

TRANSFORM

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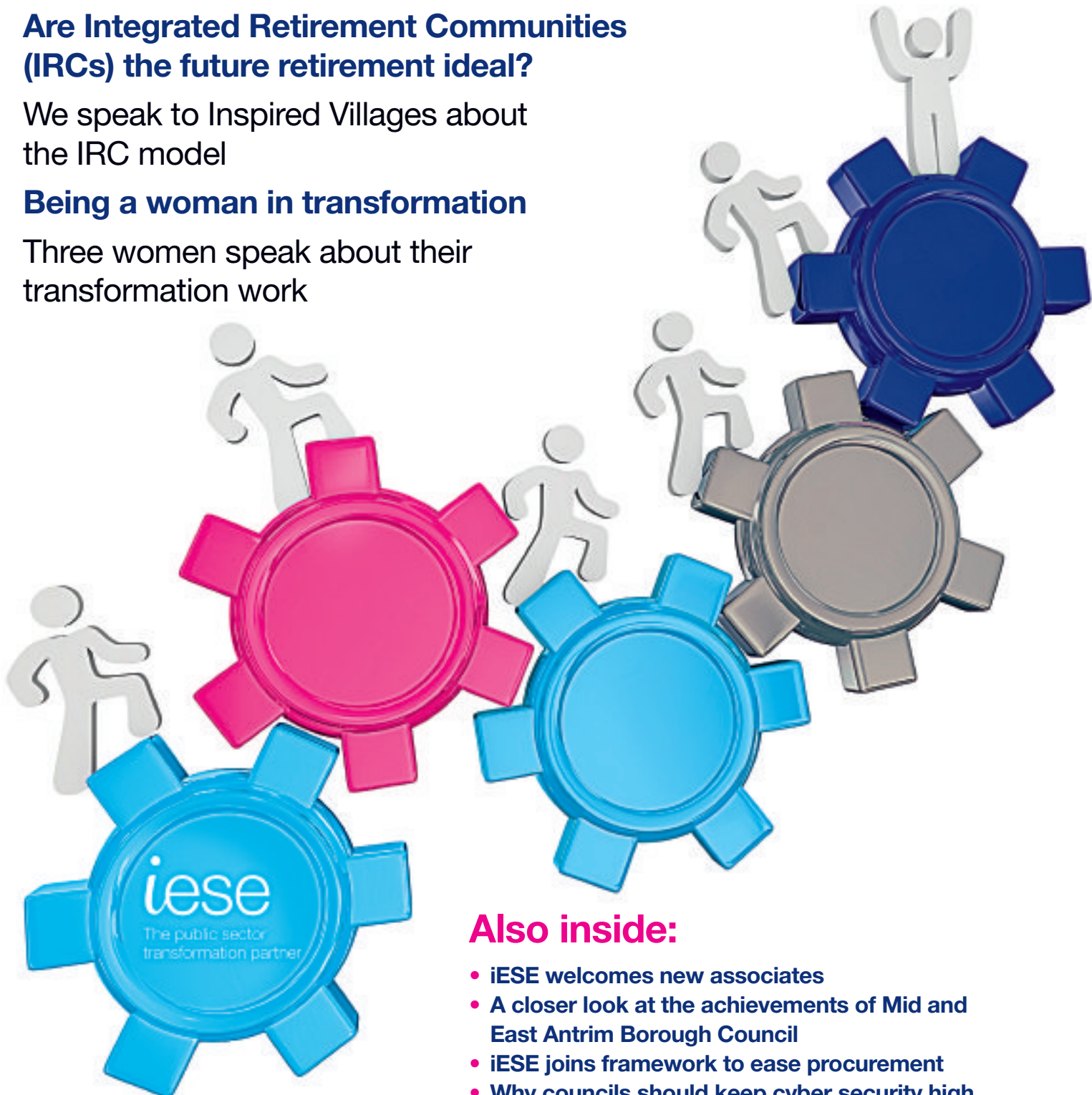
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Are Integrated Retirement Communities (IRCs) the future retirement ideal?

We speak to Inspired Villages about the IRC model

Being a woman in transformation

Three women speak about their transformation work



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- **iESE welcomes new associates**
- **A closer look at the achievements of Mid and East Antrim Borough Council**
- **iESE joins framework to ease procurement**
- **Why councils should keep cyber security high up the agenda**

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*Views expressed within are those of the iESE editorial team.
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Welcome to the first issue of Transform 2022

In this edition we hope to bring you inspiration and thinking points as we look at issues facing the sector and celebrate its achievements.

In these pages you will find an article about Integrated Retirement Communities and why they could be an important development in tackling the shortfall of retirement housing (**page 3**), we also look at the achievements of Mid and East Antrim Borough Council in Northern Ireland and why they were recently awarded two iESE Transformation Awards and two Certificates of Excellence (**pages 4 and 5**). We celebrate three women working in transformation in the public sector and ask them about their experiences and predictions for the future (**pages 6 and 7**). Lastly, we look at why councils should be keeping cyber security high up the agenda (**page 8**). We hope you enjoy reading the issue. As usual, please send any feedback or news and views for a future edition to Annabelle.spencer@iese.org.uk



Dr Andrew Lerner,
Chief Executive

 @LaverdaJota

iESE welcomes new associates

iESE HAS WELCOMED TWO NEW ASSOCIATES, DR JONATHAN HUISH AND DR AMANDA MILLINER, WHO AS A TEAM BRING A WEALTH OF PUBLIC SECTOR EXPERIENCE FOCUSED ON LEADERSHIP, CHANGE AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT.

They join from Capital People, where they were the Chief Executive and Chief Operating Officer respectively. Dr Milliner, whose doctorate focused on organisational customer engagement, with a focus on reaching potentially marginalised vulnerable people in the community, has previously worked in the private and public sector supporting and helping boards and top teams, including in the NHS, the police, housing, local government, construction, real estate and for a medical device company.

Dr Huish has a background in behavioural economics, holds three master's degrees, including one in behavioural psychology, and has a doctorate in

leadership. He led on strategy and change at the Welsh Development Agency when it merged with the Development Board for Rural Wales and the Land Authority for Wales. He also served as a councillor in Wales for 17 years and was a national lead for the Improvement and Development Agency and the Local Government Association when they merged. Dr Huish, who was also a national lead for iESE at the time of its inception, has worked closely with around 70 local authorities and has also coached more than 50 chief executives and cabinet leaders having been involved with numerous coaching and mentoring leadership programmes.

"We are both very excited about being associates



Dr Amanda
Milliner



Dr Jonathan
Huish

with iESE, it is an opportunity to connect with lots more local authorities and bring our offer to a wider audience. We tend to work together because that brings the best outcome for the client," said Dr Milliner. Dr Huish added that they were looking forward to supporting iESE's objective of building sustainable communities: "Amanda and myself are very clear that we want to support that as an objective," he added, "The learning and development offer that myself and Amanda bring aligns closely with iESE but doesn't duplicate. The crossover between digital transformation leadership and us doing strategic team development and cultural development goes hand-in-hand with iESE's existing offer so it is a perfect match."

- **Contact Dr Jonathan Huish at:**
Jonathan.Huish@iese.org.uk
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iESE joins framework to ease procurement

iESE CLIENTS CAN NOW PROCURE CARECUBED, APPGUARD AND CONSULTANCY SERVICES THROUGH THE CONSTELLIA NEUTRAL VENDOR MSP, MAKING THE PROCESS QUICKER AND LESS EXPENSIVE.

iESE and its products and services have been evaluated by Constellia which means local authorities, the third sector and public sector bodies whose standing orders allow it can take a simpler procurement route. It also allows clients to take advantage of multiple year discounts.

Constellia are appointed to two nationally available Neutral Vendor Frameworks, providing a fully compliant route to market for iESE products and services.

"We have gone through a rigorous accreditation process of getting onto the Constellia Marketplace, which makes purchasing from iESE easier for the customer. They can go to Constellia and purchase

direct licences or request a proposal for consultancy work," explained Heather Lumby, Executive Director at iESE.

"If customers are short of time and want to reduce the cost of procurement then the real benefit of Constellia's Neutral Vendor solution is that someone else has done the work for you. When a local authority goes out to tender, they must prepare a lot of documents and there is a whole process of evaluation which takes time. There is no additional cost to the customer for procuring via Constellia, so they save time and money," she added.

The whole process should be simple administratively – the client has an account manager who can help develop the specification to ensure they get what they need and Constellia deals directly with iESE.

Merton Council subscribed to CareCubed in

December through Constellia. Godfrey Luggya, Commissioning Manager at Merton Council, said: "iESE provided us with details of the Constellia framework so that we could quickly purchase CareCubed through a fully compliant procurement process. Our procurement team signed off the approach before we agreed a Statement of Work with Constellia, who then instructed and contracted with iESE. This simple process has allowed us to get up and running with CareCubed in a fraction of the time it would have taken using traditional procurement routes, and ultimately means the council will realise the benefits of CareCubed much sooner than would have otherwise been possible."

- **To procure iESE products or services through the Constellia Framework visit:**
www.constellia.com
- **To find out more contact:**
heather.lumby@iese.org.uk



How retirement villages can benefit local authorities

The Integrated Retirement Community (IRC) is a young model but the benefits it offers for individuals, the community and the local authority means it could become more prevalent.

The IRC describes a model which combines independent living with 24/7 on-site staffing, a range of communal spaces and services and access to CQC domiciliary care, to meet requirements as residents age in place. These communities offer something different from both a care home and traditional retirement housing.

Inspired Villages is an operator of IRCs in the UK. It initially opened two villages in Warwick and Cheshire funded with Places for People. In 2017, it secured significant investment from Legal & General and by November 2017 had bought Renaissance Villages taking it to six villages. It then started to secure new sites and put them through planning, some of which are due to complete soon, with a further 15 in the pipeline.

In August 2021, Inspired Villages secured co-investment from Natwest Group Pensions to deliver 34 villages in the next 15 years with a gross development value exceeding £4bn, bringing homes to more than 8,000 people across the country. A typical Inspired village has around 150 units.

“This sector is very nascent still, but the reality is that there are 12m people over the age of 65 – set to rise to 18m (a 41 per cent increase) by 2040 – and at the same time the number of over 80s are doubling,” explains Jamie Bunce, CEO at Inspired Villages. *“Therefore, when you look at the 80,000 homes in the Integrated Retirement Community sector currently there is a significant shortfall of suitable accommodation to allow people to age in their own homes well. Matched with the trillion pound of equity in the last-time buyer market you can see that people who have needs for homes of a variety of sizes have very limited choice.”*

In an Inspired Village, a property can be between 500 and 2,500 square feet, a one, two or three-bed house, apartment, cottage, or bungalow, which residents can rent, buy or part-own. *“We have a mix of housing designed to allow residents to live safely in their own home for the whole of their lives.”*

“Third parties provide regulated on-site domiciliary care and we can provide non-regulated services such as cleaning, property maintenance and providing a friendly face for residents to chat to – we believe that combatting loneliness and anxiety

as people age can be helped with cups of tea,” Bunce adds.

He explained that the sector has some myths to bust around what an IRC offers. One of the concerns local authorities might have, he says, is that it might lead to an influx of retired people with health needs to an area. However, he says most people move to a village within a five-to-ten-mile radius of their former home and most residents pay for their own care. However, research has also found that living in a village can reduce NHS and social care costs.

A longitudinal study by the ExtraCare Charitable Trust in partnership with Aston Research Centre for Healthy Ageing, looked at 162 residents living in IRC in 14 of the operator ExtraCare’s villages against a control group of 39 participants. The researchers took measures of health, wellbeing, cognitive ability and mobility at entry, 3, 12 and 18 months after moving in. They found that the IRC model is likely to offer significant potential savings in the cost of social care for local authority commissioners and result in significant savings for NHS budgets. Over a 12-month period, total NHS costs (including GP visits, practice and district nurse visits and hospital appointments and admissions) reduced by 38 per cent for residents, while NHS costs for ‘frail’ residents had reduced by 51.5 per cent after 12 months. The research also found the model was associated with reduced duration of unplanned hospital stays, from an average of 8-14 days to 1-2 days.

A report by ARCO, which represents the UK’s Integrated Retirement Community sector, *Putting the ‘care’ in Housing-with-Care*, found 20 per cent of residents experienced a reduction in care needs when they moved into an IRC due to improvements in health and wellbeing. The report claims that £5.6bn could be saved in health and social care if the sector meets the goal of 250,000 over-65s living in IRCs by 2030.

Inspired Villages has a focus on ageing well at home and has carefully designed home interiors to meet this goal, with features such as lower worksurfaces, lower cupboards, more drawers and higher sockets so people don’t have to bend as much. *“We make it look like a traditional home*

but one that will enable people to age well in place, with features such as walk-in showers with grab rails that double up as a screen. We are enhancing our use of technology to help people live better, for example through wearables and, importantly, each village it is centred around a wellness facility that has a swimming pool, sauna/steam room, gym, studios, hairdressers, cafes and bars etc and that allows us to drive through a passion to focus decisions around holistic wellbeing,” Bunce explained.

A report by Knight Frank, *Seniors Housing Annual Review 2021*, highlighted that only 20 per cent of local authorities in England have supportive planning policies or sites allocated to seniors housing, while analysis by ARCO found 70 per cent of people would like to live in an IRC in retirement.

“We are seeing proactive local authorities accepting the invitation to visit one of our villages then advocating and wanting to have these communities in their boroughs and existing local authorities are seeing we are a credible benefit to their area,” Bunce adds. One of the benefits, he says, is enabling larger family homes to be released back onto the market. Another is that IRCs contribute to councils’ housing land supply requirements.

“We deliver an environment that reduces the burden on the NHS – our focus is to keep people living well for longer. We are not a closed-gate facility so people who do not want to live in one of our environments but live in the vicinity can use our wellness facilities. At weekends we do things like allow children to use the wellness facilities with grandparents and local interest groups come and use the space too. At one village a school comes in to use the pool. We also have a service called Inspired Friendships, aimed at bringing together lonely older people in the community” he adds.

Bunce is grateful to have the opportunity to create a customer-centric legacy. *“This is about living, keeping well, enjoyment and the positives in life,”* he concludes.

• To find out more about Inspired Villages visit www.inspiredvillages.co.uk or contact: ply.radford@inspiredvillages.co.uk

Mid and East Antrim recognised with multiple iESE awards



Mid and East Antrim Borough Council (MEABC) in Northern Ireland was awarded the iESE Silver Council of the Year. It also achieved bronze in the Community Focus category, plus two Certificates of Excellence. Here we look at the initiatives which convinced the judges to give multiple awards.



Mid and East Antrim Borough Council replaced Ballymena, Carrickfergus and Larne Borough Councils from 1 April 2015. While only in its seventh year, it is currently delivering its second wave of corporate objectives set out every four years to ensure it meets the needs of its 139,000 residents.

MEABC has suffered some significant and high-profile challenges in recent years, including the closure of major employers JTI Gallaher and Michelin, resulting in the loss of more than 2,000 high value jobs. On top of this came Covid-19 which saw MEABC's 900 staff demonstrate unwavering resilience to delivering vital frontline services, with many taking on new duties and roles in which they excelled.

In January 2021, the council published a mid-year report on its progress during 2020/21. It found 76 per cent of its planned actions were either achieved or in progress during the first six months of the year – a significant achievement during a pandemic.

Alderman Audrey Wales MBE, a Democratic Unionist Party Councillor for Ballymena, said:

“Despite the challenges of Covid, we delivered on vital Capital Plan projects and continued to lead the way with our ambitious City Deal projects, our vision to see Mid and East Antrim become a UK hydrogen hub and other game-changing opportunities for our Borough.”



Alderman Audrey Wales, MBE.

She added that she was thrilled by the multiple iESE award wins and said staff and the public had been made aware of the recognition given. *“Our council is without question the best-performing in Northern Ireland, and one of the very best in the entire UK, and I am extremely proud of the incredible efforts and delivery of council services. Mayor Councillor William McCaughey and elected council members have publicly thanked the staff of MEABC for their hard work and dedication. We have also*

kept the people of Mid and East Antrim informed of the recent wins through a number of channels.”

Mayor of Mid and East Antrim, Councillor William McCaughey, added: *“These awards are recognition for the work of all our council staff who rose to the unprecedented challenge of the Covid-19 pandemic and continued to deliver a first-class service to our citizens. Due to the fast-changing environment this global emergency presented, it was vital MEABC responded to the needs of its most vulnerable citizens in a timely and focused way, and I wish to thank the staff for their continued efforts and commitment to delivering an excellent service to such a high standard. Our people are our strongest asset, across every level of council’s operations, and I am extremely proud of every one of them for helping to ensure MEABC leads the way in local government in Northern Ireland.”*



Councillor William McCaughey, Mayor of Mid and East Antrim.

A key part of MEABC's Economic Recovery Plan post Covid-19 is its vision to become a hub and global leader in hydrogen production. Wrightbus, one of the area's major employers, is a trailblazer in hydrogen energy. The council is proud to be working closely with the company on a strategic and long-term vision to establish Ballymena as a 'hydrogen hub' and key component of the Government's green energy revolution.

MEABC has also established a Manufacturing Task Force (MTF) consisting of major business players, individuals, and consultants to create a forum for discussion on supporting the sector, which led to job creation where there had previously been losses. This was catered for during a series of job fairs and table discussions between employers in the sector facilitated by MEABC. The MTF is driven to secure plans and funding for the development of a state-of-the-art innovation centre through the Belfast Region City Deal.

In addition, the council's contribution to the wider Belfast Region City Deal bid has resulted in securing approximately £60m which will be injected into several major schemes across the borough, including the transformation of the former St Patrick's Barracks site in Ballymena into a new innovation hub known as i4C.

The vision for i4C is to inspire and harness the talents of hundreds of young people every year – identifying the entrepreneurs of the future and pairing them with existing entrepreneurs, linking the coders of the future to coding clubs, and providing a pathway for future apprenticeships. Additionally, separate Hospitality and Tourism, and Town Centre task forces have also been created.

“Mid and East Antrim Council as an authority has demonstrated an incredible resilience and passion that defies even the toughest of challenges. It is against this backdrop that the team at Mid and East Antrim has risen to drive the borough into the next phase of economic growth,” Ald Wales added.

In addition to the Silver Council of the Year Award, MEABC also secured a bronze in the Community Focus Category. Its entry centred on its pandemic response.

“Despite the huge challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, staff ensured the health, safety and wellbeing of Mid and East Antrim’s citizens was the priority, rolling out a wide range of initiatives and interventions to provide support and assistance,” said Ald Wales.

As the first lockdown was announced, MEABC quickly established a Remote Call Centre and a dedicated COVID-19 Communications Hub, which would become a vital go-to information portal for citizens and businesses. The website quickly became a reliable and trusted source of information on everything from providing food and medical supplies to vulnerable members of the community, to the financial and logistical support made available to businesses from statutory agencies.

“At the outbreak of Covid, our council devised and delivered innovative interventions and initiatives to support our community. The Community Hub was critical to that, assisting with the delivery of vital



food and medical supplies to the vulnerable, as well as delivery of vital support grants to those most in need. Focused taskforces were also set up which have provided a lifeline to many businesses," said Ald Wales.

During the height of the pandemic:

- Almost **900 volunteers** were recognised in the #MEAstars social media campaign highlighting community heroes during Covid.
- **3,000 rural households** were visited and supported through schemes.
- **20,000 calls** were dealt with by the Covid Call centre.
- **5,000 food parcels** were distributed across borough.
- **1,500 businesses** were engaged and supported.

"Among the many significant achievements during the coronavirus emergency was the securing of crucial funding from other statutory agencies to help citizens across Mid and East Antrim. A wide range of interventions for the most vulnerable and isolated residents in the borough and almost 50 webinars offering support and guidance to local businesses affected by COVID-19 were also achieved throughout the period," Ald Wales explained. "Through flexible and agile working across all MEABC departments, an incredible £100,000 was delivered to help the most vulnerable people in our borough through the COVID-19 Community Support Grant Scheme, while our tireless #MEAstars helped distribute over 5,000 food parcels."

Ald Wales said that in 2022, the council would continue to focus its efforts on:

- **Sustainable jobs and tourism**
- **The environment**
- **Community safety and cohesion**
- **Learning for life**
- **Good health and wellbeing**

"Wrapped around each of these themes is our overarching objective – to be a High Performing Council as we move into 2022 and beyond," she concluded.

Certificate of excellence: Communications

The council's communications staff worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic to disseminate clear information to the public and businesses in an easily understandable way.

The team faced the challenge of being separated by homeworking but needed to maintain constant contact to roll out crisis communications. Equipment was provided and home offices set up within a week, team meetings were established to maintain regular communication.

With a borough of widely dispersed residents and businesses, a digital approach was the fastest and safest route to disseminate public information. MEABC established a dedicated Covid-19 digital hub online, regularly signposted to from its social media channels, which attracted more than 10,000 views per month.

The team established an ongoing strategic communications campaign called #ourMEA to focus on a sense of togetherness which began in March 2020. From the overarching #ourMEA campaign umbrella, three other micro-campaigns were rolled out: #RediscoverMEA, which focused on tourism, #MEAstars, which focused on community spirit and #SpiritofMEA, highlighting a shop local for Christmas message.

Since March 2020, the #RediscoverMEA campaign has generated 10,151 news articles and social media mentions. Almost one million people have been reached across Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Through radio and television advertising, the borough's tourism, retail and hospitality attractions were showcased to approximately 861,000 people. Combined with outdoor digital and billboard campaigns, this led to a surge in interest in Mid and East Antrim for things to do or as a destination to stay, demonstrated through google analytics search patterns. The average daily search for Mid and East Antrim jumped from a daily average of 20 to 60 when the campaign was initiated and peaked at just over 100 per day.

MEABC's social media channels continue to outperform the majority of its Northern Ireland local government counterparts in terms of reach and engagement and are a crucial mechanism for engaging with businesses and residents. The main corporate Facebook account now has more than 26k followers, Twitter has more than 6k, Instagram has 3.2k and LinkedIn 1.5k. Throughout the pandemic, Facebook and Twitter posts alone have reached more than 5m people.

Certificate of excellence: Working together

In a major academic report by Ulster University in June 2020, the Mid and East Antrim Borough Council area was one of four local council areas in Northern Ireland predicted to be worst impacted economically by the pandemic.

Utilising the collective power of its Manufacturing, and newly-established Hospitality and Tourism and Town Centre Task Forces, Mid and East Antrim has been at the forefront of the fightback against the economic and social impacts of Covid.

The Mid and East Antrim Hospitality and Tourism Recovery Task Group, which was the only taskforce of its kind in Northern Ireland, was set up in April 2020 and is made up of representatives from across the industry, including local hospitality providers, the Hotels Federation, Council Officers, Hospitality Ulster, Tourism Northern Ireland and Tourism Ireland. It provides a platform for key players and influencers to work together to deliver a clear action plan, focused on recovery, and to raise the profile of local tourism economy in Mid and East Antrim.

Through the work of the Tourism Recovery Task Group, MEABC is committed to helping local businesses bounce back from the pandemic, and to rebuild the tourism economy through a five-year Tourism Strategy.

Prior to the reopening of all non-essential retail in Northern Ireland in June 2020, 700 Retail Covid Support Packs were made up and distributed to town centre businesses, consisting of guidance, social distancing posters, hand sanitiser, disinfectant, social distancing tape and safety checklists for customers and staff.

In November 2020, MEABC became the first council in Northern Ireland to develop a bespoke COVID Confidence Scheme for all businesses in the borough. Building on the support from the Town Centre Recovery Task Force, Environmental Health and Town Centre officers from the council were on hand to answer queries about the COVID Confidence Scheme and to support businesses through the process. Follow-up visits took place to ensure all appropriate measures were in place before the award of a COVID Confidence Mark.

Mid and East Antrim's Manufacturing Task Force (MFT), which encourages representatives across 100 organisations to highlight the issues needing to be addressed within the sector, has also proactively supported businesses across the borough.

be a disruptor

reconsider

ask questions

Challenge the Traditional

rethink

see it differently

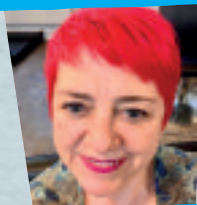
expect more

embrace change

Women in transformation

Here we speak to three women working in transformation in the public sector about their roles – what they enjoy, what they don't, how they got where they are today and what they think the future holds.

Bobby Mulheir, Assistant Director for Customer Experience, Digital and ICT, Bracknell Forest Council



What is your current role?

I have been at Bracknell for nine-and-a-half years. In 2019 there had been a bit of churn at the top in IT, the role had changed hands about three times in less than a year, so I spoke to the Chief Exec and said let me take on IT for six months alongside what I am doing. It worked out so I was able to keep it. I was Assistant Director Customer Services and now I am Assistant Director for Customer Experience, Digital and ICT.

How did you start your career?

After I finished A levels, I went to Ireland with the band I was in. When I came home, I got offered two jobs – one at the Greater Manchester Residuary Body, which was left to wind up the affairs of Greater Manchester Council, and the other as an office junior at a wallpaper design company. My mum said to pick the council because of the pension scheme!

I went to work for the facilities manager which was a great introduction to local government. Next, I worked for the pensions service at Greater Manchester and then Shropshire where I ended up managing pensions. I later worked in wider financial services at Shropshire before making a sideways move and setting up their customer service contact centre.

When did transformation become something which interested you and why?

If I go back to my first job, I am pretty sure by Friday of week one I was saying there are better

ways to do this. Transformation often means moving to digital and making the best use of ICT simply because that takes away some of the costs and you can then invest in the bespoke services for those who really need them.

At Bracknell Forest we have the Netcall contact centre and made good use of that – it has helped us introduce much more self-service and automation. We have used it to introduce web chat, to make improvements for customers that are almost expected now. We are just about to go to the cloud version, at which point we will be using some other functions, like email blending, SMS and social media bits. We have recently invested in the low-code platform and built a case management system for our Emergency Duty Service, due to go live January 2022.

It is a constant evolution – there is never a standstill point where we think our work is done. I am really interested in challenging some of the fear and traditional ways of doing things.

What do you enjoy about your role?

My role is mostly helping other people do a good job. I really love seeing people achieve what they are capable of, develop into a role and grow and learn, and become the person professionally they were capable of being.

Is there anything you don't enjoy?

Dealing with people who are not reaching their potential and underperforming.

What has been the biggest challenge you've had to overcome?

Professionally, being involved in the reorganization in Shropshire when it went from being seven separate councils to a single council. We also went from having 300 numbers listed in the phone directory for the council departments to being able to say 'ring this one number we will be able to help you with most things'. That was a really big thing at the time.

Personally, I maybe had a chip on my shoulder because I didn't go to university. Once you get into a management role people ask where you went to university and for a while, I felt sub-standard. I did eventually take a languages degree through The Open University for fun, it has made me conscious of people coming up the ranks who maybe don't have great qualifications but have aptitude and attitude.

What would you say to your younger self?

Those people who tell you they like working with you, they really do like working with you, they are not just being polite. We doubt ourselves far too much.

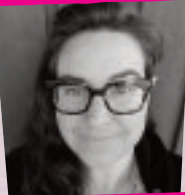
What has been the highlight of your career so far?

There are a couple of people who went on to do amazing things because of things I did to help them at work. I am incredibly proud of their achievements.

What is the future transformation change you are most excited about? Why?

I think we are going to have to design our digital services to work with smart speakers and voice activated technology. People are going to want to say, 'Alexa, is it recycling this week?'

Molly Balcom Raleigh, freelance service design expert



My thesis client was RISE, the government agency for prison systems in Finland. After these experiences I knew I wanted to work for public sector.

What do you enjoy about your role?

In my work for iESE

designing a new Case Management System (CMS), the needs we are addressing are coming loud and clear from social workers across the UK and from people in local government. There is a big opportunity to make things work better for both people working to provide services and people who use social care services. Everyone deserves to have good services and good outcomes, and it's very inspiring to work on a project that has the potential to increase the effectiveness of the committed and caring people who work in social care.

Is there anything you don't enjoy?

It is difficult to get to the users sometimes through the layers of hierarchy in government to really understand their needs and challenges. I think that is part of the continuous learning of this work: how to be effective in this research, and how to get to those folk who are using what we are building and have that ability to enact that transformation on the ground.

What has been the biggest challenge you have had to overcome?

I think local government is becoming more understanding that talking to users is essential, but it is not what everyone thinks of first. I think people who work in government feel a big responsibility to know the solution and the answers and there is a fear

of asking questions of people who use services. So we can help with that. Part of what we're doing in this project is engaging people in collaboratively making the city work better and making the local government authority more effective. It is not about who knows and who doesn't know, it is about pooling the best skills and capacity and lived experience together to make something useful.

What would you say to your younger self?

Have faith in the unique set of skills you bring and keep trying to figure out how to bring them into the world. A lot of times I have been told that the part of my work and professional practice that is rooted in creativity and care of others hasn't always been a good fit in private sector, but I get to bring in these skills and talents working for the public sector because care is so much at the heart of what we are trying to achieve.

What has been the highlight of your career so far?

I loved my experience at Aalto and I am delighted at the opportunity I have right now to bring so much of what I learned to bear on my work, including the things I learned in my creative practice and my work with organisations. It is really enriching that I can bring the full measure of my previous experience into the work I am doing today.

What is the future transformation change you are most excited about?

I would like to see a change in attitude about inclusiveness of all the stakeholder voices present in decision-making and dreaming of the future of public services, and for everyone in local authority to embrace that sense of "we don't automatically know what the right thing is, but together with the people we serve, we can find out."

What is your current role?

I am a freelance service designer based in Helsinki. I studied Collaborative and Industrial Design at Aalto University in Finland and before that I worked as a professional artist and a communications and organizational consultant for arts non-profits, mainly in the US. When I moved into service design, I had the opportunity to work with the Canadian user-centered design agency All In and they put me in touch with iESE. Currently I work with All In on projects for Canadian provincial government agencies and with iESE on local authority projects.

When did transformation become something which interested you and why?

I had an experience when I had my child of the power that well-designed, human-centred and inclusive public services has to impact people's lives. I was feeling socially isolated as a new mother and foreigner and the public services available to me made it explicit that I was important and valued as part of society. I realized that service design can be a really powerful way to use creativity and combine my interests in problem solving and aesthetics.

I chose Aalto University because they are at the forefront of design for public sector and I had several hands-on learning opportunities with different layers of Finnish government, from municipal to national.

Clare Evans, Corporate Services Manager, Tewkesbury Borough Council



Where are you currently employed?

I've worked at Tewkesbury Borough Council since 2009. I've been in my current corporate services manager role since 2017. I oversee customer services, communications and design, GDPR, and performance. I have also been responsible for our in-house transformation team since 2020.

Did you intend to work in local government/public services?

After finishing university, I did a masters in broadcast journalism and started out as a freelance video producer. I quickly realised how much I missed the writing side of things and, after about a year, started my career in local government as a media assistant at Medway Council.

When did transformation become something which interested you and why? What was the route to this point?

My roots lie in communications and reputation management, and so I am always alert to what's working and not working from a customer point of view. The transformation work ticks so many boxes because it's all about improvement – for the customer, the service or the organisation.

What do you enjoy about your role?

I love my job – it's fast-paced, challenging, exciting, and rewarding. The people working in my teams are so talented, always looking for ways in which we

can do things better, and I love being able to help shape this drive into things that improve our customers' experience and deliver the council's priorities and objectives.

Is there anything you don't enjoy?

Like many working parents and carers, I don't enjoy the guilt that comes with often being distracted by such a busy job. I'm learning to let go of the little things and hope they will grow up valuing the importance of working hard to achieve wonderful things.

What has been the biggest challenge you've had to overcome in your career?

Procuring a new digital platform for the council is up there. To get buy-in into investing in a digital platform there needs to be an internal understanding of what is meant by a digital platform and that's no simple task. Deciding on the right digital platform for the organisation is another critical element, the industry is swamped with providers, and they all seem to deliver the answers to any question or challenge you might have.

We did a huge amount of market research, but Netcall's Liberty Create stood out. It was an exciting and proud moment for me when we signed the contract. We did, and still do, a huge amount of internal communications and engagement around our digital platform. For us that's been key in getting our services to understand what it is we're doing and how we can benefit what they're doing. We are now

transforming services in a way that we've wanted to do for a long time, and at a pace we didn't quite appreciate was doable for a small team.

If you could go back in time, what would you say to your younger self?

Don't doubt yourself. How people treat other people is a direct reflection of how they feel about themselves.

What has been the highlight of your career so far?

My transformation team was shortlisted for small team of the year at this year's LGC awards, which was a particularly proud moment for me. We'd only been working together for 12 months – and only remotely, thanks to the pandemic – but the impact of the work we've delivered has been incredible.

What would you like to see happen in the sector in the next five years?

Across the sector, I'd like to see more dedicated transformation teams and more collaboration. Having met with many councils that don't have the resource and/or skills to deliver digital change at pace, I am continually grateful for Tewkesbury Borough Council's decision to invest in my team. Local government is designed in a way that means we're often all working on the same things but individually and, unfortunately, that's generally no different when it comes to digital transformation.

What is the future transformation change you are most excited about?

I'm currently working on a review of our development management service, looking particularly at customer experience, performance management, processes and structure. Development management is crying out for digital transformation, from application trackers to robotic process automation. There's a lot to be done and I'm particularly excited about what we will achieve.

cyber attack

Why councils should keep cyber security high up the agenda

While a recent study suggests the number of cyber attacks on local authorities needing to be reported to the Information Commissioner's Office may have fallen in 2020 compared with 2019, the damage seen in recent successful attacks highlights how this issue needs to remain high on the agenda.

A report by managed security services company Redscan estimates that UK councils reported more than 700 data breaches to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) in 2020, a 10 per cent decrease on the figure it collected the previous year. The same study found that at least ten councils reported a disruption to their operations due to a breach or ransomware, however 50 councils declined to provide this data under an exemption to the FOI Act, meaning the true figure could be higher.

The report, *Disjointed and under-resourced: cyber security across UK councils*, made a Freedom of Information (FOI) request to 398 borough, district, unitary and county councils to find out how many had reported a data breach to the Information Commissioner due to a cyber attack. It received responses from 265 (63 per cent) and extrapolated the findings across all 398 councils.

Of the ten councils disclosing disruption to their operations, Redscan said only Hackney Council and Redcar and Cleveland were in the public domain, both of which experienced far-reaching effects according to media reports. The attack on Redcar and Cleveland is believed to have cost £10.4m, with the Government contributing only £3.68m to the bill.

The report found a link between council size and the number of data breaches, suggesting that larger councils could be a more attractive target due to the greater amount of data they hold. It found county councils experienced far more breaches than their counterparts, with these organisations reporting 4.6 breaches on average to the ICO in 2020 compared with 1.77 breaches across all councils, while one city council reported 29 data breaches.

Colin Jupe, Director of Strategy at Assurity Systems, the UK and European distributor of zero-trust endpoint and server protection solution AppGuard, said councils are being directly targeted because of the sensitive data they hold. *"Working from home has significantly increased security boundaries for IT departments at a time when they were already severely overstretched. The move to more connection in terms of smart cities comes at great benefit to citizens but adds significant security challenges,"* he explained.

Ian McCormack, Deputy Director for Digital Government at the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), said the cyber security landscape was always evolving, with the threats including

ransomware and phishing. *"We know local authorities can seem like attractive targets to cyber attackers because of the data they hold. Attacks can have profound and far-reaching consequences, so it is vital for cyber security to be treated as a priority so services can continue running smoothly. Over the past year ransomware has grown as the top cyber threat for UK organisations, and the impact of attacks can be very severe, affecting key services, finances and public trust,"* he said.

Jupe also believes the rise in supply chain attacks is becoming more of a concern. *"The increased risk for councils is made worse through the digital transformation that is taking place around the country, threat actors know that if they exploit the weakest link in any digital chain then they can move laterally across organisations and through organisations. Standard security protection is no longer enough once attackers have penetrated your supply chain, a new zero-trust approach is required."*

McCormack agrees that the supply chain is an important consideration. *"Looking ahead, as technology becomes more integral to how services are delivered at a local level, it is crucial local authorities ensure that systems and services are built to be cyber resilient, and this includes building security throughout the supply chain. As we start to develop connected infrastructure and places, or smart cities, these must be secure by design. If a provider's systems are breached in an incident, this could lead to your services and data you hold being impacted. As a first step therefore, it is crucial to understand what security risks exist in your supply chain."*

The NCSC has a wide range of resources available to assist local authorities with improving their cyber resilience and local authorities are encouraged to report any cyber attacks to the organisation too.

Jupe believes the NCSC guidelines are essential to help local authorities get themselves to a cyber resilient standard that will help them avoid disaster. *"There is a minimum standard everyone has to get to so as not to have a disaster across the board and that is why the NCSC guidelines are excellent but you shouldn't be complacent. Following the guidelines equates to good practice but it doesn't mean you are fully protected. Whilst we don't know for sure what protection Redcar and Cleveland had*

in place, for example, it has been published that they claim to have followed NCSC guidelines. This is a situation where even following best practice is good but not good enough and councils should continuously consider new technologies as part of their security in-depth approach" he adds.

While good cyber security protection combined with staff training will often be sufficient, and with traditional cyber defence systems picking up most attacks, it is the zero-day attack which is most dangerous, where the attack hasn't been seen before – or it has and the system has not been patched.

Preparation and planning is vital regardless of the defences you choose to protect your organisation and McCormack advises practicing the response to a cyber incident. *"At the NCSC we work closely with local authorities, government partners and key representative bodies in the sector to advise on good cyber security practice and bolstering resilience. It is vital local authorities make themselves a harder target by following our mitigation advice. In the first instance we urge them to make offline back-ups of the data they hold. Having an incident response plan already prepared – and available offline – is essential as it significantly helps organisations respond effectively by defining roles and necessary actions. If your organisation does not currently have a plan, we urge leaders to develop one,"* he added.

- **Read the NCSC's supply chain guidance here:**
Supply chain security guidance - NCSC.GOV.UK
<https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/collection/supply-chain-security>

- **Read the NCSC guidelines on mitigating malware and ransomware attacks here:**
Mitigating malware and ransomware attacks - NCSC.GOV.UK
<https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/guidance/mitigating-malware-and-ransomware-attacks>

- **Read the NCSC guidance on incident management:**
Incident management - NCSC.GOV.UK
<https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/collection/incident-management>

- **To find out more about AppGuard or to book a 1:1 demonstration contact:**
craig.white@iese.org.uk