. | The My St Albans District Account will allow our residents to report issues concerning where they live easily, and request general services. This will free up valuable resources to be deployed to help the most vulnerable people in the District.                                                                                                                                  |
|                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | In addition, we will publicise Citizens Advice services, and other charities online, to make it as easy as possible for people to get the help they need.                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | We will also encourage community spirit by providing a platform that will let people make contact with their local community and find out about activities and events in the area.                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Vibrant Economy        | Developing the business and visitor economy.                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Providing online business focused services by re-designing the Business section of our website. We also intend to promote business partnerships and provide useful information through a new business portal.                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Cost Effective Council | Performance management culture will be supported by live data reporting.<br><br>Providing value for money via services that are fit for purpose, resilient and usable.                                                                                                | Achieving a shift from face to face and telephone services to digital channels will achieve cost savings for the Council. These can then be used to improve services in other areas.<br><br>Embedding digital skills throughout the Council, and establishing better ways of working, including agile project management, will lead to greater efficiency throughout the organisation |