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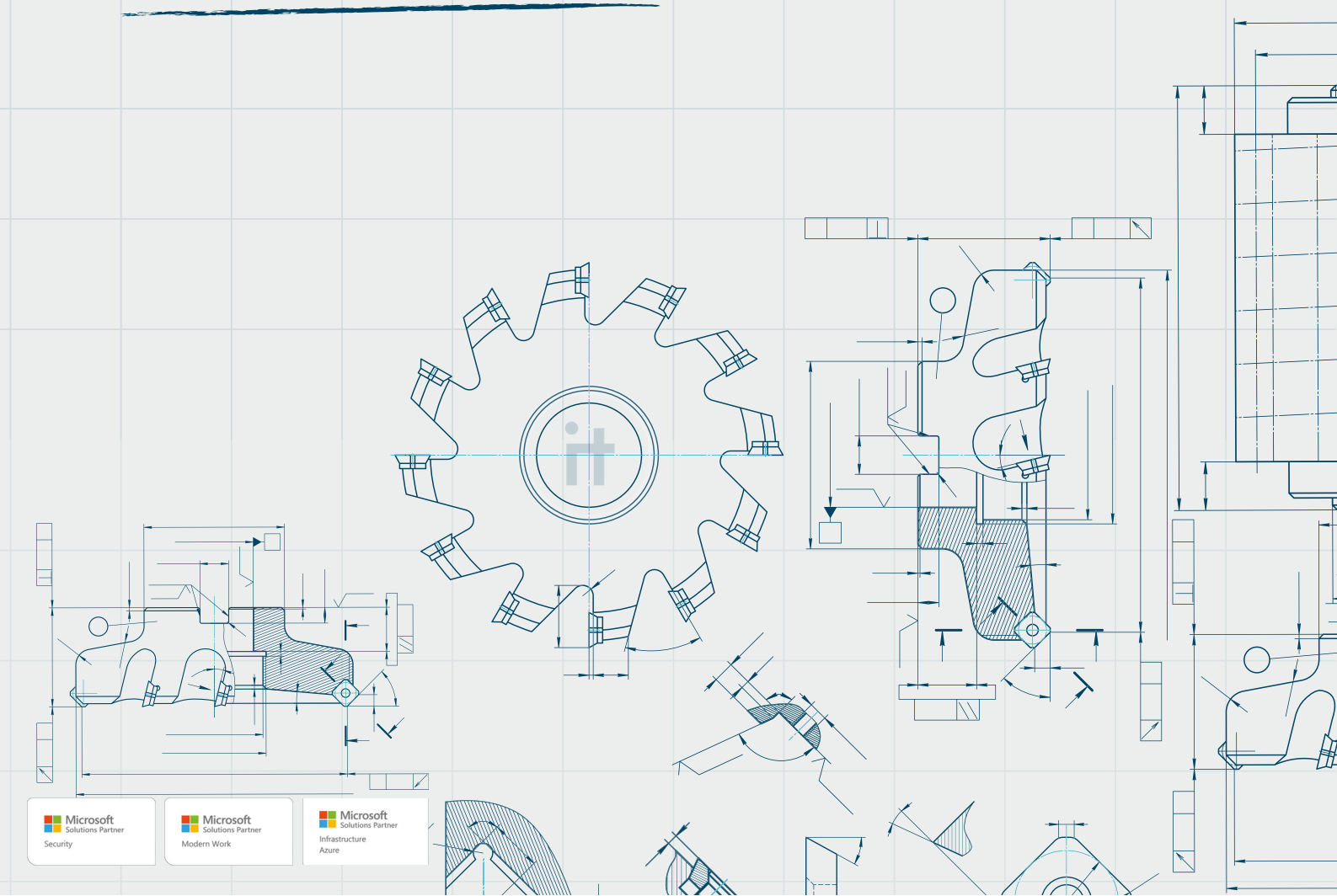
Architecting Azure: a Blueprint for Unprecedented Success



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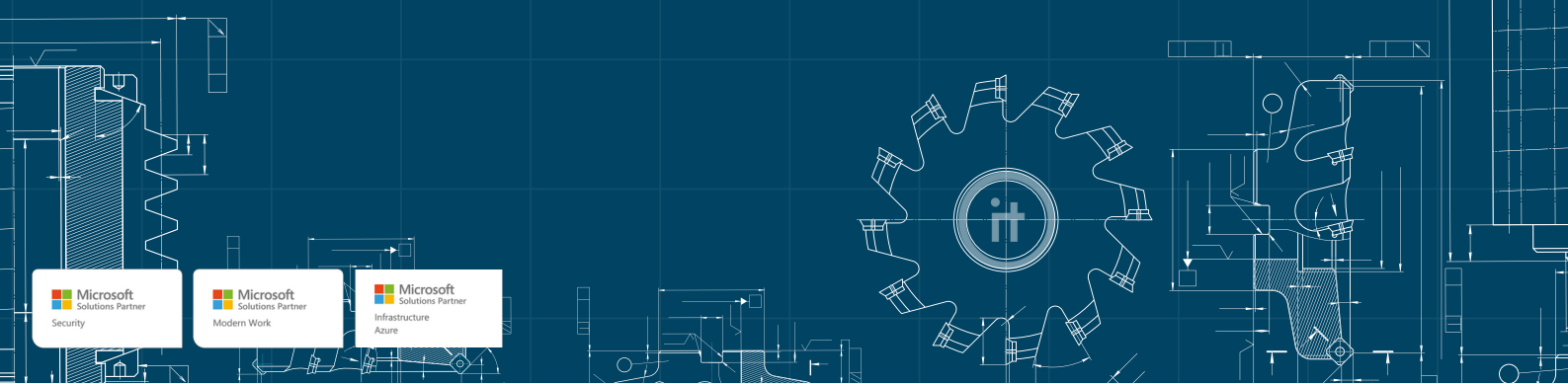
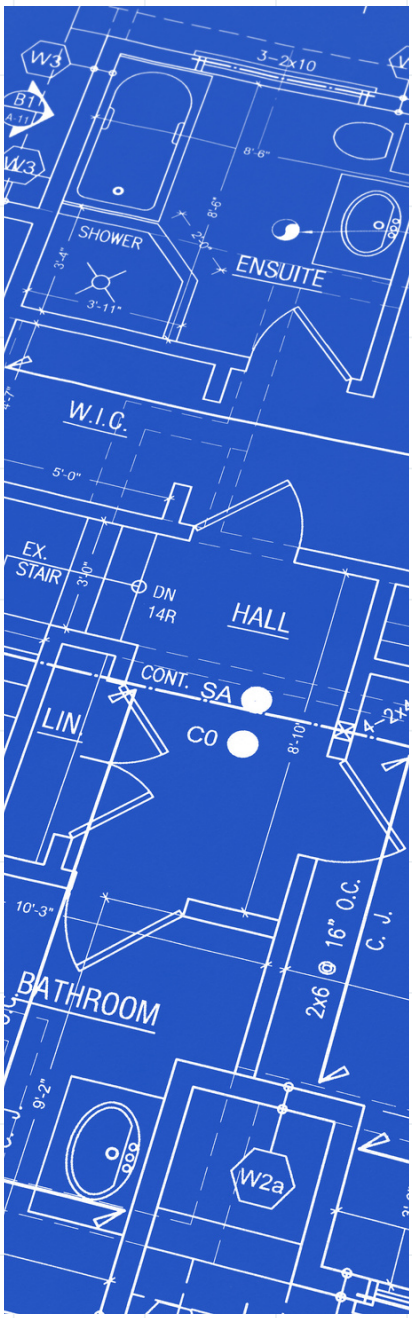




Understanding Microsoft Azure

Your Guide to Success in the Cloud.

A Modern Digital Ecosystem

Today, businesses are seeking innovative solutions to drive efficiency, enhance collaboration, and ensure the security of their data. Microsoft Azure, through its comprehensive cloud services, seamless integration capabilities, and advanced security protocols, empowers businesses to thrive in the modern digital ecosystem.

Discover Fitzrovia IT's (Fitz IT) blueprint to Azure success, our strategic partnership with Microsoft brings a comprehensive suite of Azure services to our clients to ensure they thrive in today's competitive market. Our Azure Blueprint showcases Fitzrovia IT's dedication to delivering leading managed cloud solutions and ensures our clients can harness the full potential of cloud technology to drive innovation, scalability, agility and ultimately deliver a high Return on Investment (ROI).

Your Azure Cloud Architects

This Azure Blueprint document has been written by Fitzrovia IT's Head of Azure, **Nick Rodgerson**, who leads a team of Microsoft Certified Infrastructure Azure Experts in the architectural design and delivery of our client's projects in Microsoft Azure. Nick has been with Fitzrovia IT since 2018 starting his Fitz journey as a Technical Delivery Engineer starting his Fitz journey as a Technical Delivery Engineer, before moving to the role of Head of Azure. In his current role, Nick's team is responsible for the Architecture and Delivery of our client's projects in Microsoft Azure, using his technical insight to develop their cloud infrastructure.

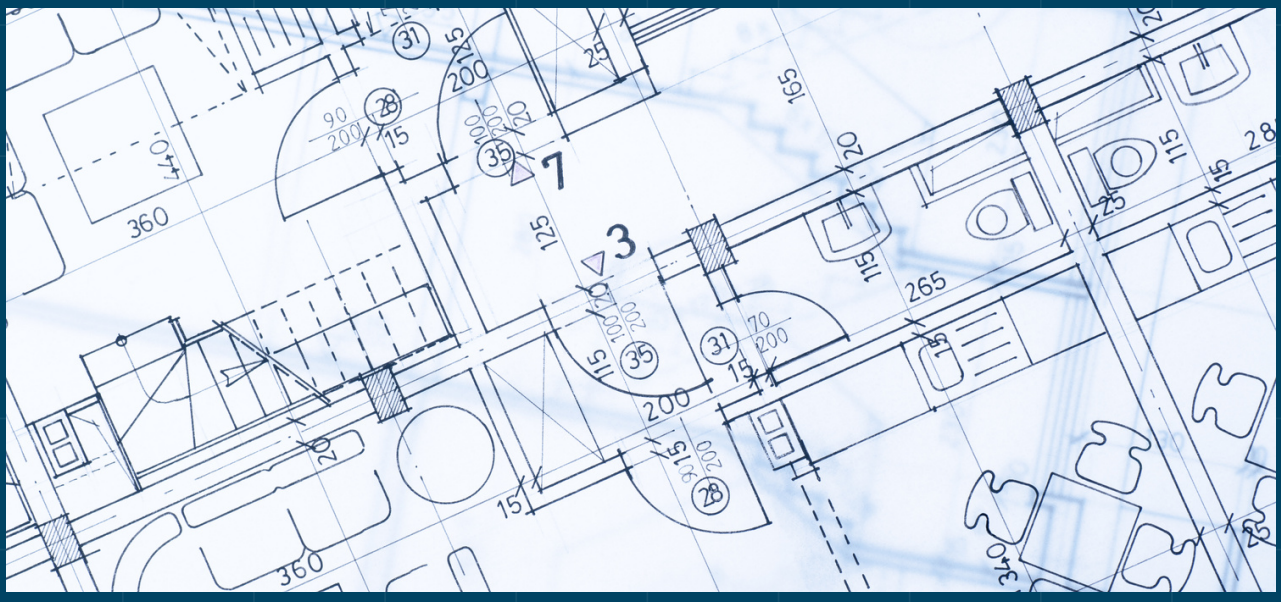
The Five Steps Towards Azure Success

1. Reliability
2. Security
3. Performance Efficiency
4. Cost Optimisation
5. Operational Excellence

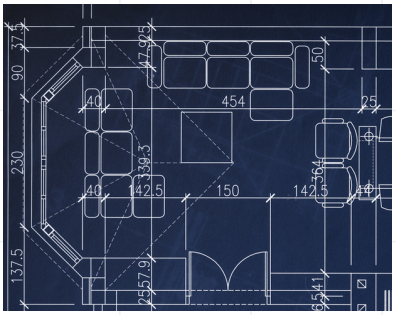
Fitzrovia IT's Blueprint for Success in Azure comprises five key steps: Reliability, Security, Performance Efficiency, Cost Optimisation, and Operational Excellence.

In the dynamic landscape of cloud computing, adherence to established frameworks is paramount for achieving optimal results. This Azure Framework is a foundational guide, providing a structured approach to building and managing reliable, secure, efficient, cost-effective, and operationally excellent cloud solutions. By aligning with this framework, organisations can enhance their Return on Investment and overall success in the Azure environment. It serves as a blueprint for best practices, offering a comprehensive set of principles that address key aspects of cloud architecture.

These five steps are based on the Microsoft Well-Architected Framework. How Fitzrovia IT deploys these steps is what this technical document focuses on.



Challenges faced by organisations before an Azure Cloud Migration

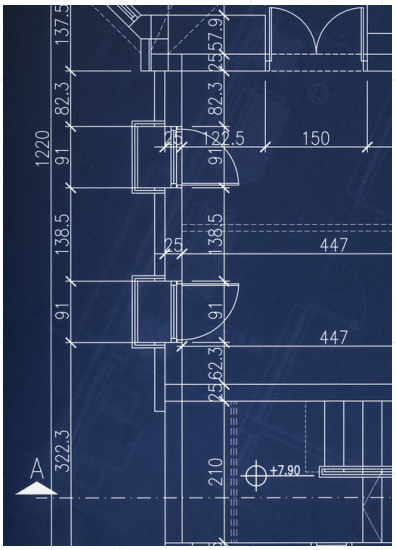


Secure and Scalable Banking Infrastructure

A leading financial institution is grappling with the limitations of its on-premises infrastructure. The legacy systems are becoming increasingly expensive to maintain and lack the scalability required to handle growing transaction volumes. The institution is also concerned about the rising threat of cyber-attacks and the need for enhanced security measures to protect sensitive customer data. Compliance with evolving financial regulations is another challenge, as the existing setup struggles to keep up with the dynamic regulatory landscape.

Professional Services - Collaboration and Remote Work Optimisation

A professional services firm with a geographically dispersed workforce is facing challenges in collaboration and communication. The existing on-premises infrastructure is hindering seamless remote work, impacting project timelines and client deliverables. The firm is also struggling to keep its software and tools up to date across various locations, leading to inefficiencies and version control issues. With an increasing demand for flexible work arrangements, the firm recognises the need for a more agile and collaborative IT environment.



Manufacturing - Streamlining Operations and IoT Integration

A manufacturing company is facing operational inefficiencies due to siloed data and disparate systems on its factory floor. The lack of real-time insights into production processes is leading to downtime, increased maintenance costs, and suboptimal resource utilisation. The company recognises the potential benefits of Industry 4.0 technologies but struggles to integrate its existing infrastructure with the Internet of Things (IoT) for data-driven decision-making. The need to modernise operations and leverage data for predictive maintenance is critical for remaining competitive in the market.

In the complex and ever-evolving world of cloud computing, implementing a well-defined blueprint for Azure implementation is essential for success. Fitzrovia IT's Azure Blueprint is a comprehensive guide that provides a set of best practices for building and optimising resilient, high-performing, secure, and efficient infrastructure and applications on Microsoft Azure for our clients.

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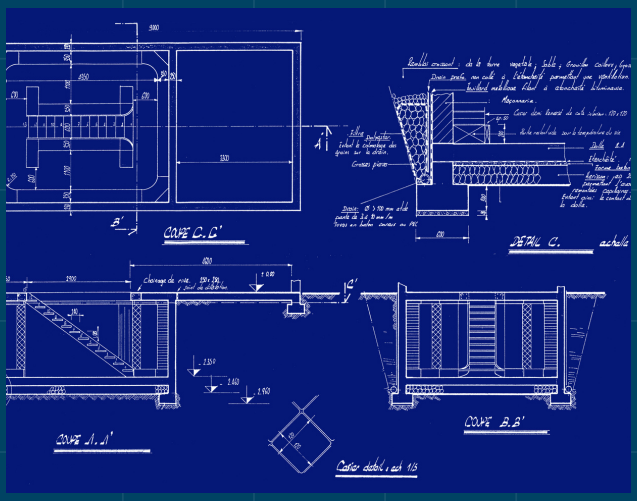
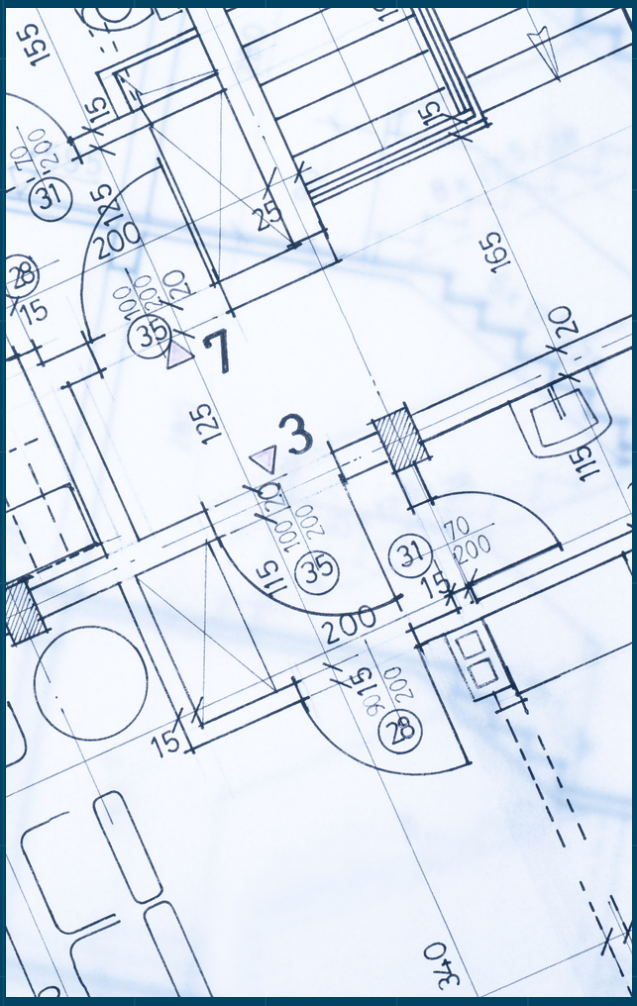
Let's Look Into The Steps

The Azure Blueprint is a valuable resource for any organisation that wants to build and operate high-quality cloud workloads. By following the blueprint's best practices, organisations can improve the reliability, security, performance, efficiency, and cost-effectiveness of their cloud workloads.

Embracing best practices within Azure is not just a choice but a necessity in today's online landscape. These form the foundation upon which a robust, secure, and high-performing Azure environment is built. While each environment is different depending on client regulations and needs the checklist outlined some of the standard best practices that our Microsoft Certified Azure Experts implement when overseeing your Azure Projects.





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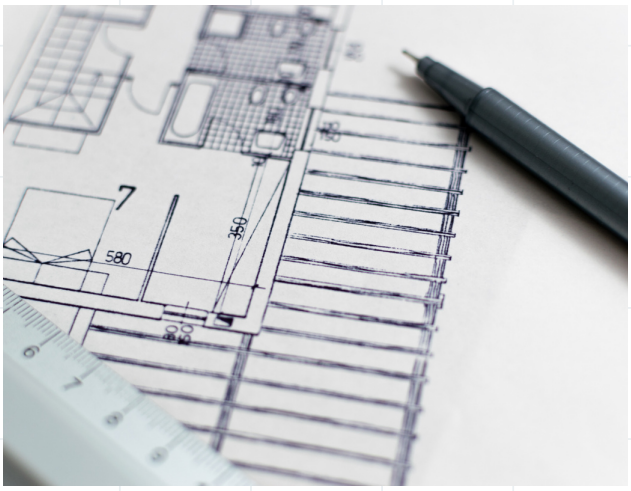
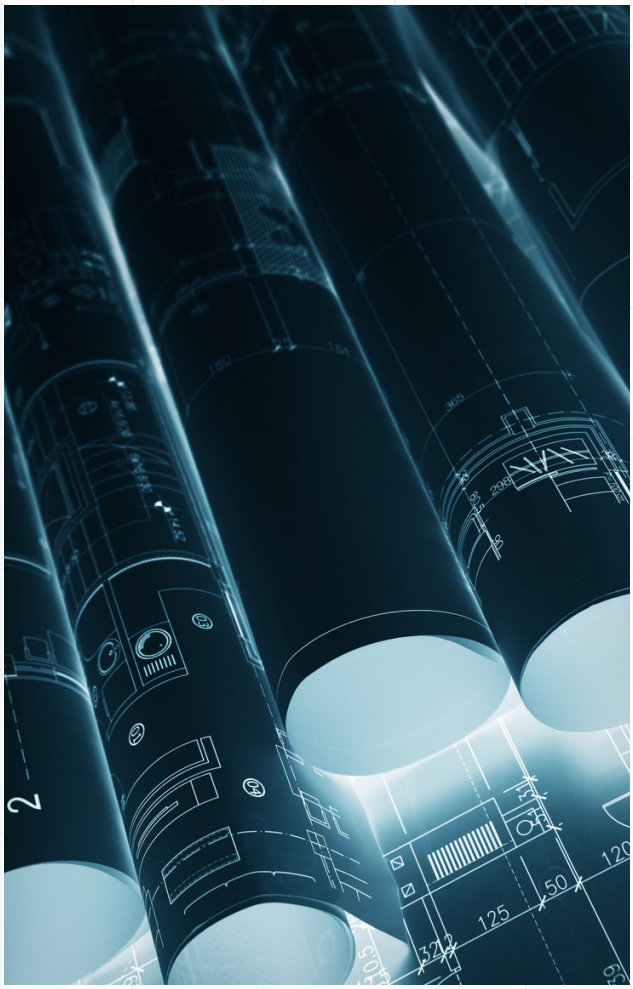
Reliability

For any cloud environment, reliability is critical to ensuring consistent and predictable performance. The Azure Blueprint stresses the importance of designing for failure and implementing redundancy and failover mechanisms. Azure's global presence and services such as Azure Availability Zones and Azure Site Recovery provide businesses with high availability, fault tolerance, and disaster recovery capabilities.

CHECKLIST

- ☐ Setup and monitor backups / Azure Site recovery.
- ☐ Make clients aware about redundancy options (Azure site recovery / backup schedules).
- ☐ Propose PaaS over IaaS where available to reduce attack surface and maintenance requirements.





Security

Cybersecurity is a main priority for all businesses. Fitzrovia IT's framework highlights the importance of implementing robust security measures, such as identity and access management, data protection, Continuous threat detection, and response. Fitz IT offer a wide range of security services, such as Azure Security Center, Azure Active Directory, and Azure Firewall, to help businesses protect their workloads from cyber threats. Additionally, Fitzrovia IT's cybersecurity experts employ advanced measures to protect your Microsoft Azure assets against threats.

CHECKLIST

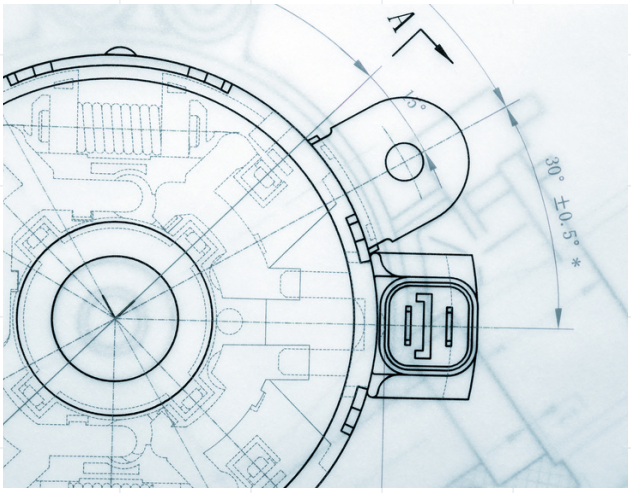
- [ ] Implementation of least privileged principle (MS Recommended best practice)
- [ ] Delegated controls internally with audited accounts via Azure Lighthouse (Using Role Based Access Control)
- [ ] Full security review by our dedicated internal Security team
- [ ] Threat detection and management by our SOC Team with advanced alerting

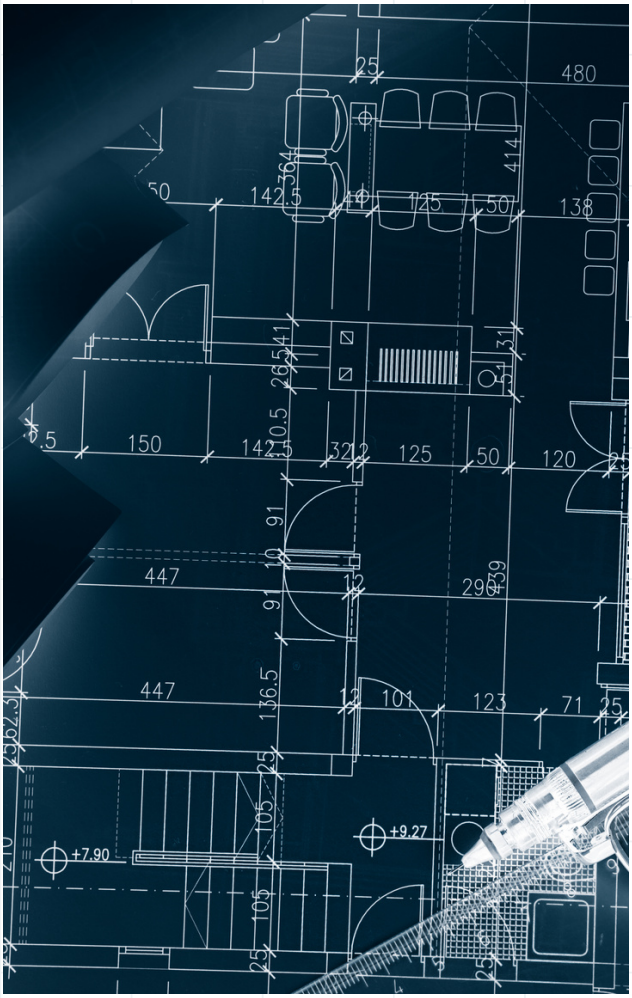
Performance Efficiancy

Performance Efficiency focuses on using cloud resources efficiently, matching supply with demand. Azure offers a wide range of services and configurations to cater to a variety of performance requirements. Businesses can utilise services such as Azure Virtual Machines, Azure App Service, and Azure Cosmos DB to optimise their workloads for speed, responsiveness, and resource utilisation.

CHECKLIST

- ☐ Advanced Monitoring and Analytics data capture.
- ☐ Advanced Testing and sign off.
- ☐ Automated reviews of efficiency, capacity and optimisation.



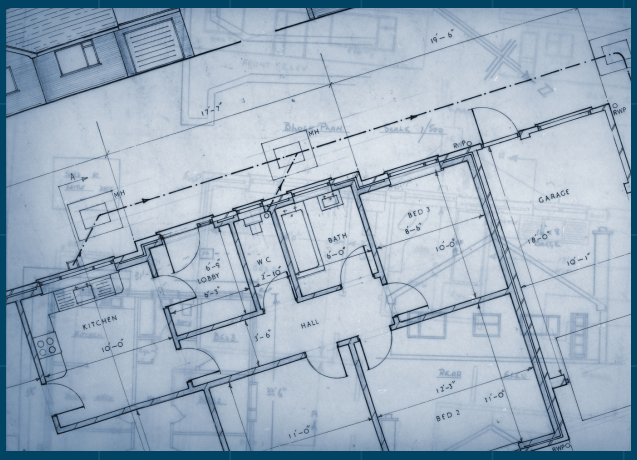


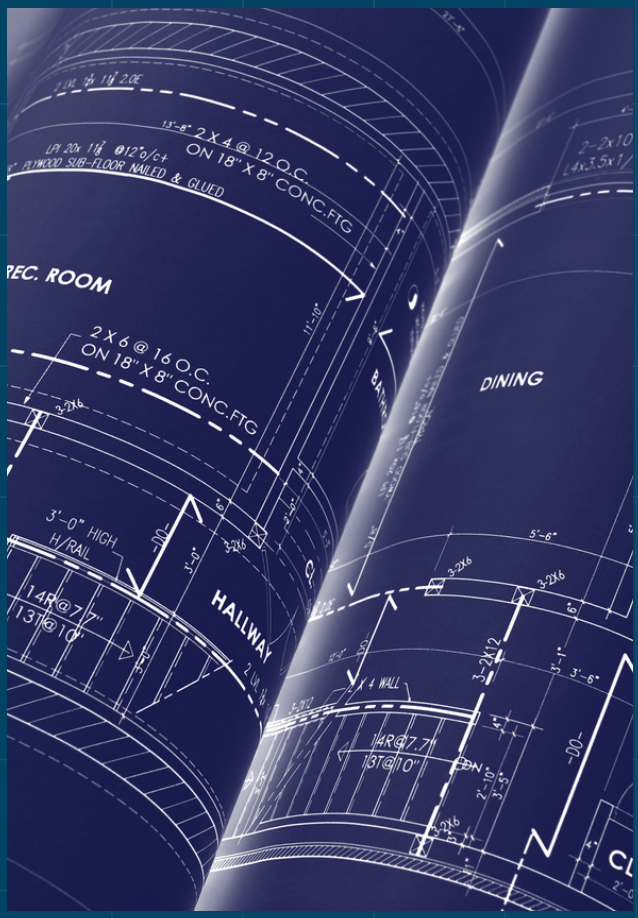
Cost Optimasation

This pillar focuses on maximising the efficiency of spending on the cloud without affecting the organisation's performance. Fitzrovia IT offer a variety of tools and services, such as Azure Cost Management, to help businesses optimise their costs.

CHECKLIST

- [ ] Capture clear requirements and produce a quote so the expenditure is inline with customers budgets and expectations.
- [ ] Discuss and introduce reserved instances on long term resources to acquire discounts for customers.
- [ ] Azure Budget alerts for each subscription, monitored by the team.
- [ ] Tagging for budgets based on services + Departments.



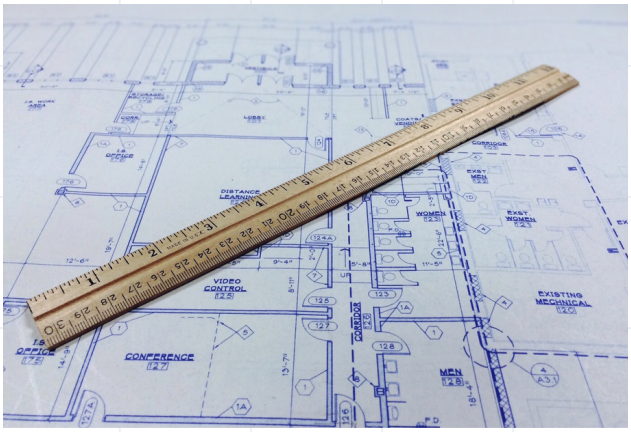


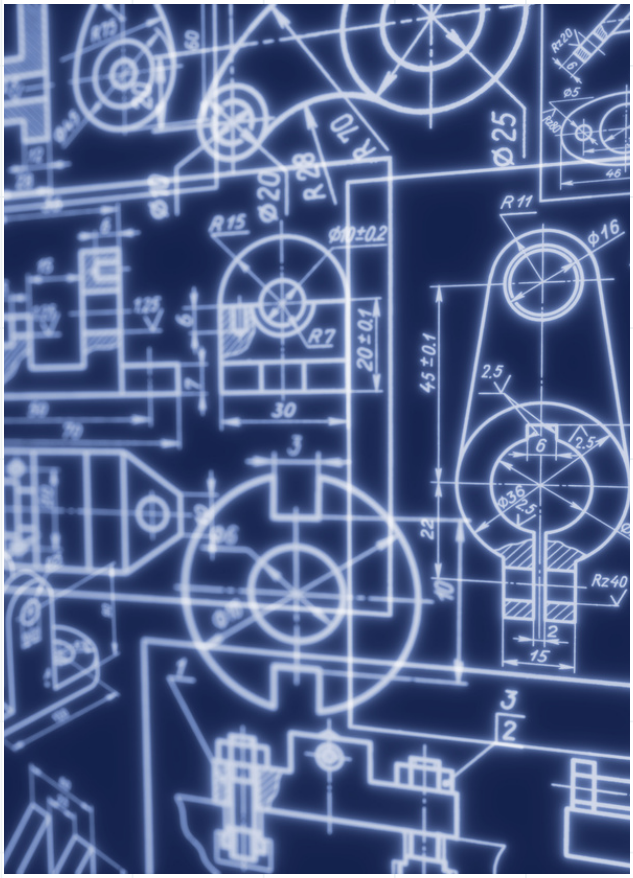
Operational Excellence

Operational Excellence involves integrating people, processes, and technology to run operations efficiently. Azure provides tools such as Azure Monitor, Azure Automation, and Azure Resource Manager templates to help businesses automate repetitive tasks, gain insights into resource utilisation, and maintain consistent operations.

CHECKLIST

- ☐ Enable Advanced monitoring and analytics of Clients Azure resources.
- ☐ Adhere to the MS best practices regarding MFA / Least Privilege access and
- ☐ Review the performance metrics of live Azure services and take steps where available to reduce expenditure and vulnerabilities
- ☐ Regular and comprehensive internal training and certifications to keep pace with the latest trends in Azure administration and architecture





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New Possibilities Start Today

In conclusion, Fitzrovia IT's Azure Blueprint is a strategic roadmap based on the Microsoft Well-Architected Framework, addressing the diverse challenges faced by businesses in the realm of cloud computing. Grounded in five key pillars — Reliability, Security, Cost Optimization, Operational Excellence, and Performance Efficiency — our blueprint is designed to optimise the Return on Investment (ROI) for our clients.

The challenges faced by organisations before migrating to Azure are diverse, ranging from the need for secure and scalable banking infrastructure to optimising collaboration in professional services and streamlining operations in manufacturing. Fitzrovia IT's Azure Blueprint is designed to address these challenges comprehensively, offering tailored solutions for each unique scenario.

Our commitment to success is reflected in the detailed checklist that Nick Rodgerson and his team follow diligently. From ensuring reliability through backups and redundancy options to implementing robust security measures and optimising costs, each step is a testament to our dedication to delivering high-quality cloud solutions. Operational excellence and performance efficiency are not just buzzwords but integral components of our approach, supported by advanced monitoring, analytics, and continuous training to stay ahead of the evolving Azure landscape.

For those seeking further clarification or guidance on these steps, book a free consultation with the experienced team at Fitzrovia IT. Together, let's discuss your Azure landscape and enhance your business's efficiency, security, and ultimately, return on investment.

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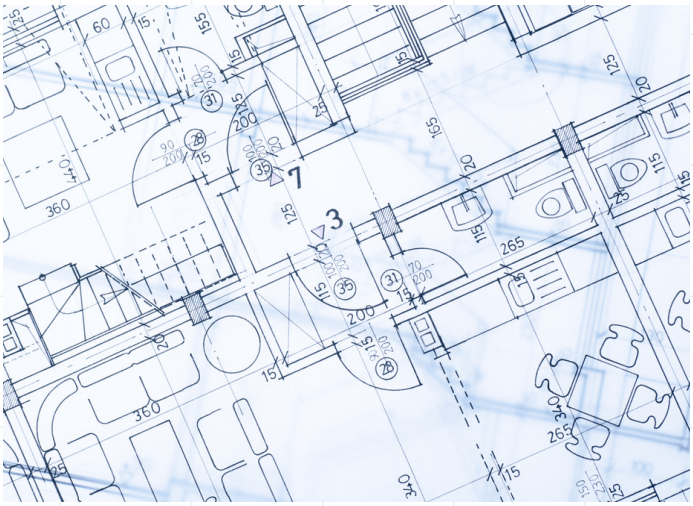
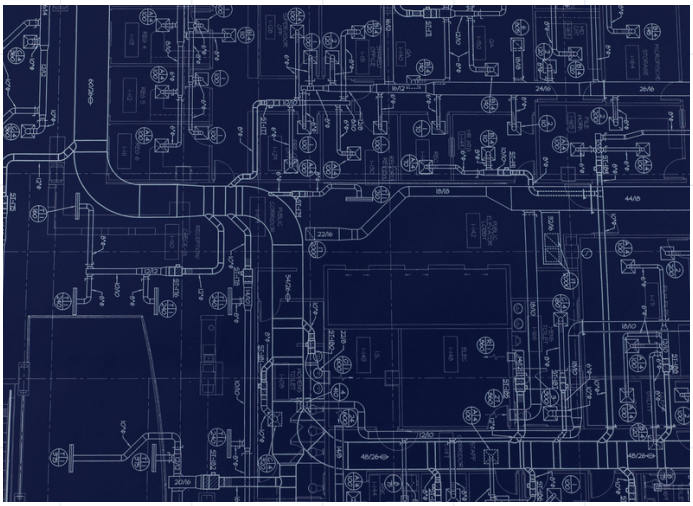
Resources

- Microsoft Azure: a Beginners Guide for Small Businesses
- Microsoft Cloud Services
- Want to Protect Your Data? Our Guide to Microsoft Azure Backups
- Introducing “Your Azure Blueprint to Success”





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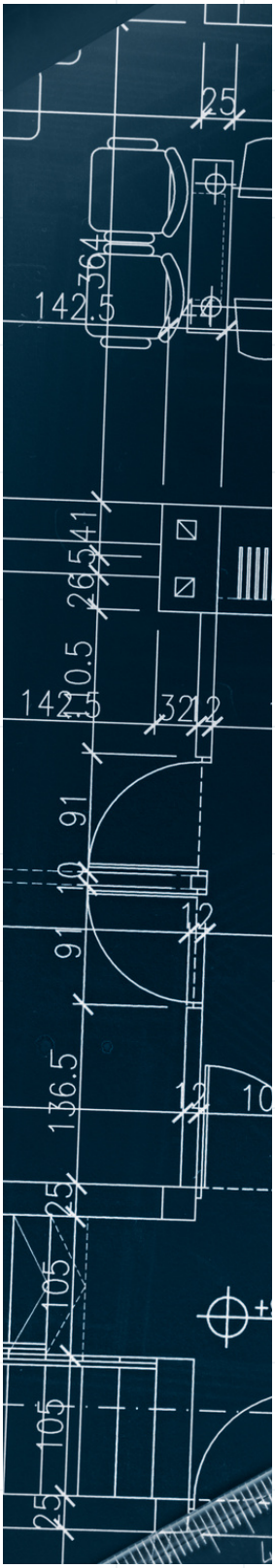
Checklist



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