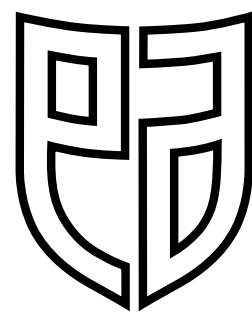
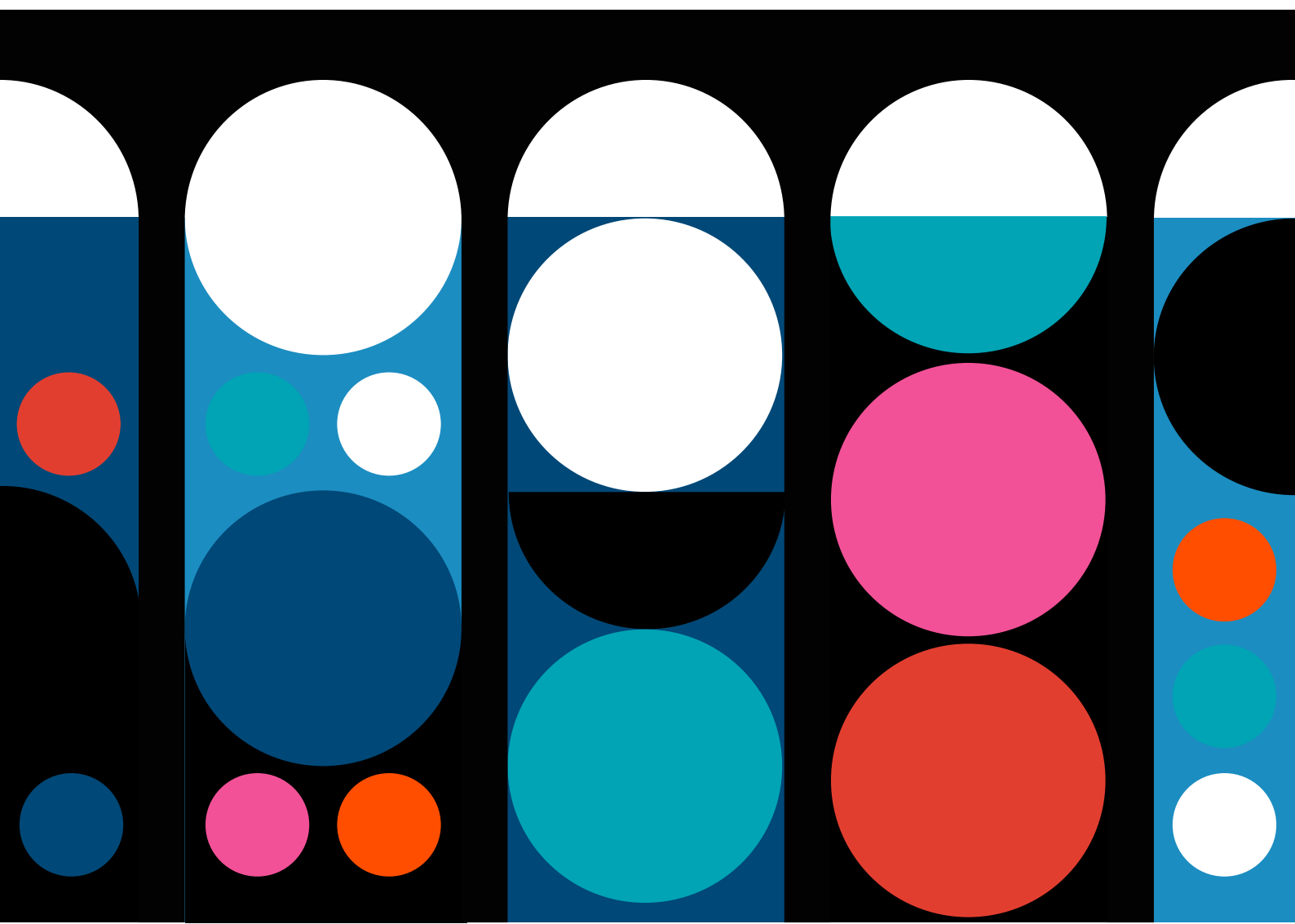


East Ayrshire Council



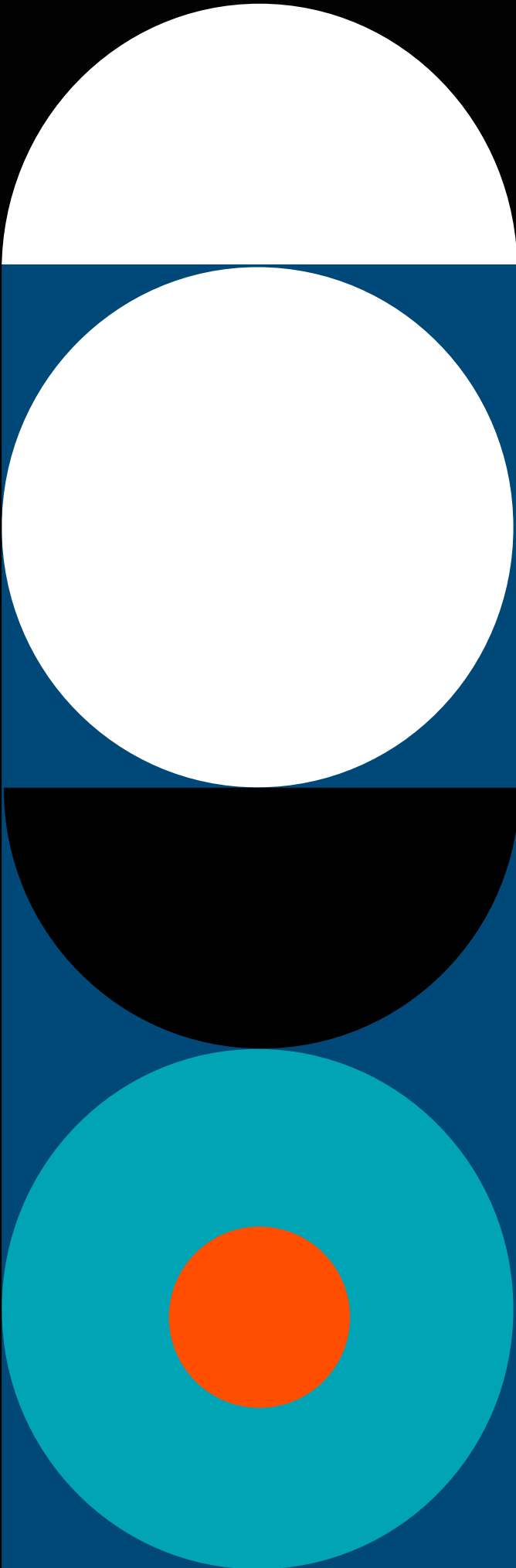
Our Digital Strategy

Our digital journey to 2027 and beyond



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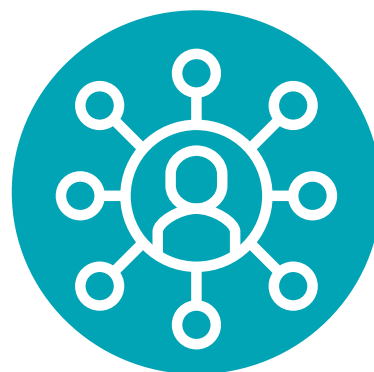
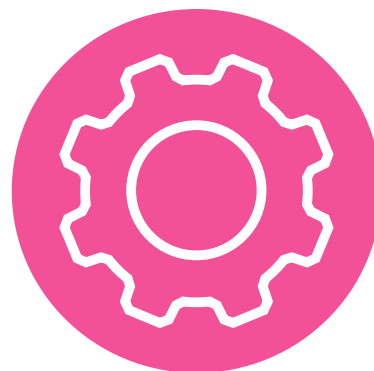
Executive Summary

Technology is changing our world at a rapid and ever-accelerating pace. It is intrinsic in our daily lives, whether at work, home or leisure. New technologies and digital innovations bring significant opportunities but also present complex challenges. The recent Coronavirus pandemic has driven an ever increasing use of and reliance on digital solutions. It has also highlighted, however, the importance of digital inclusion and managing inequalities to ensure we leave no-one behind in this fast-paced digital world.

It is vital that we make best use of innovative technology to deliver digital public services. This document defines our digital vision and establishes the road-map for our continuing digital journey. It acknowledges achievements, building on successes and lessons learned. It recognises the need to be flexible, agile and fast-paced, without fear of failure and with that occasional leap of faith. It sets out our key themes, principles and objectives; how technology and innovation will help us achieve our goals and face the challenges ahead.

This Digital Strategy supports the Council's Strategic Plan, and is linked to and aligned with, the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (2022 – 2027); and is a key driver in delivering service based digital savings and efficiencies in the years ahead. The successful delivery of this Strategy requires a collective effort. It is not an IT Strategy for ICT to deliver, this is a corporate Strategy for all Services to actively engage with and to benefit from. Only through a collaborative focus and the consistent application of our key principles can we challenge, reinvent and redefine our services.

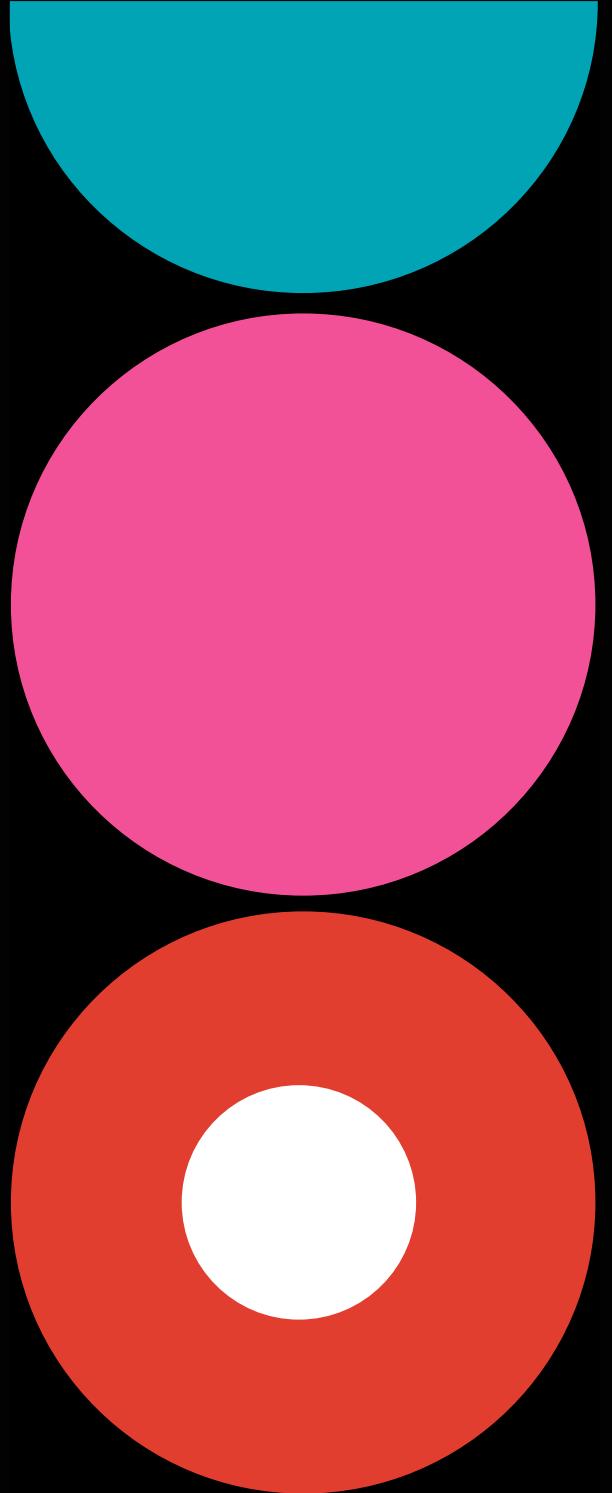
We aim to maximise the potential of digital technologies to improve services and outcomes for our workforce, our businesses, our communities and visitors alike. We will continually challenge how we design, deliver and manage services, ensure we are responsive to emerging technologies and focused on the needs of our customers, ensuring they can transact with us in simple, quick and convenient ways. Key to the digital redesign of our public services is accessibility, and ensuring we remove barriers that could prevent interaction with, or access to our websites, digital tools and technologies, for people with disabilities.



We have an obligation to deliver services as efficiently and as cost-effectively as possible. Digital delivery lowers costs with service users benefitting from a better experience with more choice, control and accessibility and services benefitting from increased autonomy and productivity. Widening the range of services available online reduces paper handling, processing time and storage and allows us to allocate resources to users who may still require assisted or additional support.

We also have an obligation to ensure our digital infrastructures and business applications are sustainable and deployed in energy-efficient ways. By increasing the services we deliver digitally, we create more opportunities to reduce our carbon impact and minimise our effect on the environment.

The digital world moves fast and we must move with it or be left behind. This Strategy, therefore, presents a high-level framework. It sets out our vision and future direction for digital technology, innovation, services and infrastructure. As our digital journey develops and evolves so too will our Digital Strategy. It will, therefore, be reviewed annually to ensure it remains relevant as we move with pace towards a 'Digital First' approach in everything we do.

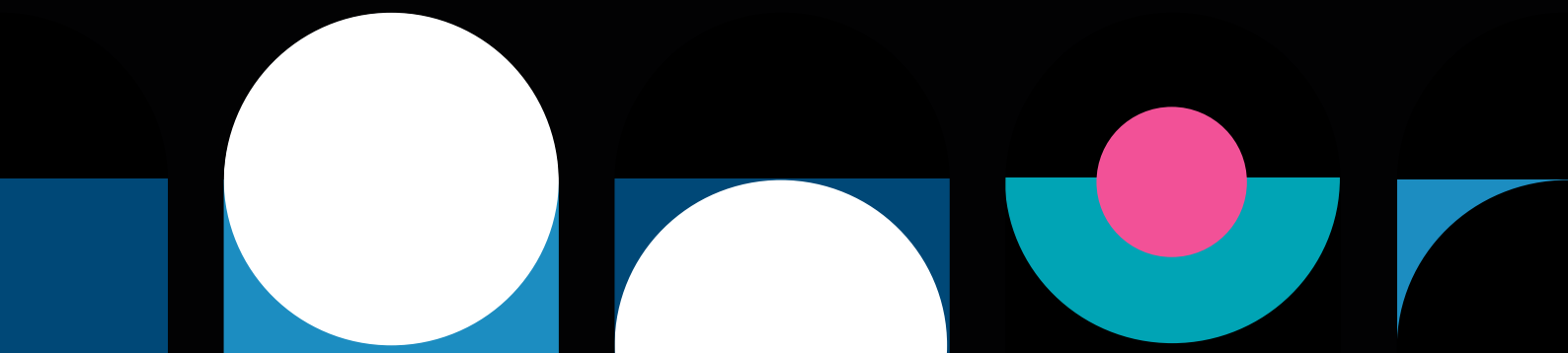


Our Vision and Key Themes

Our Digital Strategy is not just about technology, it's also about people, culture and leadership. It is about maximising our digital capabilities; changing and improving the way we live, work and connect.

Our digital vision is:

'to reimagine our public services and digital infrastructures; to deliver data driven digital services which are innovative, accessible, adaptable and customer-centric; to be better integrated and better connected; providing better outcomes for everyone within a thriving digital workforce, economy and community'.



Technology is the enabler for efficient and effective change and improvement and will be key to everything we do. We will harness the potential of the latest technologies to strengthen relationships with our communities and develop a strong digital culture within a workforce equipped with the skills and confidence to use technology well to deliver efficient and effective frontline services.

Our Vision will focus on five Key Themes:



A **Digital Customer** approach will deliver accessible online services which are so simple, quick and easy to use that they are the preferred way for residents and businesses to transact with us.



A Digital First approach will ensure we are agile, adaptive, efficient and innovative as we connect devices, networks, data and people across a safe and secure infrastructure and make informed decisions on future service based digital efficiencies and wider Council investment.



Our **Digital Services** should be delivered with a community-based focus on key essential services, ensuring our communities have safe and secure access, are supported and informed and can benefit from learning opportunities.



A Digital Inclusion approach will ensure everyone has the opportunity and capability to be digitally included as we connect residents, businesses, partners and technology and promote thriving digital communities and digital investment across East Ayrshire.



We will encourage a positive **Digital Culture** and ensure our key principles are embedded in everything we do. Led and supported by a Digital Management Board, services will have opportunities to engage in collaborative working on digital projects that improve service delivery and maximise our available resources and our digital assets.

Our Delivery Principles

Our Key Themes will be delivered by consistent application of the following Principles:



Get the Basics Right

The right tools, technology and skills will be in place to ensure a digitally capable workforce can do their jobs well, requiring little intervention or technical support.



Customer Centric Focus

Digital services will be designed around the needs of customers, both internal and external, with a focus on what they need, rather than what they – or we – think they want, and supported by user research and feedback and data insight.



Support Continuous Improvement

Continuous improvement will be supported by suitability and sustainability reviews and a rationalisation of existing applications, particularly as they reach 'end of life'; become outdated or no longer fit for purpose; or where there are gaps in functionality. We will support Services to streamline processes, reduce duplication, increase automation, realise and release efficiencies and ensure they remain future fit.



Make Informed Decisions

Technology based decisions will be solution-targeted, evidence based, provide value for money, have clearly defined outcomes and meet quality and cybersecurity standards to ensure we can sustainably resource, implement, operate and support any new digital investment.



Use Data Intelligently

Working in tandem with Corporate Support's Project Management Office, we will ensure that accurate, secure and timely collection and sharing of data will derive intelligence and an understanding of customer behaviour which, in turn, allows Services to make informed decisions, encouraging collaborative working and a proactive and consistent approach to service delivery.



Develop Inclusive Technology

Our digital services will be accessible and easy to use but we will always ensure that assisted digital solutions will be available to those who need them and provide non-digital alternative channels for those who are unable to engage with us digitally.



Digital Customers



Digital Customers

Key Objectives

Digital Customer Approach

The pandemic forced a sudden and rapid change to how we managed service delivery. Public buildings closed to staff and the public for all but a few key priority services. To support this, extensive work was required to quickly digitise services, moving processes to our online customer service platform and redesigning our telephony platform within days to provide a seamless, flexible solution that ensured staff could deliver services from home and maintain that vital link with our communities.

Now, more than two years later, we continue to deliver services either online or through our virtual contact centre environment. The reduction in 'front doors' now provides customers with single points of easy access to council services and creates an opportunity to now consider future delivery by applying the key themes and principles from this Digital Strategy.

Regardless of how any service is delivered, it is important that we offer a consistent user experience. Our Digital Customer approach will therefore be a 'one council' approach, with a single view of the customer's digital journey, working towards common platforms wherever possible, and consistent design, process, workflow and messaging throughout.

This is not simply about putting paper forms online. It is about designing new and improved processes which track an initial service request to its final delivery. Customers will self-serve at their convenience and workflow will enable staff to deliver services in defined ways with recorded outcomes.

We conduct much of our daily lives online and customers expect to transact online with their Council too. Therefore, all Council services that

could be online, should be online, with digital becoming the default for everything that we do.

Customer Centric

We will re-design our services through new delivery models that are customer centric and digital wherever possible, engaging and consulting with our customers in the design and delivery of the services that really matter to them. The Scottish Government's vision for the Scottish Approach to Service Design (SAtdSD) is that the people of Scotland are supported and empowered to actively participate in the definition, design and delivery of their public services. We will therefore adopt the SAtdSD approach and our digital solutions will be designed with the customer at their heart and with an understanding of customer needs, behaviours and expectations.

Unlocking data intelligence will be key to mapping the customer experience and challenging how we do things. We will build better processes that benefit Services and customers, streamlining and automating processes where we can, eliminating duplication and freeing up staff for frontline delivery of essential services to those who may be vulnerable or require assisted support.

Customer Experience

Customers will enjoy a consistent digital experience. They will have the confidence to use simple and secure digital services at a time convenient to them from their chosen device. They will have access to digital communications and up to date information that is easy to find, readily available and related to the services they need and the issues they care about most.

A dedicated project team played a key role in delivering new and essential online services during lockdown. This innovative work will continue, with the team expanded and incorporated within Finance and Business Innovation. The Business Innovation team will continue to support colleagues in the planning, design and delivery of service-led digital change projects that are responsive to customer needs and enhance the customer experience whilst delivering maximum value for our services and our communities.

Digital Accessibility

Our services will always be inclusive with assisted and mediated solutions for everything we do with no barriers to access through disability or a lack of digital access or skills.

We will work with Services to meet all legal obligations in respect of the Equality Act 2010, which includes specific regulations in respect of web content and mobile apps - Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018.

The pandemic highlighted the importance of quality, accuracy, and accessibility of information on the website. We must ensure that accessibility is central to everything we do, and all Services must consider any adjustments they need to make when adapting to digital service solutions and ensure their web content complies with legislative directives.

What we have done

Digital Customers

We have increased our online account presence on our customer platform from 3,000 accounts pre-pandemic to over 51,000 online accounts and 16,000 serviced accounts. Over 60 self-service applications are currently available online. We average around 120,000 visits each month to our council website and around 43% of customer contact is received via our online self-service platform.

Self-Service

Online transactions increased from 1,500 monthly pre-pandemic to over 25,000 monthly, reducing paper handling, improving processing times and transforming service delivery. We have significantly reduced avoidable contact and made our processes more accessible and efficient for customers.

Customer Contact

Our telephony platform was redesigned to create a virtual contact centre environment that supports a blended working model and integrates with our customer service platform. Multi-skilled call handlers across Services handle around 9,000 calls per week. Supported with real-time reporting, Services can plan resources, monitor call performance and take remedial action whenever and wherever it is required.

Digital Payments

In 2018, the Council stopped cash handling and the remaining mediated Face-To-Face payments were moved to a fully digital payments portfolio at the start of the pandemic. This had no negative impact on revenue collection rates or collection performance and challenges the need to re-introduce a mediated payments service within a face-to-face environment.

Digital Solutions

A dedicated team within Finance & Business Innovation supports Services to review existing processes, remove wasteful and duplicated steps and add automation, validation and workflow with reportable outcomes to new digital solutions hosted on the Council's customer service platform.

What we will do

Self-Service

Wherever possible, we will integrate our customer service platform to provide seamless communication with other common systems, exploring opportunities to access multiple services with a single log on. We will integrate common processes and common platforms to record and track service requests and outcomes. We hope to increase self-service customer contact to 65% within the next two years.

Customer Contact

We will adopt a corporate telephony approach within a blended virtual and office environment. All call handlers will rotate through a centralised contact base which facilitates corporate training and development and supports specialised service delivery. Dashboard alerts will be available to all Service managers to monitor call handling performance and take appropriate remedial action if required.

Face-To-Face Contact

We will re-design Face-To-Face services, working with services to re-evaluate our current customer support service format dealing with calls and service enquiries. Face to Face delivery will focus on appointment based specialist intervention. Those who require Face-To-Face appointments, whether online or in person, will be easily identified. Appointments will be arranged in advance and delivered by Services, with the exception of client based critical services. Video appointments will be the preferred approach, reducing travel costs and time for residents and reducing the environmental impact of associated carbon emissions too.

Telephony Contact

Telephony contact will continue to play a crucial role by triaging and resolving queries at first point of contact. Where this is not feasible, effective signposting or hand off to specialist teams for immediate resolution or call back will be implemented across all Services. Wherever possible, calls will be routed through the main 554400 number to support call monitoring and resourcing arrangements. The publication and promotion of 554400 will be by prior agreement with the Business Innovation Manager to ensure teams are skilled and resourced appropriately.

Communications

We will adopt a corporate approach to customer communication, reducing the number of access points to Council services and streamlining all contact methods including telephony, email and online through one common platform which allows it to be recorded. We will use data to create a better understanding of customer interactions and identify potential areas of improvement. We will reduce repeat and avoidable contact by ensuring consistency of information, effective signposting and reliable communications across all channels.

Digital Payments

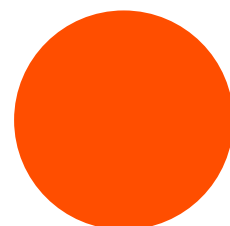
We will transition away from a mediated Face-To-Face payment service. Instead, we will seek to expand and promote our digital payments portfolio with new functionality. We will promote paperless direct debit, wherever possible, for revenue billing and explore new functionality such as SMS payment reminders. We will continue to work with our third party providers to ensure our online payments solutions are secure and fully compliant with legislative and industry standards.

Digital Solutions

Our Business Innovation team will continue to support Services in the development of digital services which really matter to our residents. They will develop the customer service platform with self-service solutions that are supported by assisted and mediated channels. SMS functionality will be added to the platform, increasing contact options over a variety of digital channels.

Scottish Welfare Fund

We will review the online application process to ensure it is as simple, quick and as easy as possible to apply. We will streamline the application and decision-making process and improve the processing time for crisis grants, ensuring that immediate financial support is provided to those who need it most at that critical time.





Digital Council



Digital Council

Key Objectives

Digital First Approach

The pandemic highlighted the value and importance of digital technology. We are now building on the lessons learned as we continue to work for, and deliver services to, our workforce, our businesses and our communities. As digital becomes the key enabler for delivering services differently, our aim is to provide efficient services and improved outcomes alongside efficient processes that deliver best value.

We will engage with partners, communities and suppliers to develop and make best use of a digital infrastructure that supports ultrafast internet and mobile network connectivity across East Ayrshire. Our digital infrastructure will support creative, adaptive and innovative business systems, applications and internet services which are future fit, providing 'always on' public services which meet the key needs, demands and challenges of our local communities.

Digital Workforce

As we continue through a time of significant change, we recognise the digital skills needed at all levels of our organisation and across all job roles and grades. We will support the use of professional development and coaching offered by the Scottish Government's Digital Academy to nurture digital skills, build capacity and support our transformation to digital public services.

Our workforce will be empowered and skilled with the tools and technologies they need to do their jobs well. They will have reliable access to work efficiently from any location. They will be encouraged to engage with and participate in digital redesign, challenge current processes, design new solutions and support continuous improvement in service delivery.

Digital Security

As we continue to make more services available within a digital environment we will ensure robust security is deployed across our network infrastructure and business systems to protect our data, our staff, our customers and our learners. Cyber defence is the responsibility of all staff and cannot be viewed as 'someone else's job'. We will bolster our current toolkit of support and remain vigilant to the threat of cyber-attack. Whilst threats can never be eliminated completely, our Cyber Defence team will continually invest in actions which mitigate risk whilst allowing us to benefit from the many opportunities digital technology brings to public services.

Digital Investment

Even pre-pandemic, our transformation journey had started and, in terms of ICT and digital, this was centred on Smarter Working. This enabled staff to work from a blended home and office environment; the rapid response to the pandemic quickly reinforcing that approach and accelerating the digitising of as many management and workflow processes as possible.

We continue to invest in our corporate and curricular environment through our capital programme, allowing safe and secure access to learning and the delivery of services in a blended and flexible way, whether that be from the office, home or another location.

We also continue to maximise investment in our data centres, virtual server environment, secure remote access solutions and dual telephony and internet connections that provide resilient communication channels. A business case for the adoption of either in-house or cloud based technology will always be considered wherever it is appropriate.

Moreover we continued to invest in digital change and where this could provide benefits to the users of our services and this was particularly relevant on the analogue to digital journey for community alarms.

Cloud Strategy

Cloud technology has brought about a step change in the ICT landscape, with cloud innovation helping to support the transformation of the public sector ICT estate into one that is more agile, cost effective and environmentally sustainable.

The Council has made significant investment in ICT platforms, and whilst we should continue to maximise that investment where it's financially viable and operationally justifiable, we should be mindful of the potential opportunities associated with cloud computing.

We have already deployed a number of cloud technologies, including Granicus, our customer service platform, Talentlink for our end-to-end recruitment process, and Webfleet for transport management.

The ICT Service is finalising a programme of works that will introduce Microsoft Office 365 across the Council; this will be our most significant and far reaching step into the adoption of cloud based technology and will support our shift to file access from any location with an internet connection, secure cloud storage, and improved access to a range of collaboration and communication tools.

We also continue to collaborate with the Scottish Government Digital Office and their focus on joint actions that include the development of a suite of common platforms to be adopted across the public sector, designed to ensure a greater degree of joined up access across the public sector. Where practicable, the Council will align with the outcomes of the Digital Office and our ICT Teams will lead on transitional outcomes in this regard.

What we have done

Digital Workforce

We have equipped our office-based workforce with the essential tools, skills and technology required to deliver smarter services. Over 2,000 staff have access to laptops, networks, mobiles and fixed telephony solutions which allow service delivery from wherever and whenever it is required. Assistive technologies are provided where required, ensuring all staff can make the best use of available technology.

Digital Learning

We have developed new e-learning modules for staff training around information governance, IT skills and cyber awareness.

Digital Devices

We have standardised and modernised the range of laptops and devices available across our corporate estate and ensured they are compatible with all of our current business applications.

Mobile Technology

We have supported Services and our non-office based workforce by providing secure mobile technology. Our fleet of Housing Asset Services operatives now use digital job lines; our Home Care staff work more efficiently with the introduction of an electronic diary and appointment system.

Digital Access

We have provided secure Wi-Fi to visiting guests in a number of our corporate offices.

Digital Networks

We have provided an internet solution in our Children's Houses that enables young people to use their own devices on our network securely.

Digital Security

We have implemented a multi-factored and multi-layered approach across our digital infrastructure whilst attaining and remaining PSN compliant.

Digital Investment

We have invested over £1.5 million in both corporate and curricular infrastructure, systems and devices.

What we will do

Digital Learning

We will update our learning and development programme, creating opportunities for our workforce to enhance their digital skillsets, increase their digital confidence and employ best practice in cyber security.

Digital Security

Cyber security has become a requirement for all businesses, irrelevant of size, as systems containing valuable and sensitive data continue to come under attack from malicious actors. Deploying the correct cyber security defences will help to protect all categories of data from theft or damage. We will continue to bolster our existing 'layered' approach to cyber security and defence in order to protect the Council's critical systems and sensitive information against cyber-attacks and data breaches. We will continue to follow industry best practice, sharing this knowledge and working together with existing partners in order to stay in front of this ever changing threat.

Microsoft Office 365

Microsoft Office has been providing users with productivity tools for several decades. Through its core applications (such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Outlook) it provides businesses with access to the tools they need to perform everyday tasks, such as; managing data, creating documents and communicating information. However, Microsoft Office has evolved into a huge suite of intelligent tools that, if used correctly, will allow organisations to become even more productive and efficient. With Microsoft Office 365 all applications and services are connected, both to each other and to the wider web. This facilitates teamwork, saving employee's time by enabling them to work better together through tools such as unified communications, online video meetings, collaborating in the creation and updating of files, and providing cloud based telephony solutions. The inclusion of cloud storage and mobile applications within the Microsoft Office 365 suite also allows organisations to work wherever and whenever, with secure access to content from any device. We will create a dedicated and focused team to deliver and implement Microsoft Office 365, and other 'software as a service' (SaaS) solutions, to drive the Council's digital transformation forward securely.

Network Stability

We will replace and update firewalls and increase network load capability to support the introduction of Microsoft Office 365.

Green Digital

We will implement green initiatives to reduce power consumption such as 'power downs' that automatically puts inactive devices to sleep at fixed times in the evening. The introduction of Microsoft Office 365 and increased network stability will enable wider use of videoconferencing with Teams, reducing staff travel costs, improving productivity and reducing carbon emissions.

Repair, Re-Use, Recycle

We will make best use of the equipment we own and follow the disposal principles of Repair, Reuse, Refurbish and Recycle wherever costs and practicalities allow. We will explore options which may allow us to re-purpose end-of-life equipment by donating to community or charitable organisations or support the provision of community grants funded from income from surplus equipment recycling activities.

Digital Solutions

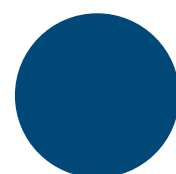
We will make best use of the applications and software we own. We will establish a clear vision which reduces the complexity of our software estate and any unnecessary duplication. We will consider the use of SaaS (Software as a Service) solutions, ensuring we only pay for essential software that we absolutely require.

Digital Investment

We will seek to re-use existing technology if it is fit-for-purpose. When buying or developing a technology solution we will ensure we identify the best fit option that meets current and future requirements and provides value for money.

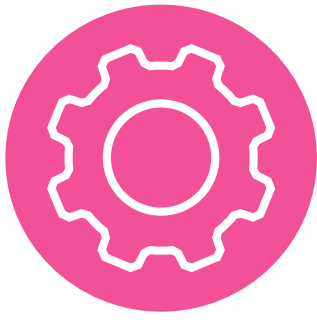
Digital Review

We will seek to review the existing ICT digital estate, ensuring that our current business systems are resilient, secure and efficient and remain future fit. We will gradually rationalise solutions that do not meet these criteria and only consider alternative or replacement solutions that improve service delivery.





Digital Services



Digital Services

Key Objectives

As a Council we can evidence powerful digital change as Services have reviewed and modified their processes and introduced digital solutions that have been well received by residents and customers. The pandemic has taught us lessons, particularly about human behaviour and digital – the gentle and unobtrusive nudge to digital, employed by companies prior to the pandemic, has been replaced with a revolution where nudging is redundant and we now see companies and the public sector working to keep pace with customer expectations and demands around digital interventions and actions.

In this Strategy, the day to day workflow processes that form the foundation of current service delivery will be reviewed and updated to remove inefficiency and duplication and help draw out service based digital efficiencies for use by the Service against savings targets or investment opportunities.

Within Digital Services, this Strategy provides examples of past and present collaborative working and this approach will grow further as the Strategy is taken forward by Services across the Council.

Digital Education

East Ayrshire Council is committed to delivering excellence and equity in education; the use of digital technology has made a significant contribution to this commitment. If used appropriately and effectively, digital technology can enhance learning and teaching across all parts of the Curriculum for Excellence; equip our learners with vital digital skills; ultimately leading to improved educational outcomes.

IT has a central role in supporting children and young people to achieve their full potential, embedding IT in learning will help children and young people develop an understanding of the role and impact technology has in changing and influencing society; gain the skills and confidence to embrace and use technology ethically and responsibly at school and at home; broaden their understanding of the applications and concepts behind technological thinking, including the nature of engineering and the links between technologies and the sciences; and establish the foundation for lifelong learning or a specialised career in the technology sector.

What we have done

Cyber Security Labs

We have created cyber security labs in a number of our Academies, by recycling older generation computer hardware due for disposal; these Academies can now deliver SQA Level 5 & 6 in Cyber Security in a safe and secure environment.

Digital Learning

Working in partnership with Computing at School through BT's 'Barefoot Computing' programme, training, support and classroom resources for computing and computational thinking skills were provided in our schools; 15 workshops for primary school teachers were delivered with 223 teachers registered to use programme resources in their classrooms.

Digital Solutions

We have developed high-tech "Protools" labs in every academy, enabling music technology courses to be delivered using industry standard software already in use in Further Education universities and colleges.

Digital Innovation

Working with engineering partners, we have created an in-house mobile projector system that allows pupils to interact with a PC by projecting screen images on to the floor or wall; using a pointer to open applications and access the internet, the pupil is effectively immersed in the application or web page they are viewing.

Digital Information

We have installed a content management system across a number of our schools that allows staff to present information relating to the school on one or more screens simultaneously.

Supporting Learning

We have provided devices with bi-directional translation software that allow our teachers and pupils to converse verbally or in written format; additionally we have converted Chromebooks into Ukrainian, allowing pupils to read, write and produce work in their native language. We have also supported online courses delivered through the Ayrshire Regional Improvement Collaborative.

What we will do

Digital Learning

We will work with our technology partners to offer practical opportunities and advice to our young learners on how STEM subjects can enhance career prospects in the digital world of work.

Digital Infrastructure

We will ensure our school ICT networks support the Scottish Government's proposed provision of a device for every child in Scotland; and we will develop secure solutions that will allow our young learners to use these devices safely and securely wherever they chose to do so.

Digital Devices

We will continue to support and deliver devices that can be used by families and pupils where English is not the first choice family language.

Digital Health

The Scottish Government has a vision to

'improve the care and wellbeing of people in Scotland by making best use of digital technologies in the design and delivery of services'.

When considering future investment programmes, we will include the provision of digital platforms that will enhance how people are supported and how the workforce communicates. Due to the pandemic, many organisations, including health and social care services, had to quickly find digital ways of working that continued to provide support at critical times; and people and families embraced new digital ways of living and connecting with each other.

What we have done

Digital Solutions

We are providing digital solutions to help people connect with each other, their family supports, our services and partners.

Digital Information

We are embedding the new Social Work Management Information System across all social work functions, to improve information recording and management and performance monitoring.

Digital Networks

We have provided a shared network solution across the Health & Social Care Partnership which allows secure transactions across all applications and systems whilst providing the necessary safeguards.

What we will do

Digital Poverty

We will focus on tackling digital poverty by ensuring digital skills sit alongside literacy, numeracy, and health and wellbeing, as essential skills for life.

Digital Solutions

Corporate ICT will continue to support our Health & Social Care colleagues to develop and use digital solutions and smart products to help people live independently at home as well as in a care setting. The introduction of digital telecare will support the shift to a more proactive and preventative approach by using citizens' data to assess and anticipate user needs.

Digital Workforce

The health and social care workforce will be digitally connected and skilled, and will use technology to improve practice, with high quality digital health and social care services in place as part of the wider service delivery. This approach will involve examining digital supports to increase the safety of those employees that are predominantly lone workers.

Digital Innovation

Corporate ICT will work with the Health & Social Care Partnership's Thinking Differently: Smart Supports Team to create a 'Smart Hub' where technology that can support people to live independently at home, and emerging smart home products that can be used in a care setting, can be demonstrated. This space can be used as a learning resource, allowing for a range of environmental sensors, smart lighting and voice activated assistants to be demonstrated to resource workers, and for service users and their families to see first-hand how technology can benefit them in their own homes.

Digital Place

The Internet of Things (IoT) is a network of physical objects embedded with sensors, software, and other technologies for the purpose of connecting and exchanging data with other devices and systems over the internet. It is a network that can also support community safety through the deployment of cameras in public realm settings.

IoT is becoming increasingly important in connecting everyday objects to the internet via embedded devices; providing seamless communication between people, processes and things; IoT devices can now share and collect data, and digital systems can record, monitor and adjust interaction between connected devices, with minimal human intervention.

The Council is working with an industry sector partner to install a network of IoT sensors across almost 80% of our local authority area.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is intelligence demonstrated by machines, 'simulating' human intelligence processes. AI applications can be used to process large volumes of data much faster and more accurately than is humanly possible, however it can be expensive.

The Ayrshire Roads Alliance is already using a system that combines AI technology with high-quality video data to quickly and accurately assess surface conditions; this information is then used to create accurate pavement and street survey condition reports to support strategic monitoring and decision-making processes.

We will continue to support Services to explore opportunities for the deployment of IoT solutions and suitable AI technologies that enhance service delivery arrangements or provide efficiencies for the Council.

Digital Surgeries

Whilst acknowledging that a digital challenge remains within our communities, we should also recognise that for many of our local residents, almost all aspects of their lives are or can be connected and experienced through digital channels rather than Face-To-Face.

There may be opportunities to complement in-person surgeries with virtual surgeries, using either web applications and social media platforms, or corporate video-conference solutions, adding a new dimension to Elected Member community engagement and relations.

Working with Elected Members, officers from relevant Services will consider options for the delivery of digital surgeries, including the technologies that could be used, and the practicalities and protocols of such an online environment.

Digital Housing

Colleagues in Housing Services are developing an online self-serve application system which will allow tenants to make housing applications, track their application's progress, check their position on the allocations waiting list, and view East Ayrshire housing stock based on their selection criteria. The end-to-end workflow will also identify any additional information checks required by Housing staff. Check-points will be built in to the system for users who may have difficulty in completing the online form, and telephone support will be provided for non-digital applicants with housing staff completing the application on their behalf. The platform will bring four separate processes together into one single streamlined application process.





Digital Communities



Digital Communities

Key Objectives

Digital Inclusion Approach

The pandemic highlighted the importance of being online, enabling our residents and businesses to access public services and connect with their family and friend networks. It also provided opportunities for the Council to digitally connect with our communities. However, the pandemic also exposed isolation and inequality in our communities, and highlighted the consequence of digital divide.

Our Digital Inclusion approach must focus on developing strong and caring partnerships with our communities, using the data we hold and ensuring we remain aware of those who continue to be vulnerable and in need of ongoing support, in order that we can better support, protect and help them thrive in an increasingly digital world.

Digital Learning

Having the essential digital skills and access to lifelong learning opportunities will enable our communities to participate in a digital world. These skills enable us to communicate, collaborate and share information online; handle information and content by knowing how to find, manage and store digital content securely; transact and pay for goods or services online; problem solve by finding solutions using digital tools and online services; and understand the importance of being safe and legal online. The Council and its partners already provide a range of lifelong learning and community based learning opportunities to support individuals and organisation to develop their digital skills.

Digital Access

Having access to the internet with a suitable device is key to tackling digital exclusion. A range of local and national initiatives including the Connecting Scotland Programme and

ConnectingU provided a real lifeline to many people during the pandemic, helping those at risk or experiencing digital exclusion to connect online through the provision of a device, mobile Wi-Fi and Digital Champion support.

The East Ayrshire Digital Access Network brings together a range of local and national organisations to promote digital inclusion and equality. Through this network, we will continue to work towards the creation of a digital East Ayrshire culture, where everyone in our communities has the same opportunity to reach their digital potential, and has access to the wider benefits it brings.

Digital Infrastructure

East Ayrshire's wider digital infrastructure is central to economic and societal resilience. It must be fast, reliable, resilient and capable of meeting the current and future needs of anyone living, learning, working or visiting East Ayrshire.

The Scottish Government has committed to giving every home and business in Scotland access to superfast broadband. This will further help develop new products and services, expand knowledge and skills and reduce costs, whilst also increasing the quality of public services.

We will continue to engage and work with Digital Scotland to ensure East Ayrshire maximises the benefits from the rollout of the Scottish Government's Reaching 100% (R100) superfast broadband programme. This will support our infrastructure and the benefits that can be realised by our communities and businesses in the years ahead.

The Regional Economic Strategy will assist in developing a strategic approach to regional digital transformation in support of Ayrshire's economic ambitions and the Scottish Government National Performance Framework. The willingness of the three Ayrshire councils to work with partners beyond their administrative local authority boundaries is important, not only for public sector partners, but also helps to take account of the perspective of businesses, communities and residents who do not necessarily relate to or operate within such boundaries.

The Ayrshire Growth Deal presents an unrivalled opportunity to transform the economic prospects of Ayrshire. Digital investment will ensure that Ayrshire has the digital infrastructure, skills and ambition to drive future growth and participation in the economy. This has the potential to attract global businesses, and make Ayrshire a world-class digitally connected region that is attractive to investors across the digital economy.

What we have done

Digital Inclusion

The East Ayrshire Digital Access Network was recognised nationally and awarded Silver Award at the iESE Public Sector Transformation Awards in 2022 for its work in tackling digital exclusion, inequalities and isolation.

Digital Divide

Collectively, the Council and its partners supported over 1,500 families and households, helping them to get online during the pandemic.

Digital Access

We will work with BT, one of our technology partners, to provide free public Wi-Fi in our larger town centres through the provision of smart street hubs that offer free calls and Wi-Fi, easy access to local information, advertising opportunities for local business, and updates on Council services.

Digital Infrastructure

96.4% of East Ayrshire premises now have access to superfast broadband through the Digital Scotland Superfast Broadband programme.

Working alongside local businesses and partners, we have developed an innovative virtual high street using a combination of the ShopAppy platform and EA Gift Card to promote a 'Shop Local' mind-set.

Ayrshire Growth Deal

Over £251 million of investment has been secured through the Ayrshire Growth Deal which will help build economic resilience and inclusive growth, particularly in relation to Digital, through projects contained within the key infrastructure programmes.

What we will do

Digital Inclusion

Working with our partners, we will continue to maximise opportunities arising from local and national initiatives such as Connecting Scotland and ConnectingU to promote digital inclusion and equality.

Digital Learning

To support our communities with the transition to digital, we will work with partners to develop learning opportunities to boost digital know-how; whether it's just the basics or the next step into the digital world, we will look to provide a self-supported training programme that can be accessed free of charge and delivered anytime and anywhere, that will improve the digital skills and confidence of our communities.

Digital Divide

We will ensure our digital services and content are accessible and available across multiple platforms and channels whilst supporting service users who are not yet, or have chosen not to be, digitally connected, ensuring the digital divide is not further widened.

Digital Skills

We will work with our Services to support people and organisations to develop their digital skills using a collaborative approach with partners. This will be achieved through Lifelong Learning Opportunities for communities and initiatives such as the Digital Boost programme for Businesses. We will signpost professional learning opportunities for our third-sector partners, through the Scottish Government's Digital Academy, to support the work they are already undertaking to digitise communities.

Digital Access

Using data and intelligence, we will develop a matrix that will enable the Council and its partners to identify communities at risk of or experiencing digital exclusion within East Ayrshire in order to target resources effectively.

Digital Infrastructure

We will continue to work with key partners, including the Scottish Government and Digital Scotland, to support the delivery of superfast broadband coverage under the R100 programme.

Ayrshire Growth Deal

We will seek to maximise opportunities arising from the Ayrshire Growth Deal investment of £3m, set aside for key digital infrastructure, regional digital hubs and 4G infill.

Community Partnership in Action

Connecting Scotland Programme

Being online is an essential lifeline. Throughout the coronavirus crisis, the internet is keeping us connected to friends and family, informed and entertained, and able to learn, work, shop and access health information and other public services. However, some people can't access these benefits because they don't have the confidence, kit and connectivity at home.

The Scottish Government have committed to investing up to £200 million to support digital inclusion during the lifetime of this parliament in their Programme for Government. This will be achieved via the Connecting Scotland Programme and will support up to 300,000 households get the devices, data and skills to connect.

The Connecting Scotland Programme is a Scottish Government funded initiative that was set up at the start of the Pandemic to help get every citizen in Scotland online. Over 1,500 East Ayrshire families to date are benefiting from the Programme, which has provided them with a device, connectivity and wraparound "Digital Champion" support.

More information on the Connecting Scotland Programme can be found on the [Connecting Scotland](#) website.

Input Community Works

Input Community Works, a locally based charity in Ayrshire, works with adults with Learning Disabilities or additional support needs and helps prepare them for the world of work.

They have been instrumental in helping tackle Digital exclusion and poverty in East Ayrshire whilst also supporting the Scottish Government's ICT Green Strategy by recycling old, new and unwanted digital devices and giving them back to local people at risk or experiencing digital exclusion for little or no cost.

During the Pandemic, Input supported over 200 East Ayrshire families helping them get online by providing them with a recycled device, technical support and where possible connectivity.

More information on the charity can be found on the [Input Community Works](#) website.

Accessible Broadband for Struggling Families

A new service administered by The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) will allow providers of broadband to verify whether customers are receiving relevant benefits, making them eligible for extra financial support, such as reduced broadband bills.

The verification service will require customers on Universal Credit and other benefits to consent before the internet service provider can speak to DWP about their eligibility for the schemes, which include access to broadband 'social tariffs' and mobile phone deals.

Digital Poverty Alliance – Tech4 Families

As part of their efforts and mission to eradicate Digital Poverty in the UK by 2030, the Digital Poverty Alliance partnered with Currys in June 2022 to launch their [Tech4Families Scheme](#).

Five areas (Ayrshire being the only area in Scotland) in the United Kingdom have been identified where they know lots of people are struggling to make ends meet.

The [Tech4Families Scheme](#) provides families with of a computer (and where required, 6 months connectivity) helping them get online to realise the benefits of being connected.

More information can be found on the [Digital Poverty Alliance](#) website.

AbilityNet – ConnectingU Scheme

AbilityNet is a pioneering UK charity with a global perspective. They believe the power of digital technology should be available to everyone, regardless of ability or age.

Building on the success of the Scottish Government funded Connecting Scotland Programme, AbilityNet, partnered with Lenovo, launched their ConnectingU Scheme in April 2022. The initiative resulted in 300 digital devices and support distributed to older and disabled people struggling to access any digital service.

Their free online resources and a network of over 300 community-based volunteers help individuals with any disability, of any age, to use all kinds of digital technology.

Members of the East Ayrshire Digital Access Network successfully participated in the programme and received a share of the resources, which has helped families in East Ayrshire get online and learn new skills.

More information on the ConnectingU Scheme can be found on the [AbilityNet](#) website.

Respite Now – National Databank Initiative

The National Databank, setup by [The Good Things Foundation](#), provide free mobile data, texts and calls to people in need via Good Things Foundation's [network of local community partners](#). Community organisations can apply to access the databank, enabling them to provide data to people in their communities who need it.

Respite Now, part of the National Databank Initiative, provides free 02, Three and Vodafone SIM cards until 2023 to those experiencing data poverty. East Ayrshire Digital Access Network member and local social housing provider "Shire Housing Association" successfully applied to become a "Community Partner" and received 1,000 data sim cards, which they will be distributing to their tenants as part of their drive to tackle data poverty in East Ayrshire.

More information on the National Databank can be found on [The Good Things Foundation](#) website.



Digital Culture



Digital Culture

Key Objectives

Digital Culture

Digital Culture is the concept that describes how technology and the internet shapes the way we interact. It's the way we behave, think and communicate and is the product of the endless technological innovation that surrounds us.

In today's modern environment, a successful organisation also needs to be a digital organisation. Digital technology has revolutionised how we operate and succeed. And, it is increasingly important to nurture a strong digital culture that supports this.

Digital Culture must therefore be recognised as the key theme that provides the foundation to our Digital Strategy, underpinning our vision and all of the other key themes. A strong digital culture should be encouraged by:

Embracing Transparency

It is important to raise awareness of the importance of and impact that digital technology has. We must facilitate transparency through effective communication and discussion, delivering information in engaging and positive ways.

Encouraging Collaboration

Working together improves workflow. Ideas become more cohesive and progress can be measured. We must encourage shared learning and insights across our services.

Providing Digital Training

The most effective way for staff to understand digital is via effective and targeted digital training. We must support the provision of a flexible and consistent training programme that reflects roles and aids personal development.

Being Comfortable with Risk

The fast-moving pace of digital demands

we be agile. We must cultivate an open and trusting environment that focuses on sharing of best practice and lessons learned, where we are comfortable with risk and unafraid of trying new things.

Aspiring to Inspire

Digital is the key to a world of opportunity and we must capitalise on its potential. We must be brave in disrupting the norm, challenging how things are done and viewing our services in different ways.

Collaborative Working

As we review our core digital applications and platforms there is an opportunity for us to create common and shared solutions across our services. One such opportunity is in how we record, use and share data and information across our multiple sources and systems. There is a wealth of data intelligence available to us and we will explore the potential of using data to drive future decisions, forecast service demand and improve service delivery, allowing resources to be allocated efficiently and to where they are needed most.

Where appropriate we will share data across service areas to improve service outcomes for our communities. By sharing information and working collaboratively, we can move to a pro-active joined up approach. Legislative requirements and security controls will be robust and proportionate, to protect data and services, but not impede accessibility.

Digital Governance

For any strategy to succeed it requires leadership. Digital Governance helps to establish lines of accountability, roles, decision-making, and change management authority for an organisation's digital presence. A well designed and supported digital governance framework minimises efforts, resources and costs and ensures digital business maturity.

To this end, a Digital Management Board will be established, led by the Chief Financial Officer and Head of Finance and ICT and will report directly to the Corporate Management Team. This Board will oversee the delivery of the corporate digital agenda and drive forward the digital programme. It will also ensure that the Digital Strategy supports and compliments our other corporate strategic policies and aligns with East Ayrshire's sovereign Community Plan.

Digital Equality and Diversity

This Strategy was developed with input from East Ayrshire's Equalities Consultation Forum. A number of community representatives and community councillors recently attended an open forum to discuss the Council's digital journey so far. This proved an extremely constructive and interesting afternoon for all who attended, with our Digital Strategy being well received and attendees being both interested and invested in our continuing digital journey. The Equalities Consultation Forum will continue with their support and involvement by becoming a 'Critical Friend' to the Digital Management Board. They will challenge progress wherever it is required and ensure we embed our core values of quality, equality, accessibility and partnership in everything we do.

What we have done

Collaborative Working

Collaborative working has delivered several key online projects, including the recycling booking system, the garden permit scheme and the school enrolment programme. These were designed and delivered in-house and have attracted interest from our peers who are keen to implement similar solutions.

Digital Learning

A digital resources section has been created on the Learning Academy and we recently participated in a campaign raising awareness of online fraud.

Digital Ambassadors

The work of digital ambassadors fully aligns with the FACE qualities and behaviours and supports a digital culture mind-set. As we move forward and embed a digital culture, being a digital ambassador will become the norm in everyone's role.

What we will do

Collaborative Working

We will continue to encourage collaborative working, both internally and externally with our partners and peers whilst adopting the Scottish Approach to Service Design to ensure a cohesive and consistent approach is applied to everything we do.

Digital Learning

We will enhance existing and develop new learning opportunities with 'How To' guides which support employees in improving their digital skills and digital confidence, encouraging engagement in digital redesign whilst reinforcing the essentials such as the importance of cyber security and staying alert to emerging risks.

Digital Ambassadors

We will build on the success of the digital ambassador programme and the digital champions within our curricular estate, encouraging, suggesting and influencing new ways of working and testing new digital solutions before they go live.

Digital Governance

A Digital Management Board will be established to lead, support and challenge the Digital Strategy. The Board will include key staff from Finance & ICT and Service stakeholders, fostering collaboration and effectively breaking down silos, perceived or otherwise. The Board will meet regularly to offer leadership and support and challenge every key aspect of the Digital Strategy. It will be tasked with establishing governance around digital investment, priorities and standards; developing and employing policies that encourage the success of the digital programme; defining short- and long-term action plans; and ensuring their successful delivery. It will ensure a focused and coherent approach is taken and provide regular updates on corporate initiatives and digital progress to Cabinet and Senior Management. The board will review the Strategy annually to ensure objectives are remain clearly defined and future fit.

Measuring Progress

Progress against our Digital Strategy will be tracked primarily through existing corporate measurement frameworks. Service performance is summarised through a range of Statutory Performance Indicators, which are reported to the Council on an annual basis. Ongoing performance is regularly monitored and reported using the Council's electronic performance management framework. We will seek to update existing indicators or create new ones which will identify and monitor digital improvements within our services.

We will compare our performance through benchmarking with our partners and peers as a means of identifying good practice and supporting continuous improvement and ensuring the best possible services and outcomes for our communities.

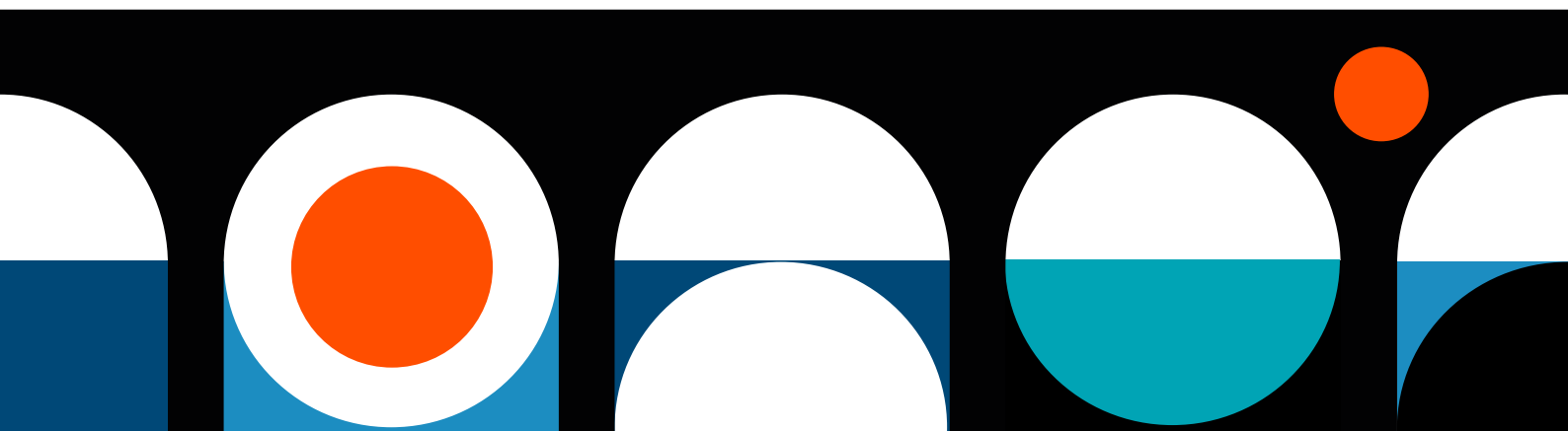
We will design and implement our digital services to align with industry and sector standards, policies and procedures. If these do not exist, we will define them.

Our digital security standards, practices and procedures will be continually reviewed and updated in line with industry trends in cyber resilience. Digital security will be reviewed not only at the design stage of any new service but continually throughout the lifecycle of the digital technology.

We will routinely track and report on our own set of internal performance indicators that include self-service take-up, service delivery levels, stakeholder surveys, user satisfaction and user feedback.

We will also work with Services to help them realise and achieve their own digital savings and efficiencies as they review and redesign their processes and customer approach to align with this Strategy and keep pace with demand and change.

Our Digital Strategy is one of a suite of strategies that are being prepared to guide and shape the Council through to 2027 and beyond. Whilst this Strategy has the depth and span to justifiably stand alone, it does so while recognising the fundamental inter-dependencies that exist between it and the Council's Strategic Plan, the Medium Term Financial Plan and the work that is being progressed through the Workforce Strategy. Together they form the route map to achieve digital change and transformation, support the financial plan, align resources, demonstrate resilience and deliver effective and considered change at this turbulent time.



The Stats and the Facts

Some Key Stats



51k online customer accounts, with 60% created between April 2020 and March 2021



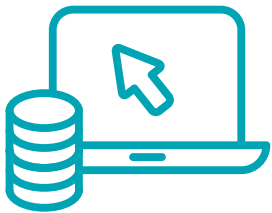
16k serviced customer accounts, created for customers who transact by phone



76% of customers can transact online with access to over 60 self-service applications



65% of online customer accounts have been "active" in first five months of 2022



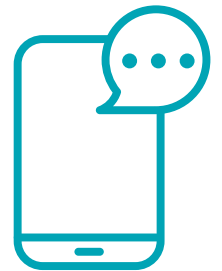
An average of **58k customer contact** transactions per month



55% of contact is by phone, 43% is online and only 2% is now Face-To-Face



An average of **9k calls are answered weekly** through our customer contact numbers



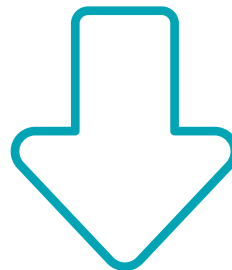
69% of customer calls are from a mobile phone number



65% of calls are specific service enquiries, the remainder are Finance service related



Digital Payment options have increased by over 30% since 2020



45% reduction in mediated payments since 2018/19



23% of payments are now mediated, compared with 67% in 2018/19

Some Interesting Facts



97% of customers book their recycling centre visit online, with only 3% made by phone



72% of Garden Waste Permits are purchased online, with the remainder by phone



Mornings are the busiest time with **Monday and Tuesday** typically our busier days



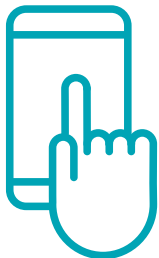
30% of online transactions happen out with traditional office hours



63% of customers rate their experience as positive, with only 5% rating it as negative



120k visits to our website in May 2022, **up 83%** for the same month last year



95% of monthly website visits are unique visits



All employees now have access to laptops, telephony and remote access networks



An average of **2.5k technical support requests resolved** by ICT Helpdesk each month

Customer Feedback

- ★ *"Easy to use, super modern software. The downloadable PDF showing the enquiry is very useful, not many councils or even private companies offer it!"*
- ★ *"I have filled this form in a few times now and it has been very easy and dealt with very quickly!"*
- ★ *"Well done East Ayrshire, I arrived at the Recycling Centre and thought it was closed as no other cars were queuing, relieved that it was open and appointment system worked well. Only saw one car arriving as I was leaving so no worries about overcrowding and social distancing."*
- ★ *"Just been to my recycling appointment, excellent is all I can say, first time I have not had to queue at the Recycling Centre, chap checked my registration and in I went. Please tell me this will still be in place after Covid as it was excellent."*

Testimonials

"Technology has redefined working practices across a whole host of services in the Housing & Communities portfolio with the workplace increasingly becoming a more flexible, mobile environment. Mobilisation of our workforce has the potential to enhance service efficiency, customer service and value for money. With an influx of devices that enable colleagues to access and update data, from multiple locations, the efficiency advantages are significant. This enhancement in productivity as well as empowering colleagues with the tools they need to fulfil their role continues to be at the core of serving our communities".

Blair Millar, Head of Housing and Communities

"The recent introduction of Chromebook technology has presented opportunities to support pupils with little or no grasp of English. Our staff are being provided with Chromebook devices that are configured to translate from English to the pupil's native language, and back. The pupils are also being provided with a Chromebook in their native language so they can carry out tasks assigned by their teacher. Devices are currently being used to support Ukrainian children in our schools and ECCs; and by our teams to support Urdu, Egyptian and Vietnamese translations. This has also been a great cultural experience for pupils and staff as they develop linguistic skills and basic vocabulary in other languages."

Linda McAulay-Griffiths, Chief Education Officer and Head of Education