

ADG

# Lighting the way: A playbook for council survival

# Introducing ADG

Way back in 2016, as Chief Executive of Aylesbury Vale District Council (AVDC), Andrew Grant spoke at a public event for public sector professionals.

He said in less than ten minutes everything you need to know about local government funding today:

*“There is no point in half-hearted or ‘business-as-usual’ solutions. We have seen the future of tax and grant dependency. Politically and managerially, **the current trajectory is unsustainable** for local authorities. If they cannot find alternative sources of income, it will lead to service failure.”*



*“If we shave costs to make the council more effective, our residual fixed costs – like pensions – still increase, relatively. The top line remains sufficiently weak that the government always ends up subsidising services, and we know we won’t be allowed to continue like that.”*

*“We figured **we needed to change before change hit us**, and that’s been the momentum for our transition to a more commercial footing. You can’t just do the wrong things more right for a few years.”*

*“We realised that if we were going to grow our way out, we would have to **get in touch with our community’s discretionary spend**. We have customers which we don’t have to acquire, so we asked: what can we do that will bring value to their lives? They are on our doorstep and they know who we are, so the reward for good work will be not just payment, but their loyalty and a continued stream of work. **We are positioning AVDC as an enterprise organisation which makes our citizens’ home and work lives easier.**”*

Grant’s philosophy, explained there in just 200 words, changed AVDC’s trajectory.

Between 2011 and 2019, savings and new income moved the needle on AVDC’s profitability by a total of **£18.7M** – or just over £2M per annum.

And since then, Grant has shared his successes at AVDC with over **60 other councils** across the UK.



*“Andrew’s passion for change shines through. He’s one of the few people who has truly led organisational change and understands the nuance and relationship between leadership, culture and implementation. Working with Andrew doesn’t just fill you with hope, but reassures you that anything is possible when you put your mind to it.”*

**Vimla Appadoo, TedX Speaker and FutureGov Service Designer**

# The money isn't coming back

Anyone working in local government management should be both scared and energised.

**Scared**, because the money isn't coming back. Local Government has seen a 49% reduction in funding from central sources since FY2010-11 (NAO 2018). And the government has announced further mandatory cuts to local government spending.

for specific requirements are complex and inadequate. And ultimately, central government has a transformational agenda and a media machine which knows that it can get away with pillaging local resources for national purposes. **Austerity may be over – but don't hold your breath!**

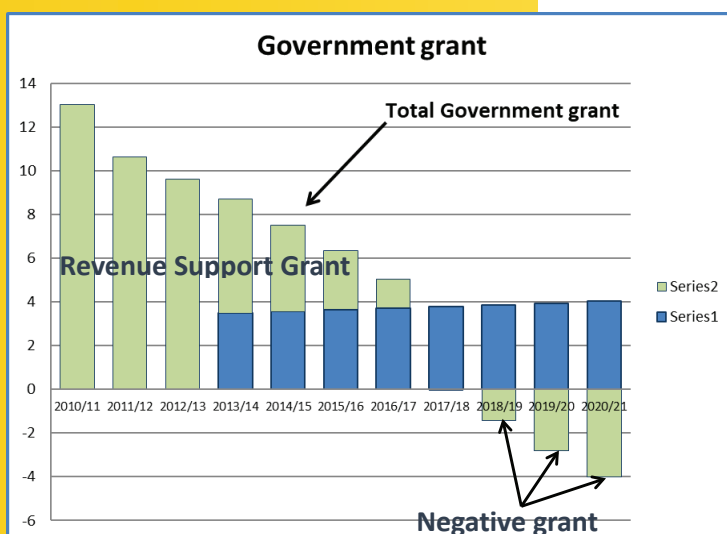
But you should also be **energised**, because we know where we are at, and we know that there are solutions. We know our position, and even being at the bottom of the funding priorities pile is significantly better than living in ignorance and hoping that a change is round the corner.

Furthermore, even though it's in the nature of the public sector to be conservative (with a small 'c'), **we have all we need** in terms of resources and evidence to move rapidly towards a more effective operating model.

And be under no illusion: as efforts focus on Brexit and the economic recovery from COVID-19, **a fully transformed operating model is the only way forward.**

In this White Paper, we will take you through **an all-embracing process**, refined across a decade of world-class delivery in a real local authority context.

A process which saw Aylesbury Vale District Council (AVDC) win multiple awards, balance the books, become the envy of cash-strapped authorities across the UK and **a pioneer for modern council management.**



**Support picture for local government, pre-COVID**

The COVID-19 crisis has seen local authorities gain access to funding to resolve specific short-term challenges, and it may in the long run change attitudes towards e.g. social care funding. But this is unlikely to be more than piecemeal.

These and other pots of money available for begging councils to top up funds



# The Checklist

Let's begin with a brief moment of introspection.

The worst-performing councils have verged on US-style bankruptcy, yet **many Chief Executives are closing their eyes** to the problems they face today, or are certain to face without radical reconfiguration.

This checklist will help you understand your position - without having to draft in your CFO!

1

**MONEY: How confident are you of being able to balance your budgets this year?**



Answer on a scale of 0-10, where 0 is "very unconfident" and 10 is "very confident"

Your answer:    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

2

**CUSTOMER SERVICE: Can you see all the services used by any citizen in one place?**



Yes

Manually, with  
a bit of work

No

3

**CULTURE: Which of these do you think is a good thing?**



Removing hierarchy

Delegating to less experienced  
staff

Giving staff other job  
opportunities within the council

Allowing staff to spend money  
investigating their commercial  
ideas

Parachuting professional  
managers into departments of  
which they have no experience

4

**TECHNOLOGY: When COVID hit, how easy was it to access all your systems remotely?**



Answer on a scale of 0-10, where 0 is "very hard" and 10 is "very easy"

Your answer:    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

5

**MONEY: How do you intend to balance the books?**



Pick any of these which are in your strategy:

Get help from  
central government

Make cuts to  
existing services

Develop new shared  
services

Launch new  
services

Find new in-house  
efficiencies



6



**CUSTOMER SERVICE:** On which of these channels can your customers reach you and receive an excellent level of service?

Telephone

Live Chat

Voice control  
(Siri, Alexa etc.)

Email

Web Account

7



**LEADERSHIP:** How many of these are true for your organisation?

We have a leadership development programme.

Managers are subject to exactly the same regimes as those on the shop floor.

Managers are management specialists, not technical specialists.

We successfully attract leadership talent from the private sector.

Nobody goes more than three months without personal careers or leadership advice.

## How to score...

**Q1:** Your answer from 0-10 as your point score.

**Q2:** Yes: 10  
Manually, with a bit of work: 3  
No: 0

**Q3:** Two points for each time you answered yes.

**Q4:** Your answer from 0-10 as your point score.

**Q5:** Add up a total for each you selected, as follows:

- Get help from central government: 0
- Launch new services: 7
- Make cuts to existing services: 1
- Find new in-house efficiencies: 1
- Develop new shared services: 1

**Q6:** Give yourself two points for each channel you use.

- Add an extra five points if data from all of these channels goes into the same system in real-time
- And add another extra five points if customers can move between channels in real-time

**Q7:** Two points for each time you answered yes.

Tot them up! You should now have a score out of 80 – the higher the better.

- Hit 70-80 and you're in the sort of territory we achieved at Aylesbury Vale District Council.
- Achieve 50-70 and you're well ahead of most councils.
- We should see 20-50 as the majority; an achievement, but also not sustainable in the long term.
- And 0-20 means you should read on, urgently.



# The Big Picture

If the crisis checklist looks like bad news, don't worry. You're not alone, and there are answers.

Survival – in fact **a genuinely profitable evolution** – is possible; with a fully transformed operating model which:

- Recognises that **the status quo is unsustainable** and a one-way ticket to bankruptcy
- **Brings down the sacred cows** in both management and delivery teams
- Focuses on providing **an unprecedented level of service** that exceeds citizen expectations
- With the ultimate aim of ensuring the **long-term viability of local services**

Our five-point plan has already served to revolutionise (and bring into financial equilibrium) the operations at Aylesbury Vale District Council (now part of the Bucks unitary authority).

It is a proven, tested and ambitious model.

It will also require faith, diligence and good communication from council leaders and Chamber Members alike.

The key components are:

- **Digital transformation:** employing digital tools so that operations can become:
  - **Cheaper**, cutting the cost of service
  - **More flexible** (and this is more important than being cheaper!), able to move with customer expectations and demand; and also **cutting the cost** of trying out new ideas.
- **Leadership:** making dramatic changes to an organisation which is political, unionised and whose legitimate stakeholders include the entire community demands excellent leadership. Your staff also deserve effective communication and to see **commitment from the top**.
- **Customer Focus:** when we think about our communities first, we can't go wrong. Everyone is a resident, everyone deserves our focus. And when an organisation becomes customer-obsessive, its **standards rise to meet their expectations** – enough to become a supplier of choice.
- **Culture Change:** the counterpoint to leadership, bringing staff on a journey of transformation requires a dramatic change in operating culture. You will lose some people; significantly more will surprise you with their **resilience, talent and capability**.



- **Commercialisation:** finally, we must **eliminate the idea that commercialisation is a dirty word**. The council's traditional job is to cater to particularly the under-served and the most disadvantaged people in society. Yet if we provided services to the majority 90% too, there would be plenty more in the way of resources to 'do the day job'. If the commercialisation of essential local services is to be unimaginable, then the commercialisation of additional services and the application of commercial discipline to council operations is essential.

<b>1</b>	<b>DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION</b>	THE DIGITAL TOOLS TO COPE WITH ACCELERATED CHANGE AND EMBED FLEXIBILITY FOREVER.
<b>2</b>	<b>LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE</b>	COMPLEX CHANGE COMES FROM THE TOP. EVERYONE NEEDS TO BE UP TO SCRATCH.
<b>3</b>	<b>CUSTOMER FOCUS</b>	THINKING CUSTOMER-FIRST. BE AS GOOD AS AMAZON.
<b>4</b>	<b>CULTURE CHANGE</b>	RE-IMAGINE PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY
<b>5</b>	<b>COMMERCIALISATION</b>	DEVELOP SERVICES WHICH CREATE REVENUE STREAMS

## The triangle of options – and why you're in the wrong place

This is likely looking too hard to swallow. How can a council possibly countenance becoming a commercial organisation in any way?

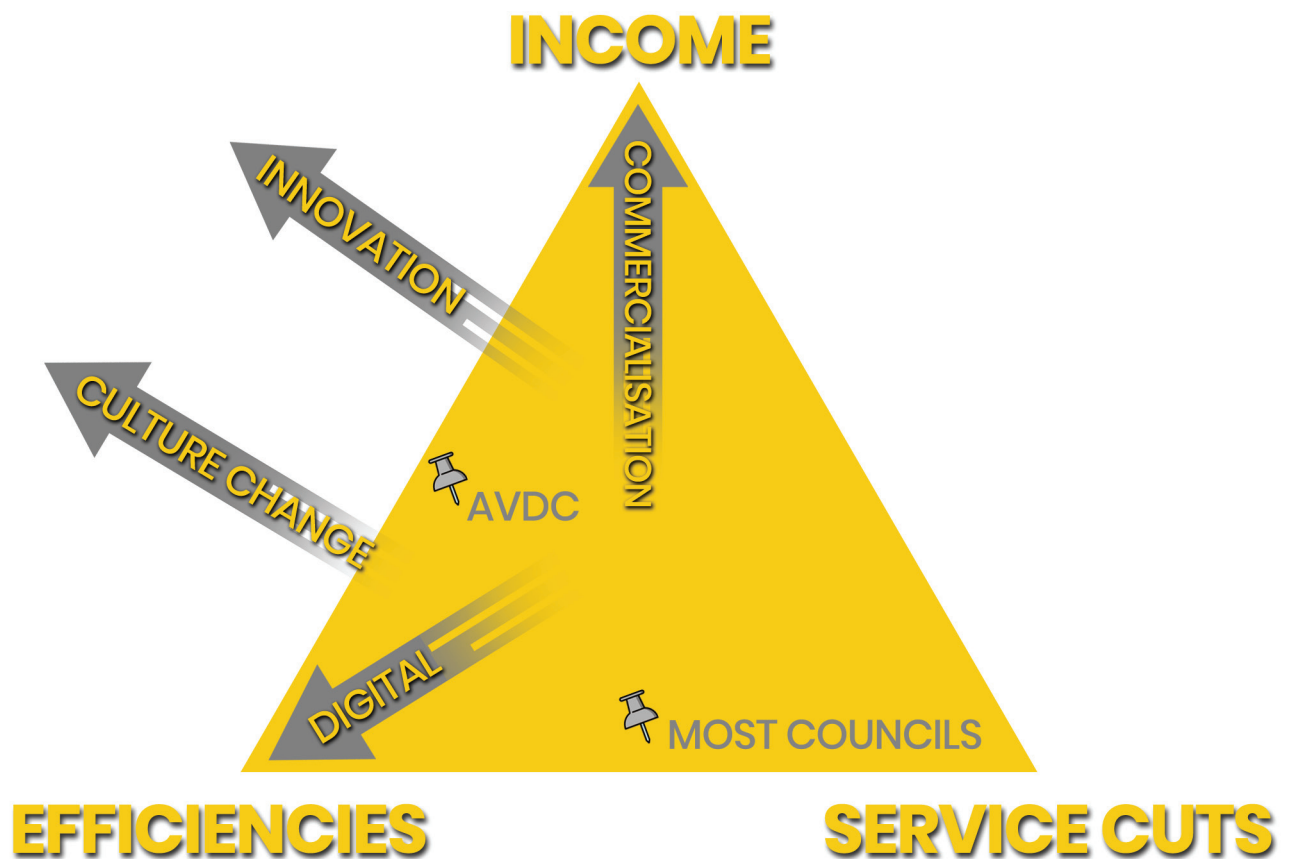
Maybe this simple model will sway your opinion.

There are only three ways in which local authorities can improve their financial performance:

- **Efficiencies – doing more with less:** successful thus far, but impossible to continue without digital transformation in any case; and **guaranteed to reach a limit** in the near future (unlike government demand for savings!)
- **Service cuts – doing less with the same:** already the painful truth for councils which have not made adequate plans, and the **guaranteed outcome** for councils without a new service philosophy.
- **Income – doing more with more:** the unpalatable truth for dogmatic councils, the obvious choice for the realist, and something we have **already achieved** at AVDC and formalised into a roadmap here.

Most councils are hovering on the axis between efficiencies and service cuts.





Aylesbury Vale District Council, conversely, moved to an **optimal model** based on digitally-driven efficiencies and innovative income streams. The same digital excellence puts the council on a firm footing for future innovations.

And on the triangle of cost-cutting options, it's clear how AVDC's transformation plans have moved the council in the right direction:

- Digital creates efficiencies
- Innovation opens the door to both efficiencies and new income streams
- Culture change unlocks a commitment to making big transformations and gives staff confidence in their changing environment
- And commercialisation creates increasingly important opportunities for income generation





# Stop beating yourself up

If the Triangle model is a logical impetus for change, it's worth looking at a cultural incentive too.

In local authorities, we seem to do a very good job of sentences which begin with "But".

- We'd love to transform our operations, but...
- This works in the private sector, but...
- It makes sense in principle, but...

Again, we've seen these arguments constantly. They are both a barrier to enlightened and realistic thinking and, more importantly, **embed the status quo**. And since we know that the status quo is unsustainable, these arguments therefore embed guaranteed failure.

Nobody says it's going to be easy to change the mindset of a large and complex organisation. But it's not impossible.

So let's push the reset button on what it means to be a leader in the public sector. Let's recognise the **extraordinary resources for transformation** that we have at our disposal.

It begins with the realisation that, far from being stale poor relations to modern private sector ventures, local authorities and councils often have a head start when compared to businesses.



Your managers are  
**VERY CAPABLE**  
indeed



You are  
**TRUSTED**  
by your customers



You can be  
**COMMERCIAL**  
without being evil

*You're in better shape than you think!*



Here are ten reasons to believe that the stodgy old local authority architecture has far more to offer than you thought.

## 1) You have capable and knowledgeable leaders.

David Robson, the Director of public sector business consultants, Archemys, worked with us at Aylesbury Vale District Council on our commercialisation plans. He says, “*When we started working with local authorities, we found that they have exceptionally competent managers. They may lack experience of enterprise, but there is **no lack of ability.***”

## 2) You’ve got talent.

How many startups have an in-house legal resource? Or an HR consultant on tap? How about finance, governance, improvement, procurement or public affairs? Transformation and commercialisation all demand agility. Unlike a small business, you have the talent and resources to **bring expertise to any challenge.**

## 3) You are connected to your citizens.

Robson says, “*For most modern startups, the majority of their investment goes on acquisition and building a customer base. Councils already have it: **their customer insight is worth millions** and it just needs realising.*”

## 4) Insight is everywhere

Making decisions on a whim is hard. But that’s not something a council has to do. Most council employees will live in your catchment area – so they represent the best focus group for new ideas a startup could ever have. And if you need still more validation for a plan, **you won’t have to travel far to find honest answers.**

## 5) Council spend isn’t money down the drain.

There is a very good argument for active local authorities. The instinctive belief is in “*small government*” – that councils should only do the minimum, as a provider of last resort – because that’s all they are good at, and these administrative and emergency functions are a sink for money. However, by being more active, the council can support local businesses, cover more of its own costs, and ideally drive enough economic activity to take some of the most costly individuals out of the safety net and into self-sufficiency. At AVDC, we made a point of working wherever possible with our “**local economic family**”. The idea that every pound spent is a pound lost is ludicrous.



## 6) Successes benefits the council and therefore the community.

What could be a better driver for loyalty than supporting the communities in which we live? When the council makes a profit, people understand that it funds and improves local services, or keeps taxation down. This is an incentive for more well-off residents to use locally-developed and provided commercial services – they **directly fund local outcomes**.

## 7) You've got scale.

Local authorities already have the people and call centres to **cope with a six-figure (or more) population**. The infrastructure for building services or transforming business models while dealing with thousands of interactions is already in place.

## 8) You can use council suppliers.

The supply chain is also in place. Whatever you want to achieve, **you probably already have the supplier relationships** to do it, and if you don't, the procurement processes and resources are off-the-shelf.

## 9) You've got data.

Data is prized. The [FT reports](#) that by 2022, data will be worth \$200BN – indeed it's this data that allows us to use Google and Facebook free of charge. We're not suggesting that councils should be selling their data on; rather that there is clearly inherent value in knowing your customers. In the local area, nobody knows better than you who is wealthy, who is active, who has a family or who needs assistance. **You are uniquely equipped to design services that meet local needs.**

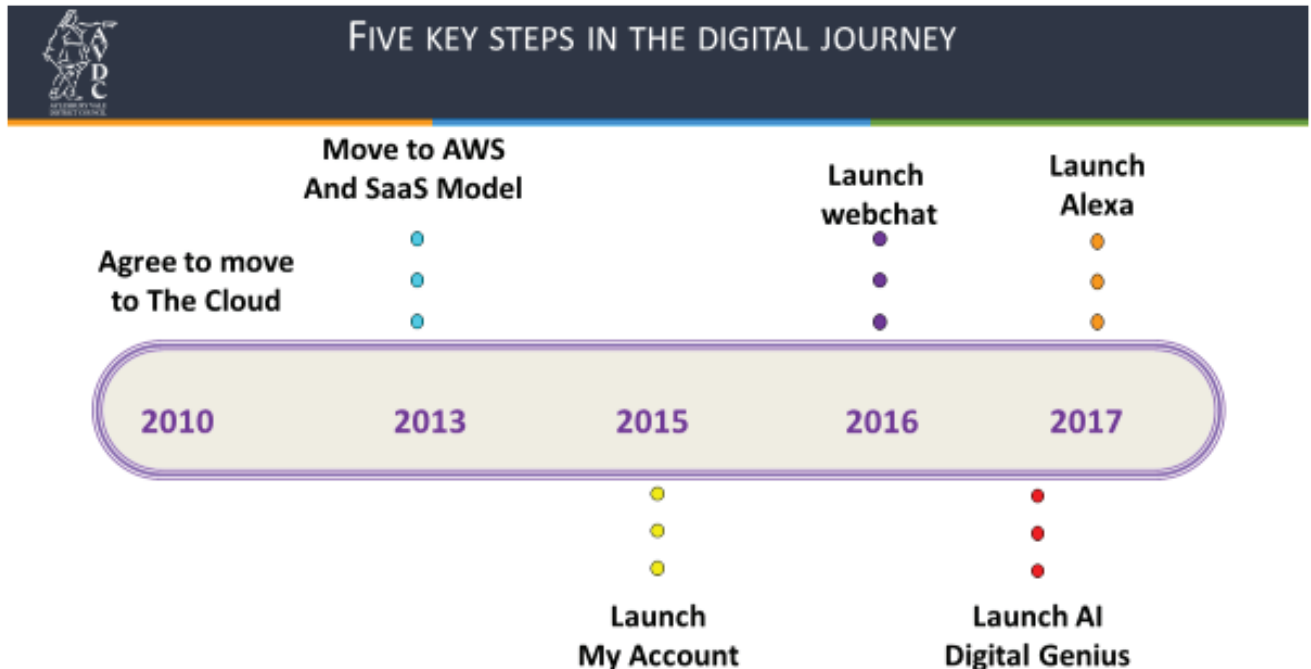
## 10) You're ethical

For every criticism that councils are lumbering or ineffective, they are also trusted to be ethical, to have an oversight regime, and to be fair. Robson again: ***“Local authorities have a remarkable wealth of soft assets to monetise. Their portfolio includes reputation, their standing in the community, deep fiscal and moral trust, and ample people resources.”*** When councils transform, develop commercial models, or engage in new activities with their communities, this trust is invaluable. It's also becoming increasingly appreciated: ethical operations are a priority for Millennial citizens.



# Why ADG?

## What we did at Aylesbury Vale District Council



- Savings
  - Cut 20% of council budget outright
  - Project savings from staff efficiencies: £1.8m over 5 years
  - 100,000 miles, 100,000 officer hours and £100,000 saved with access to electric car pool
- Digital Transformation
  - The first council to move 100% to the Cloud
  - Flexible working saves £1.5M in office space
  - Hot-desking generates £80,000 every year in rental of resulting spare office space
  - Print services save £190,000 over 5 years
  - Cloud telephony saves £250,000 over 5 years
  - The first council to launch an Alexa Skill



*“Andrew is an experienced and well-networked leader with deep knowledge of government workings and a passion for change. His disruption and transformation of AVDC was a shining example of leadership in the UK local government.”*

**Denis Kaminskiy, Founder, Arcus Global**



- Leadership Excellence
  - Management respected as a discipline in its own right
  - 70 channelled through certificated leadership development programme
  - General Managers brought into key departments
- Customer Focus
  - Omnichannel customer services reduces costly face-to-face interactions by 90%
  - Over 2000 webchats per month – 40% of which have an AI component
  - Chat costs 15p, as against £2.22 per answered call

- Equivalent 133 hours officer time a month
- Overall efficiencies saving of two FTE
- Up to 5 webchats at a time plus phone call
- Webchat durations down by 3-4 minutes
- 15p versus £2.22 per phone call

**Phone calls down 30% on average since webchat introduced**

- Culture Change
  - Slashed corporate hierarchy
  - Embedded obsession with the customer: over 90% of staff are now “customer-facing”
  - Only 10% of staff lost in complete restructure and behavioural analysis
  - After 12 months, 30% increase in new staff attracted by new culture (including top private sector recruits)



*“In my time in local government, I have met few real visionaries and Andrew is one of that very rare breed. People like Andrew must not be lost to the public sector.”*

**Nick Tustian, Chief Executive, Eastleigh Borough Council**



- Commercialisation
  - Leisure services retendered, from in-house and loss-making to outsourced and profitable
  - Over £1m annual income from innovative, chargeable incremental waste services
  - £1m loss converted into £1m surplus in Planning department through efficiencies, flow analysis and Premium Planning service which fast-tracks planning applications for a fee (also improving standard planning service delivery).
  - Local lottery has raised over £200,000 for local causes
  - Innovation process launches multiple further ideas, some successful, some less so, but all contributing to agility, insight and improvement.

Years	Income Generation	Efficiencies	Cuts in Services	Total Savings
2011/12	685,000	1,177,700	947,000	2,809,700
2012/13	547,800	1,409,200	73,200	2,030,200
2013/14	211,400	1,128,500	0	1,339,900
2014/15	557,200	1,800,400	70,000	2,427,600
2015/16	910,400	1,546,100	0	2,456,500
2016/17	1,855,000	965,800	12,500	2,833,300
2017/18	706,300	1,426,700	67,000	2,200,000
2018/19	842,500	1,790,100	0	2,632,600
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,315,600</b>	<b>11,244,500</b>	<b>1,169,700</b>	<b>18,729,800</b>



# Digital Transformation 1:

## Cloud agility

Here's where it all started. But first, a few caveats – because tech and the public sector have not been easy bedfellows...

The public sector is littered with IT projects which have gone over budget, been abandoned by staff, or failed to deliver on their promises.

We know.

At AVDC, we approached the digital component of transformation with all the trepidation of any other public sector organisation.

But we applied digital solutions as a strategic answer to strategic challenges – not tactical day-to-day delivery, but the big issues which were **holding the council back**. At AVDC, it began with the Cloud, because the Cloud was genuinely revolutionary in its scope.

Aylesbury Vale District Council was the first council in the UK to move into the Cloud, removing huge IT maintenance, management and risk costs at a stroke. The change saved a consistent £4m per annum, thanks to:

- **No datacentre:** By putting both processing and storage into the cloud, AVDC dramatically cut the CapEx and maintenance overhead of its in-house IT.
- **Virtualisation:** Virtualisation maximises cloud resources in real-time to meet demand, further reducing costs
- **Reduced physical support:** From security to break/fix, support is handled by the cloud contractor. This is much cheaper, because there are no physical call-outs and the cost of in-house IT support is removed completely.
- **Virtual desktop:** Hotdesking unlocked by virtual desktops reduces the need for physical desk space (and also breaks down departmental barriers, focusing employees on customer need)
- **Cloud apps:** Since staff can work anywhere, they are free to work at home or on-site – saving time, cutting travel costs and making employees happier.
- **Cloud telephony:** AVDC worked with a local provider to operate truly cloud, infrastructure-free, telephony. Not only is there no phone infrastructure to buy, AVDC only paid for lines and bandwidth as they were actually used, in real-time.
- **IT as a Service:** As much IT as possible is bought in on an OpEx/pay-as-you-go basis. Indeed the most convincing business case came from removing non-critical activities from critical-grade support, e.g. asking “*how many of our services really need out-of-hours availability?*”



- **Simpler licensing:** By minimising onboard software, as many functions as possible are managed through the browser. When software is pay-as-you-go rather than bought outright, the capital expenditure is removed completely and licensing can be flexed up or down monthly as demand changes.

Cloud is now the default for most organisations, but despite AVDC's lead, many councils still operate at least some of their own IT infrastructure. This is mainly through a **fear of loss of control**, despite the fact that third parties operate a much more secure and responsive service than in-house teams can hope to achieve, and at a lower price. Yet cloud migration – especially with today's hybrid offerings – is a one-off investment in an evolved future.

## **Cloud is not about savings. Or even security. The true value is operational agility.**

Why is it such a valid investment? Cost is not the only reason that Cloud is the start of our transformation programme. More importantly, the flexibility and scalability of cloud infrastructure **unlocks ADG's visionary and customer-focused transformation** of council operations. The IT Strategy Manager at AVDC at the time said, *"Cloud allows us to spend less time running around after problems, and the best use of that time for the team is to think not about how we deploy today, but about what the ideal framework for next generation services might look like"*.

Specific programmes which cloud platform deployment has enabled include:

- **Mobile telephony for the contact centre:** Extending the use of webchat and even opening hours to meet customer need, enabled by **location-free telephony**
- **Analytics:** Connecting disparate systems (and deploying Salesforce) to better understand customer needs, **present a complete picture of the customer** and their history with each interaction, and reducing expensive exceptions (e.g. to improve fraud detection)
- **Automations:** Anything which adds seamlessness to the customer experience, **making life easier for customers** (whatever their platform) and cutting costs for the council. For example, update notifications on a planning process are simple to set up, give customers comfort and reduce expensive postage of letters or calls to contact centres.
- **Self-service:** Giving customers the satisfaction and reduced fulfilment cost of self-serve interactions, 24/7
- **Next generation services:** And most importantly, in the Cloud, further systems can be bolted on at low cost and easily configured with existing services. AVDC is **better equipped to handle future citizen demand** for emerging digital tools, meeting those needs without major capital investment and much faster than an in-house IT team could deliver.





In short, Cloud is the digital infrastructure foundation of a transformative services agenda.

## CHECKLIST

Aim to achieve these objectives:

- ✓ Minimal in-house IT cost
- ✓ All IT delivery covered by SLAs to third parties
- ✓ All staff can work from anywhere
- ✓ Customer-facing web properties work properly, supporting optimal self-service
- ✓ Data is available to support new service design



# Digital Transformation 2:

## The digital council

With a cloud infrastructure in place, the door is open to digitally-driven transformation. What is right for each council will depend on your priorities, but the key ‘*umbrella*’ themes are:

- **Data-driven, or “Joined up” services:** When you have a “*single view of the customer*”, you can better serve them, create services that will meet their needs with confidence (whether that is commercial ideas or optimising traditional council services), and understand the trajectory of future demand.
- **Meeting the needs of the 24/7 citizen:** Once upon a time, councils could deliver on their own schedules – the citizen got what they were given! That is no longer the case. If we’re going to stop being “*the bloody council*”, then we have to work at the same speed and delivery flexibility of the private sector – which in turn is dictated entirely by customer expectations. Amazon must be our template. We cover this elsewhere in this document, but **digital is absolutely at the heart of giving citizens the 24/7 services they demand.**
- **Innovation:** Digital systems allow organisations to take calculated and minimised risks, cutting the cost of experimentation. AVDC was able to deploy innovations with confidence to maximise the return on its technology investments. At AVDC, we didn’t get everything right. But we could trial ideas fast and then either fail them fast or improve them fast. **Digital technologies mitigate risks and compress the speed to market** such that we have room to try out ideas in a way which traditional councils would simply never be able to afford.

These themes will all add rapid value, but we also found that the way local authorities generally approach IT is also problematic. Councils all know that technology is crucial in achieving economies; but they usually make mistakes along the way:

- **They lack ambition:** they seek to replicate today’s services rather than thinking about tomorrow’s opportunities. This will always mean that you are behind the times (and you won’t have saved money, either).
- **They deploy piecemeal solutions:** transformational change never comes from tinkering around the edges – and going for broke demands leadership, commitment, and, yes, a bit of money.
- **They outsource through fear:** outsourcing is not bad by default. After all, Cloud deployment is an outsourcing operation in itself. But there is a difference between outsourcing for value (logical) and outsourcing to reduce risk (not a strong enough justification in our view). Councils should keep strategic responsibility firmly in-house.



- **They stick with tried-and-tested solutions:** Again, this is a lack of ambition. It's natural for the public sector to wait for technologies to be proven; but again, risk and cost are now so mitigated that there's ample opportunity to be cutting edge. At AVDC, we were able to count numerous pioneering firsts among our achievements – and often our suppliers gave us significant discounts to sweeten the deal in exchange for our assistance in refining their products to make them fit for service.

## A single view of the customer

At AVDC, with a cloud-first digital infrastructure based on Amazon Web Services, it was easy to implement **further digital services at low incremental cost**. It was also easy to fail: some of our digital ideas (very few!) did not work so well, but the cost of failure was minimal: no headcount challenges and no heavy investment in upfront IT.

Our first major investment was Salesforce. Fundamentally a CRM (Customer Relationship Management) system, Salesforce is used by private businesses to gain a single view of every customer. It is as applicable to the public sector: when we know our customers, we can serve them better, identify other services which they might use, and make better decisions about their needs.

Yes, there is a sales aspect there – we want to upsell them products eventually. But that was not the overriding concern. Only with a single view of the customer – or citizen in our case – can we hope to give them even **basic council services to a standard and experience which meets their modern expectations**.

Salesforce also has an ecosystem; other digital services which integrate to the basic platform and which require **no new coding or tooling to work**. Similarly, it's easy to get Salesforce data out of the system to integrate with our own existing databases. This was the foundation of AVDC's customer focused digital ideas, and whilst Salesforce might not be your first choice, the key is to implement a single cloud-based platform with a single view of the customer from every angle.

By 2015, we had launched "My Account", the AVDC web portal. All local authorities in the UK now have web portals, but the vast majority are still informational, transactional (e.g. pay parking fines) and require huge investment to add further services.

## MyAccount

The image displays several screenshots from the MyAccount web portal. The top left shows a navigation menu with options like 'My Account', 'My Bookings', and 'My Payments'. The main content area features several service tiles: 'Online - benefits, billing, discounts', 'Waste Services - Reporting a missed bin', 'Taxi applications and MOT booking', 'Taxi Vehicle License Application', 'My Bookings', and 'Confirm your address'. The 'Taxi Vehicle License Application' tile shows a 'Payment Confirmation' form with fields for 'Name', 'Address', and 'Phone'. The 'My Bookings' tile shows a table of bookings with columns for 'Number', 'Date', 'Time', 'Location', 'Description', 'Status', and 'Actions'. The 'Confirm your address' tile shows a form with a 'Search for Address' button and a table of search results with columns for 'Road', 'Last updated', 'Next update', 'Following update', and 'Report'. An 'sms' icon is also visible in the center of the collage.



AVDC's My Account was a different beast. It was the centre of a customer experience:

And new ideas could be added on demand. These included:

- **2016: webchat.** A way for some classes of customer and query to be dealt with in a more efficient digital way. This also dramatically reduced our cost-to-serve: chat operators can handle up to five times as many queries as telephone call managers.



### *Efficient*

*"Yes a very good and efficient service. Saved me calling in whilst at work, the webchat feature was excellent."*

*Stacey, Aylesbury Vale resident*



### *Inclusive*

*"This service is fantastic. I am profoundly deaf so having a service like this means that I can resolve issues myself without compromising my independence."*

*Alicia de Barry, Aylesbury Vale resident*

- **2016: Digital Genius.** A further augmentation of our digital channels, which used AI to interpret customer queries based on past experience. This improved the quality of search results for users of the My Account portal and AVDC websites, creating happier customers and reducing the load on call/chat handlers
- **2017: Alexa Skill:** AVDC was the first local authority to deploy an Alexa Skill, bringing AVDC into people's homes using voice control. Not only can we answer questions ("when is my bin day"), Alexa functionality can make voice-activated changes to families' configuration of council services.



There's more on our customer service activity below. But here in 2020, even these ideas are only the starting point for the opportunities presented to a truly digital council. The foundation of a “*single view of the customer*” unlocks what we call “*Connected Knowledge*”:

- A better partnership between the council and its citizens
- The ability to predict and cater to their needs proactively
- Developing council services and allocating budget according to need
- Reaching out at near-zero cost in multiple service-user contexts
- And as demographics change and people prefer to use multiple channels (digital and otherwise), a greater chance to be wherever customers are in the ways in which they need us.

### CHECKLIST

Aim to achieve these objectives:

- ✓ A single view of the customer
- ✓ Digital services can be developed at low cost and low risk
- ✓ Be where customers want you to be
- ✓ One portal, one record of truth, one interface
- ✓ Digital as an enabler, not a burden



# Leadership excellence and transformational ethics: driving the journey from the top



*“Culture equates to leadership behaviour. The culture in any organisation is broadly determined by how senior leaders and managers tend to behave, operate and interact; because the rest of the employees will observe those people and identify the traits which are appreciated and valued. They will model those behaviours and that is how, over time, norms are formed and culture – the ‘way we do things around here’ – becomes embedded”.*

**Paul Everitt, CEO, Real World Consulting**

Transformation starts at the top. AVDC therefore aimed to change leadership behaviours first. Without absolute commitment from a local authority’s leadership, evidenced day-to-day and with the confidence that comes with understanding the model in depth, any transformational effort is certain to fail. **In the early days, the attitude of the “top table” is simply crucial.**

We used a behavioural competency model (i.e. valuing behaviours rather than raw knowledge) designed around the ideal ongoing culture (one of agility, embracing change, commercialism etc.) and then measure performance across the management cohort using a range of tests conducted in independent assessment centres.

Here are some of the key drivers:

- **Nobody escapes the drill!** The Chief Executive should be first to demonstrate a commitment to the testing regime – because he/she will lead the change by example. The rest of the leadership team will follow, and must demonstrate **openness to change**: not in a critical or blame-based way, but identifying gaps in the overall team and a willingness to fill them so that expertise is prized.
- **Line Managers are an under-appreciated engine room for change:** Just as importantly, we work with line managers too, because these often forgotten leaders have the capacity to **lead the organisation in the future**. Many will also display the behaviours we want to reinforce for the sort of ongoing culture we want to achieve.

At AVDC, after a year-long engagement, plenty of those line managers are the people who went on to lead the change across the council.

- **Spoiler Alert: Not everyone makes it through.** Importantly, the qualities required for leadership during times of change (and change is, in our model, a constant) are not necessarily to be found through length of service or



# Leadership excellence and transformational ethics: driving the journey from the top

automatic succession and promotion. Therefore, leadership testing will invariably throw up challenging cases where true leadership skills (flexibility, conscientiousness, taking ownership etc.) are exhibited by line managers or even ambitious employees at lower levels rather than those in senior roles. It is essential to handle the invariable fallout from this transition with honesty and sensitivity, because it is non-negotiable. **You will lose some stragglers**, and even some very good people who simply find a changing environment too challenging.

The whole process took 12 months of intense activity but concluded on the agreed project date, with no staff claims or tribunals. We had full Unison involvement and the project funded a full time union secondment to the process. The project cost about £1m but produced over £3m in recurring savings.

AVDC finished the process with a leadership team which is hungry for opportunity and fully committed to a service-driven future. Many of those people were crucial in AVDC's subsequent conversion to a Unitary authority.

## Management is a skill in its own right

There is one further senior team lesson which is challenging for some to swallow, yet crucial to appreciate. “*Managing*” is increasingly recognised as a technical skill in its own right in the private sector; whereas in the public sector it is either a dirty word or a rite of passage.

In the traditional hierarchical management model, a technician (planning, surveying, marketing, social services etc.) would, through seniority (and undoubtedly through experience) become a manager of colleagues with less seniority in the same discipline.

But those technical skills don't make, say, a planner or surveyor a great manager. People with little to offer in the way of management skills would take these roles, because **it was the only route to a better salary**, whilst not doing a particularly good job (because they are superb technicians, but not automatically good people-managers) – and often finding the responsibility burdensome too.

Even worse, as management is a discipline in its own right, conversely, **good managers didn't get roles which might be ideal for them** – because they don't have a specific technical discipline.

At AVDC, we took a leaf from the private sector playbook: **managers manage, whilst technicians perform their roles.**

Importantly, technical specialists can rise through the paygrades at AVDC without becoming a manager, so they can still enjoy a fulfilling and profitable carer path; and similarly there are managers who are earlier in their careers, and who will not command ‘managerial’ salaries until they can prove their merit.



# Leadership excellence and transformational ethics: driving the journey from the top

In this way, management gets the recognition it deserves and people fill roles most aligned with their skills.

## CHECKLIST

Aim to achieve these objectives:

- ✓ Lead from the top
- ✓ Embrace change – because your team will have to embrace it, too
- ✓ View management as a skill in its own right, separate from technical knowledge
- ✓ Empower your line managers as change agents. They may need training
- ✓ See off those who don't join the journey with warmest regards – it's not right for everyone





# Customer Focus: Thinking customer-first

Councils have traditionally been part of the social safety net. They fulfilled two important roles:

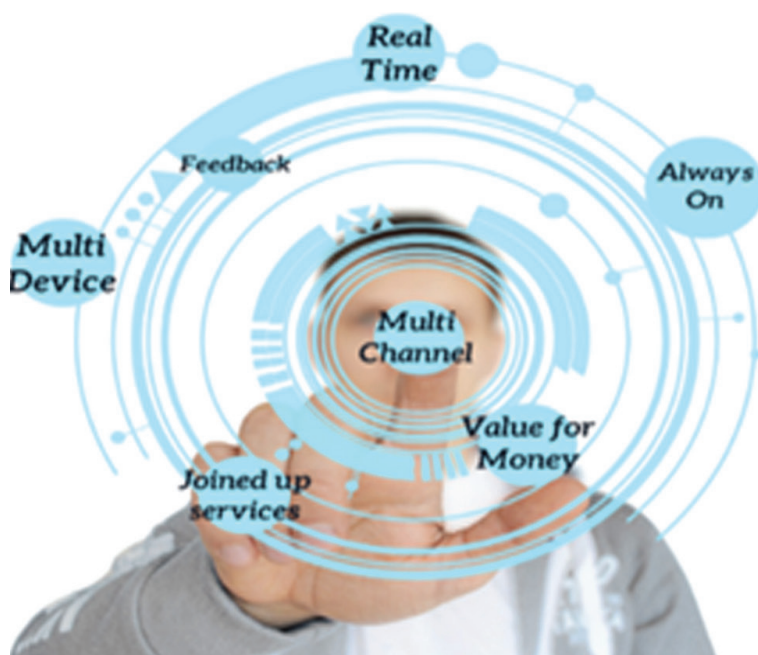
- For the most disadvantaged and troubled in society, they **provided critical services**. 10% of service users might use 90% of ongoing resources.
- For the rest, the council was to be **ignored wherever possible**. So long as the bins were collected and potholes removed from the roads (eventually...), everyone was happy. This majority 90% therefore might use 10% of council resources.

Because of this, councils were not customer-responsive. “Customers” didn’t want to engage with the council, and those who did were in need anyway, and in no position to argue!

As you now know, our model for public sector transformation includes **leveraging the goodwill and opportunity to sell products and services to that majority 90%**. To do so, councils must become as customer-focused as private sector organisations.

The good news is, this comes with many benefits:

- Customer-focused councils provide better services to those in need as well as those with discretionary income.
- Customer-focused councils make fewer strategic mistakes because they are better connected to their communities.
- When councils provide services and touchpoints in ways that meet citizen expectations, people are happier with the services they receive – even if the nature of those services has not changed.



Delivering great  
customer experience



At AVDC, the engine of a customer-first approach was multi-pronged:

- As you've seen above, we used digital tools to **engage with customers on any platform, 24/7**, becoming the first council to develop an Alexa Skill.

In surveys, 70% of AVDC customers reported that they wanted to avoid visits to council offices by handling basic interactions online, at times which suited them.

AVDC therefore invested heavily in its website and app, both for self-serve functionality and to learn about customer needs. In the words of one employee, *"You wouldn't believe how many hits we get on our website about bin collections. Over a bank holiday it was around 50,000 hits. So we introduced bin functionality on our app; and the number of people downloading our app doubled - up by 100%. The stats told us that it was the right thing to do, because it's important to people."* **Doing what data evidences customers actually want is at the heart of customer focus.**

The technology horizon continues to evolve, and the nature of customer touchpoints will change every year. We have found that each digital opportunity generally increases customer satisfaction while reducing council costs. AVDC's innovations included:

- **"My Account"**: AVDCs web portal.
- **Alexa**: Citizens can ask an increasing subset of popular questions via their Alexa devices.
- **Webchat**: Chat is both convenient and cuts the cost of service provision.
- **AI**: Already used to prioritise responses to customer questions on the basis of answers which were previously rated as useful.

Beneath all of these tools is a Salesforce infrastructure which ensures one dataset for the whole council, connectivity between disparate systems, and that when new technology tools are deployed, the cost, risk and roadmap for launch are as low as possible.

- AVDC also restructured the entire organisation to be more customer-centric. This is by far the most challenging aspect of council reinvention, and we discuss this below.
- We realised that employees, most of whom live locally and are therefore customers, are a council's most direct source of improvement inspiration. Incredibly, most councils have staff who know full well when services are inadequate with their *"home hats on"*, yet as soon as they put their *"work hats on"* are capable of ignoring second-rate service.

AVDC **empowered all staff to engage, comment and improve services** for customers across the board. They can speak out without fear of reprisal and can clearly see their contribution to better service delivery. A *"Bright Ideas"* scheme allows anyone to put forward ideas, whether commercial or



operational. Each is validated with the help of the council's expert resources. If successful, business cases are regularly presented and stress-tested in Board meetings.

Again, the traditional view for councils has been that referring to citizens as “Customers” is private-sector doublespeak. It comes with a negative connotation: that dealing with people becomes transactional rather than emotional; where a council is mainly there as the last resort for many people's needs which are inherently emotional.

But as we have seen, sometimes it is good to think like a customer. It allows us to view our services dispassionately and appreciate how effective (or not) they really are. And deployed correctly, customer focus means we can have real ambition – to meet the needs of our communities by exceeding their expectations rather than just trying hard.

## CHECKLIST

Aim to achieve these objectives:

- ✓ Reach customers on their platforms of choice at any time (without compromising services for those who are not tech-enabled)
- ✓ Use digital data to inform future strategy and finance decisions
- ✓ Listen to your staff. What are their expectations? Because most of them are customers, too.
- ✓ Make BAU the exception. When everyone is empowered to focus on service improvement, the shackles of day-to-thinking are removed.
- ✓ Give everyone the right to excel and to comment when they can see opportunities to improve.



# Culture Change 1: Behavioural excellence to re-imagine public service delivery



**YOU DON'T HIRE FOR  
SKILLS, YOU HIRE  
FOR ATTITUDE. YOU  
CAN ALWAYS  
TEACH SKILLS.**

**Simon Sinek**

The changes achieved at Aylesbury Vale District Council (AVDC) cannot be underestimated: they are seismic.

However, leading several hundred staff on a journey which will not only sometimes uproot people from the comfort of their day jobs, but often challenge their very understanding of what a council does, is a big ask. And **without a staff cohort aligned and on-board - AVDC would have set itself up for a very public fall.** The same is true of your own organisation.

AVDC therefore invested heavily in a wholesale root-and-branch training, coaching and empowerment programme across several years in order to:

- keep as many employees at all levels in-role despite the upheaval of transformation
- empower staff to see the true breadth of their own abilities, enabling those whose roles would change either to perform well in their new roles or to see how they could migrate to other roles within the council rather than needing to find jobs elsewhere (and causing a brain-drain)



# Culture Change 1: Behavioural excellence to re-imagine public service delivery

- be capable of delivering services during and beyond the lean remodelling of the Council
- support further change as it happens, with a staff team empowered by the discovery of latent and untapped skills.

It is only through **all-embracing training and coaching** that an organisation can be restructured and rebuilt whilst maintaining business-as-usual services; neither turning services off nor removing talented people from their roles.

Where many training programmes are either half-hearted efforts or check-box exercises designed to edge over the line of a compliance challenge, AVDC put **personal, career and leadership development at the heart of transformative change**. It requires commitment and the relevant application of the full range of Learning and Development disciplines across the long term, including:

- behavioural frameworks
- talent management processes
- 360° appraisals
- senior management assessments
- e-learning hubs for home learning
- and embedded train-the-trainer programmes, which allow new starters and existing team members to learn from the most credible tutors of all: other employees of the council

Train-the-trainer makes the change process hugely credible, because it is amply obvious that employees are able to exceed the boundaries of “*business as usual*”: by becoming coaches they are already breaking down traditional role-based silos. In over a decade of train-the-trainer work:

- Just under 10% of AVDC staff have had ongoing one-to-one coaching from in-house mentors
- Over 70% of coaches have scored the process ‘*excellent*’ on their feedback forms

The result is a range of soft but highly valuable management skills: the ability to **delegate, take ownership, micromanage less and take the more strategic view**. These are skills which participants can carry into their future careers; but the process also shows that tapping into latent talent is much cheaper and more positive than swapping out a workforce.

At the heart of our culture transformation programme is a recognition that in the modern workplace, where information is never more than a click away, **behavioural ability is much more valuable than knowledge**.

At AVDC, we therefore focused on nurturing five behaviours (rounded enough to capture



# Culture Change 1: Behavioural excellence to re-imagine public service delivery

the essence of our transformational requirement, simple enough to articulate and percolate through to all levels):

- **Customer focus:** Thinking of the customer first, understanding their needs and being led by their requirements
- **Maximising potential:** Encouraging the best in oneself and one's colleagues
- **Adaptability:** Recognising that change is constant and not to be feared; and making the most of the opportunity
- **Driving Results:** Avoiding the wasted effort of “*nearly getting there*” by having clear aims and working to fully achieve them
- **Building effective relationships:** Appreciating that collaboration rather than competition is the most effective driver of benefit to customers and a supportive working environment.



*Expectations of staff at AVDC*

A similar set of behaviours will no doubt be relevant to your needs. Note that these are applicable across departments, professional technical skills and delivery contexts: behaviours can infuse any job description.

## **If change is constant, support for employees should be constant, too**

Behavioural excellence is clearly a powerful tool. But we have all experienced training courses which gave us the tools to make changes – and then fallen back into old, ingrained habits within a matter of days.



# Culture Change 1: Behavioural excellence to re-imagine public service delivery

Often, that is because we take our new behaviours into an old working environment. And even with AVDC's wholesale cultural change programme, **it's easy to return to comfortable old behaviours** in our old working context. This needs proactive management.

We also realised that an annual review – often a token exercise – is nowhere near frequent enough to create true dialogue with employees or to give them the support they need to make lasting change.

As well as training, the second part of our culture change programme – an embedding component – therefore means **renewed investment in skills and career management**. At AVDC, every member of staff had a Personal Development Plan and a continuous dialogue with their manager under a programme called “*Reach*” which encouraged everyone to communicate with their managers in real-time; to achieve more for the organisation and at the same time to proactively manage their careers and aspirations.

“*Reach*” discussions are a continuous dialogue; usually monthly, focusing on:

- **R: Results** – what have you achieved for the Council?
- **E: Enhance** – how can these results be further improved?
- **A: Aspire** – what do you personally wish to achieve?
- **C: Celebrate** – what can we share with colleagues and how can we bang the drum for achievement?
- **H: Help** – what do you need help with?

“*Reach*” is continuous. It is a **course correction process** that nurtures staff and prevents issues from festering into crises. It forces managers to proactively manage. It creates real space for credit to be given where it is due, and for lessons to propagate throughout the organisation. Above all, it enforces allocated time for people and talent to get the attention they deserve.

## CHECKLIST

Aim to achieve these objectives:

- ✓ Put training at the heart of change management
- ✓ Invest in management skills, soft skills and remedial assistance
- ✓ Create career opportunities: teams have exceptional latent talent
- ✓ Aim for course correction, not revolution. Continuous improvement beats annual appraisals.
- ✓ Demand leadership from senior stakeholders. Change is painful, and teams deserve strong, capable leadership.



# Culture Change 2: Breaking and re-making the organisation

With a workforce fully prepared across over a year for a new world, we were able to confidently execute a complete organisational restructure.

The scale of this restructure cannot be overstated. And without the adequate preparation of a year's effort, it would have failed.

In the restructure, all but three members of the council staff were forced to re-apply for their own jobs. This sounds like a frightening prospect, one typically employed by companies seeking to remove staff by managing them out of the organisation. However, the contrary is true. We recognise the enormous value of the knowledge and experience in a council team – **the ideal outcome is to lose as few people as possible.**

Instead, the AVDC restructure was conducted in a unique and innovative way, supporting the council's commitment to behaviours.

Every employee had taken a behavioural assessment before the restructure and before any jobs were advertised. The behavioural assessment gave every employee clarity over their skillsets – and the authority to apply for **any role covered by their skillsets.** One member of staff even applied for fifteen jobs – because they were genuinely qualified to apply for all of them!

Everyone has something new to offer. AVDC's transformation process is littered with people who successfully moved roles, often in surprising ways, achieving **richer and more fulfilling careers.**

The reconfiguration was designed to both encourage and evidence a completely customer-first approach. Rather than a spread of departments along technical (e.g. waste management), professional (e.g. planning) and delivery (e.g. environmental) lines, the structure was rationalised to just two designations:

- **Customer-facing:** everyone who deals with customers or whose activities impacts customers. Not surprisingly, this accounts for some 90% of employees, and includes everything from Revenue & Benefits to Housing.
- **Support Services:** everyone who supports the customer-facing teams; namely management and back-office.





## Culture Change 2: Breaking and re-making the organisation

As well as enforcing a customer-focused approach across the Council, the new structure has:

- **Removed hierarchy from the organisation:** The leadership team is more accessible to all staff and this supports the percolation of new ideas up the chain of command and more broadly across teams.
- **Added new teams to support commercial delivery:** for example a contract management function which supports the existing procurement team and holds larger contracts to account during their delivery.

### CHECKLIST

Aim to achieve these objectives:

- ✓ Avoid losing people. It's expensive as well as sad.
- ✓ Recognise that we exist to serve customers.
- ✓ Reward agility as well as talent or achievement.
- ✓ Recognise the latent abilities of many staff.
- ✓ Do nothing at all unless it justifies the greater aim: an operation that is customer-first.



# Commercial behaviours: As good as the private sector, and always round the corner!

In 2014, AVDC began a journey towards commercialisation.

At the outset, as is still the case in many councils today, commercialism was something of a dirty word.

But **the plan has never been to start charging for services which have always been free.**

*Rather, commercialism allows a council to better fund the services which rightly must be delivered free of charge, by taking a fair share of discretionary income, from people in the community who choose to elect the council to act as a service provider for things they need.*

Commercialism has led to a raft of new services:

- **Vale Lottery:** One of AVDC's first entrepreneurial ventures, AVDC's pioneering local lottery has been replicated around the UK and raised millions for good causes. Working with an experienced delivery partner to de-risk the project, the local lottery turns a small profit and raises money for local charities.
- **Leisure Services:** AVDC re-let its leisure services contracts under new terms that render them a profit centre.
- **Waste Services:** AVDC provides a range of premium waste services which now generate over £1m annual income.
- **Planning Services:** Similarly, AVDC offers a fast-track premium planning service. The money raised goes towards resourcing and skilling the planning department, so that even those who do not select the premium service get a faster turnaround.

At the same time, the council invested in local redevelopments; but unlike so many white elephant regeneration projects, AVDC's property ventures have been successful because **the drive to commercialism has embedded a set of behaviours which now infuse both commercial and traditional operations:**

- **Try things out at low risk:** technology allows us to develop ideas and put them in front of customers to see if anyone's interested, minimising the expense of product development. It's easy to start fast and fail fast – or win fast!
- **Get partners who know what they're doing:** The AVDC lottery is a joint venture with an experienced partner (who also took the regulatory burden of the lottery license). Good partners insulate you from complexity and errors, and



# Commercial behaviours: As good as the private sector, and always round the corner!

therefore improve your chances of success.

- **Don't bury your head in the sand:** something we feel is the classic council behaviour. Most councils only make big changes when threatened by the “*burning platform*”. The commercial approach is to accept facts, move with the times and find solutions, no matter how hard they may be to initially swallow.
- **Use the best of what you already have:** Councils already know every customer. Citizens trust their Council, too. And Councils have resources that start-up ventures don't: an independent audit panel (the Members), plus legal, financial and technical expertise, all on tap. These make commercial activities almost turnkey to create.



*AVDC's Commercial Behaviours*

Let's finish with a reminder of the raw facts. Councils are not anti-commercial at heart. If you take money for leisure services and town centre parking, you're a commercial entity. It's time to stop hiding behind a false morality and recognise that commercial activity is essential to keep us alive.

COVID will usher in a new austerity to local government. Waiting for handouts from central government is not an option. Worse, previously stable fee incomes (council tax, high street properties etc.) are all going to take a hit. Councils must become more commercial – targeting the luckiest in society – in order to maintain even a basic level of services.

That doesn't mean you have to be mercenary or predatory. Quite the opposite. The council has the benefit of knowing every single citizen, being close to its community, and trusted by them. You know what they need, street by street.



# Commercial behaviours: As good as the private sector, and always round the corner!

The future of public sector delivery is in our hands – and nothing should be off the table. (Indeed, COVID might be just the revolution that's needed – I have already spoken to council leaders who are modelling how to cut their estate costs by never working in an office again.) Under Austerity v1, at least fee income was reliable. In the post-COVID world, there is no option: income generation must take centre stage.

## CHECKLIST

Aim to achieve these objectives:

- ✓ Make commercialism acceptable in the organisation – it's the only way to survive.
- ✓ Recognise that all the entrepreneurial talent needed already exists in-house: a council is much better resourced than a startup.
- ✓ Work with partners. The public sector is perceived as an excellent customer base!
- ✓ Capitalise on the new “*home-first*” world post-COVID



# The ADG Local Authority Transformation Maturity Model

All that you have read so far can be largely summarised in a maturity model, which assists with the journey that local authorities face from traditional through to modern and commercialised.

We designed, used and refined this model at AVDC and it is also being used by plenty of consultants to the public sector.

We used four axes of analysis – citizens themselves, our staff, the services we provide and the technologies we used to achieve change. You may also wish to add further axes for e.g. financial visibility / fiscal prudence, partnerships, or even the KPIs by which you wish to judge your progress.

	CITIZENS	STAFF	SERVICES	TECHNOLOGY
<b>LEVEL 4</b> COMMERCIALISED	<p>Segmentation and analytics identify customer opportunities.</p> <p>Citizens fully aware of commercial council services and equipped to judge them against independent competitors.</p> <p>Customer satisfaction on a par with private sector</p> <p>Council perceived as trusted source of services and champion of local economy</p> <p>Choice at the heart of even traditional council services, increasing satisfaction.</p>	<p>Cross-functional teams come together proactively</p> <p>Internal, external and commercial operational challenges are handled the same way, and with enthusiasm</p> <p>Innovative ideas are plentiful and welcomed</p> <p>Employees maximise contact with their communities</p> <p>Employee KPIs are around outcomes, not time served</p>	<p>Services are marketed to local consumer and business communities</p> <p>Mature infrastructure supports predictive resource allocation and efficiencies of scale</p> <p>Commercial and traditional services are equally efficient, cross-funding each other where necessary</p> <p>The council is proud to be its own customer</p> <p>High-end extras maintain profitability because <i>"money is never left on the table"</i>.</p> <p>Council becomes <i>"safe provider"</i>, benchmark provider of services</p>	<p>Self-fulfilment through citizen service platforms</p> <p>Predictive knowledge informs customer engagement, corporate strategy, product design and demand management</p> <p>Real-time services: 24/7 citizen service, immediate billing, customer insight and service commissioning</p> <p>Automated connectivity between multiple service providers</p> <p>Data security is visibly a priority: so citizens have comfort that their personal information is both safe and siloed</p>
<b>LEVEL 3</b>	<p><i>"One version of the truth"</i> from which citizens can always get excellent service.</p> <p>Council resources are freed up to make a positive and visible impact in their communities.</p> <p>Online services match the quality of those in the private sector.</p>	<p>Training and coaching used for <i>"life-long learning"</i> continuous improvement</p> <p>Managers and staff participate in fulfilling and wide-ranging project work</p> <p>Employees contribute crucially as both customers and providers: a testbed for service design</p> <p>Employees connect to other departments, teams, projects, agencies, professional associations, authorities and citizens</p>	<p>Authority delivers new commercial services.</p> <p>Business models and lessons learned are applied to future opportunities</p> <p>Choice for citizens is maximised</p> <p>Commercialism is highly localised: council is trusted broker to the local economy</p>	<p>IT is a strategic enabler of commercial services, and moves closer to being a profit-centre.</p> <p>IT becomes in the business of saying <i>"Yes"</i> instead of <i>"No"</i>: flexible working, connectivity beyond the perimeter etc. are all no problem</p> <p>Back-end infrastructure is available, scalable and universal.</p> <p>Automations create convenience and cut costs</p>
<b>LEVEL 2</b>	<p>Citizens have more reasons to engage with their council beyond the safety net (e.g. social services) and community services (bins, parking etc.).</p> <p>Council engages with local businesses, priming the pump for citizen business owners to power the local economy</p>	<p>Employees empowered to manage their own front-line situations</p> <p>Time allocated for new or outward-looking projects</p> <p>Training and coaching at the heart of staff development</p> <p>Staff appreciate pace of change</p> <p>Staff empowered to communicate beyond level / paygrade / job description</p>	<p>Services are assessed for both efficiency and commercial opportunity.</p> <p>Customer service an operational priority and a cross-departmental discipline</p> <p>Authority engages with supplier network to establish appetite for commercial service provision</p>	<p>IT team contributes at executive level to business strategy</p> <p>Quick wins (e.g. flexible working, unified communications) rapidly deployed</p> <p>Cloud services deployed to minimise cost and unlock operational flexibility</p>
<b>LEVEL 1</b> TRADITIONAL	<p>No <i>"single version of the truth"</i>: information is in departmental silos.</p> <p>Service users get a disjointed, transactional experience.</p> <p>Customer satisfaction low.</p> <p>Online services are clunky and unsatisfying for younger generations, impenetrable for older users.</p>	<p>Staff focused on <i>"The Day Job"</i> – execution rather than planning.</p> <p>Staff not entrepreneurial, resistant to change</p> <p>Staff comfortable in departmental silos.</p> <p>Hierarchy defines interpersonal relationships</p>	<p>Services are monolithic and bureaucratic.</p> <p>Services built around budgets rather than what customers want</p> <p>Services are one-size-fits-all</p>	<p>Piecemeal/legacy technology</p> <p>Too much firefighting</p> <p>Tech gets in the way instead of enabling</p> <p>IT not aligned to business priorities</p>



# How can I help you?

## DEEP DIVE

The perfect starting point. A rapid analysis of your local authority's situation across multiple axes (digital, cultural, financial etc.), featuring a deep dive into your organisation through interviews with key stakeholders, advice and guidance and an initial report. **Turnaround typically within two weeks.**

## MENTORSHIP & COACHING

On-tap advice and mentorship on a one-to-one basis. Only available to **five** individuals of executive officer seniority in local authority organisations at any one time. I offer personalised and actionable coaching, tailored to each individual's skills and situation. **Ongoing engagement as required**

## IN-HOUSE ENGAGEMENT

Avoid the expense, inexperience and bad optics of the big consultancies with a genuine, experienced local authority Chief Executive. I have done it, I have rolled my sleeves up, and I know the path that is required and how to tread it. I can help you ongoing, or on a project basis, with:

- Digital transformation and strategy
- Culture change
- Commercialisation and public sector ideation
- Customer experience strategy
- Leadership
- Political and Managerial transformation
- And more

**Ongoing engagement as required**



## SPEAKING AND TEAM BUILDING

I have changed the culture of a public sector organisation from top to bottom. I am happy to speak to businesses and local government organisations, either to build motivation, to engender change, or simply to spread the word about local authority transformation. **Typically three day engagement**

## “TAME” CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Need the point of view of a local authority Chief Exec? I will validate your thinking and ideas through the lens of my experience. **Turnaround typically within two weeks.**

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT AS-A-SERVICE

You wouldn't expect me to evangelise about digital transformation without also having an as-a-service offer myself. I have collected a team of local authority management experts and associated skilled professionals to provide their insight and expertise as a service: remotely and on a simple hourly rate. Just like your other digital services, there's no commitment and no painful fees. **On demand, on tap, on your terms.**

To discuss any of the ideas in this White Paper, please contact Andrew Grant:

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- **LinkedIn:** <https://linkedin.com/in/andrewdgrant>
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**ADG**

Lighting the way for public sector excellence