Corporate ICT Strategy

Introduction

We are committed to using Information, Communication Technology to:
- Improve business efficiency and drive down service costs
- improve information management
- Improve communications within the organisation and with our stakeholders
- To improve customer relationships

We have well developed ICT systems and infrastructure that compare well with other local authorities. However the current financial environment means we will need to work even harder to keep abreast of technology developments which might help our business as well as maximising the use of and minimising the cost of existing technology. In particular ICT will need to support the Council's medium term business strategy which aims to reduce costs whilst maximising service effectiveness.

This is not a business plan for ICT Services: it is a strategy for the organisation's use of ICT and all managers need to be aware of the strategy and helping to deliver it.

Our Objectives for ICT

Our high level objectives and priorities are set out below: these will drive our ICT decision-making and delivery over the next three years. A detailed action plan for the delivery of these priorities is attached as Appendix A (see page 4).

1. **We will ensure our ICT resources are deployed to support the following priorities:**
- Projects which improve the Council's cost effectiveness
- Development and enhancement of the website as a primary source of information, a facility for maximising on-line transactions and as a vehicle for interactive communication with stakeholders
- The Council's culture change objectives including the development of a Customer Service Centre to improve customer service
- Meet statutory requirements and critical service development needs
- Support the drive for 'smarter working', including providing the tools and support to enable staff to work efficiently at home

2. **We will optimise the potential of the Council ICT infrastructure by:**
- Reviewing and re-engineering existing processes with a view to streamlining processes and automating transactions wherever possible.
- Ensuring staff have the ICT skills and competencies required to exploit the ICT technology available.

- Rationalising and improving data and information management across the Council, maximising the use of new and existing technology in ensuring a consistent approach to data quality maintenance, data reporting, data analysis, data protection and data and document sharing.
- Creating a robust, secure and resilient ICT infrastructure, to underpin corporate standards of data governance and one that meets corporate business continuity planning and disaster recovery requirements.
- Ensuring that new technologies integrate with or replace existing ones, and move away from 'silo systems' that meet single service needs to cross-cutting 'corporate systems' that link to each other effectively and facilitate information sharing across the Council.
- Increasing the use of technology that supports mobile working, providing opportunities for more staff to work flexibly from different Council buildings, from home and in the field.
- Working with other aspects of corporate governance and business procedures to review security procedures on a continuous basis, keeping information secure wherever or whenever it is handled including remote access.

3. We will endeavour to reduce existing ICT infrastructure costs by:
- Reducing reliance on bespoke applications and reviewing server utilisation and efficiency.
- Reviewing hardware and software usage and identifying opportunities to promote, develop, eliminate and consolidate existing technologies.
- Exploring the potential for change to technologies and applications that provide a positive contribution to the Council's efforts on climate change.

Strategic Alignment

This strategy provides a framework for the use and development of ICT in Oxfordshire County Council and has close links to and is influenced by the following policies and strategies:

- **Business Strategy** – the way we will streamline services and improve cost effectiveness across the council,
- **Customer Service Strategy** – how we deliver excellent customer service by placing customers at the heart of everything we do, and how we will deliver high quality, responsive, accessible and value for money services.
- **Communications / Digital Engagement / Marketing Strategy and Ask Oxfordshire Programme** - the ways in which we will consult, involve and communicate with the community to ensure it knows what we are planning to do.
- **Web Strategy** - sets our intentions to provide a single public website for the organisation to make contacting the council straightforward for everyone
- **Closer to Communities Strategy** – the way we work with local communities to better understand and respond to their needs, including with partner organisations.

- **Business Continuity Strategy** – how we will meet public expectations by providing vital services at all times, even when crises impact on our operations
- **Technology Strategy** – the selection and application of technologies to underpin ICTs delivery role for the Council's business strategy
- **Data Governance Policy** - ensures relevant and reliable data is available and used by decision makers, data security and compliance with relevant statutory requirements, and promotes the use of performance data to monitor performance against our priorities and targets and address underperformance.
- **Learning & Development Strategy** – will reflect the Councils need to improve ICT competency levels generally to enable us to fully exploit the technology available
- **Asset Management Plan** – developing a new approach to ensuring we make best use of our buildings, and that they support new ways of working across the Council.

Implementation

A detailed delivery plan is attached at Appendix A (see page 4). Any significant programmes of work initiated as a direct consequence of this Strategy will need to be fully scoped, costed and resourced.

The budget for maintenance of existing ICT infrastructure and support is held centrally. New projects will be funded corporately from the Initiatives Fund or by directorates. Directorate funded projects will need to satisfy the crieria set out above.

Resource Allocation

Existing costs - The ICT unit will be expected to contribute to annual efficiency improvement requirements and the budget will be scrutinised annually by the Cabinet via its Star Chamber process. As the organisation contracts there will be opportunities to reduct ICT costs (e.g. less computers and users to support) but the Unit will also be expected to search for reductions in the cost of equipment and maintenance

Service developments – New ICT projects to support service development will be funded from service directorate resources. However for each project a business case for investment will need to be approved by the appropriate Directorate Leadership Team. The business case will need to identify:
- payback expected from investment and/or
- how service delivery/management might be improved and/or
- How customer service will be improved and/or
- statutory requirements

Major projects (those costing in excess of £100k) will also need to be approved by the Business Strategy Group

Corporate projects – new projects will need to be approved by the Business Strategy Group. A business case will be required as for service developments but corporate projects will also need to demonstrate alignment with the Business strategy. Funding for corporate projects will be from the initiatives budget

Governance

The implementation of this ICT Strategy will be overseen by the Business Strategy Group (BSG) which will report at quarterly intervals to CCMT and the Cabinet. The BSG will:

- monitor progress with implementation of the delivery plan
- approve corporate and major service ICT projects
- consider advice from the Head of ICT on ICT advancements which might offer opportunities for cost and service improvements and/or opportunities to reshape the organisation functions.

The BSG will be supported by an ICT Working Group. This will include cross-directorate representation in support of embedding news ways of working across the organisation and prioritising competing service and corporate demands for limited resources.

Sept 2010

Appendix A – Action Plan

Objective / Aim	Action	By When	By Whom	Outcome
1. We will ensure our ICT resources are deployed to support the following priorities: • Projects which improve the Council's cost effectiveness	• Ensure all ICT projects and service requests are prioritised against value for money, utilisation of existing resources, benefits realisation and ensuring an efficient and joined-up approach across the council	October 2010	ICT Officers Working Group	• The introduction of an effective cross-directorate ICT Officers Working Group that supports the Business Strategy Group in providing governance for significant new ICT related developments by ensuring that business cases comply with strategy, efficiency and statutory requirements.
	• Develop and implement a Channel Management Strategy to encourage greater use of the website as primary means to contact the Council	October 2010	Customer Service Centre Manager	• The Channel Management strategy identifies the opportunities for migrating customers from expensive to less expensive channels. ICT will reuse or implement technologies to allow customers to make more effective use of website, online transactions and telephony.
• Development and enhancement of the website as a primary source of information, a facility for maximising on-line transactions and as a vehicle for interactive communication with stakeholders	• Develop the Intranet and Website to ensure that customers and Customer Service Advisors can find the information they require easily and that content management systems support a self-service approach to keeping information up to date.	Summer 2011	Web Services Manager	• Web Strategy implementation is aligned to the Customer Service and Channel strategies to deliver a knowledge base that will under pin the public web site, and the Customer Service Advisors case management CRM

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	• Develop and implement a consistent approach to expanding on-line services and payments across a wider range of Council services, including payments, bookings, completing forms etc	March 2011	Deputy Head of ICT Services	• Where efficiencies and savings are identified, self-service and payment facilities will be developed and deployed in line with the Customer Service and Channel Management strategies and transition to technologies will be fully supported.
	• Support the specification, procurement, implementation and ongoing operation of the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to ensure it is efficient, effective and meets wider Council needs	Summer 2011	Deputy Head of ICT Services / Customer Service Centre Manager	• A fit for purpose and cost effective Customer Relationship management (CRM) system is selected and implemented successfully; integrating to existing technologies where efficiencies can be made.
• The Council's culture change objectives including the development of a Customer Service Centre to improve customer service	• Develop and encourage the use of technologies to support better ways of working, including video and teleconferencing, online workspaces, Instant Messaging and other communications systems.	January 2011	ICT Operations Manager	• The introduction of reliable, easy to use technical solutions that reduce the need to travel to meetings. • A significant reduction in the number of e-mails sent and stored on the OCC Mail system
• Support the drive for 'smarter working', including providing the tools and support to enable staff to work efficiently at home	• Identification of core ICT competencies and requirements	Summer 2011	Deputy Head of ICT Services / L&D Manager	• A Learning & Development strategy to support the ICT competence and skills we need our staff to have

Objective / Aim	Action	By When	By Whom	Outcome
• Meet statutory requirements and critical service development needs	• Review existing technologies for home and flexible working	January 2011	ICT Operations Manager	• Identify and implement improvements to technology application and use that support effective home and flexible working
	• Work with services to identify and address statutory responsibilities and critical service needs requiring ICT support and solutions and help manage ongoing compliance	On-going	ICT Officers Working Group	• New requirements are identified via Service Planning process and prioritised via Officers Working Group and Business Strategy Group as appropriate
2. We will optimise the potential of the Council ICT infrastructure by: • Reviewing and re-engineering existing processes with a view to streamlining processes and automating transactions wherever possible.	• Identify and work with services to exploit opportunities to automate, reduce and simplify processes, and further develop self-service approaches	On-going	ICT Desktop Manager / Deployment Manager	• The introduction of web self-service for ICT so that customers are able to log, track and receive updates without having to contact the ICT Support Centre.
• Ensuring staff have the ICT skills and competencies required to exploit the ICT technology available.	• Develop and promote e-learning and formal training courses to support greater use of technology to improve ways of working (eg video and teleconferencing, Instant Messaging etc), alongside ongoing development in 'core ICT skills'	January 2011 / on-going	Web Services Manager / L&D Manager	• The production of a suite of e-learning packages that business customers are able to select and use at a time of their choosing. The suite will be developed to accommodate a varying degree of skill and cover all key technologies

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• Rationalising and improving data and information management across the Council, maximising the use of new and existing technology in ensuring a consistent approach to data quality maintenance, data reporting, data analysis, data protection and data and document sharing..	• Develop and implement a Data Strategy to improve data and information management across the Council, including maximising the use / value of existing large data stores such as the Local Information System to improve service delivery	October 2011	Research and Intelligence Manager	• A strategy for data, performance, and information management requirements that ensures data quality, making effective and efficient use of existing enterprise business reporting tools, the LIS and web publishing platforms.
• Creating a robust, secure and resilient ICT infrastructure, to underpin corporate standards of data governance and one that meets corporate business continuity planning and disaster recovery requirements.	• Work with the Business Continuity Stakeholder Group to improve corporate business continuity planning and disaster recovery	March 2011	ICT Operations Manager	• A consolidated Disaster Recovery Plan that identifies both the business and ICT responsibilities and actions in the event of a disaster. We will carry out regular Disaster Recovery and business continuity tests to ensure that the plans are always up to date and either resolve or escalate issues as they arise.
• Ensuring that new technologies integrate with or replace existing ones, and move away from 'silo systems' that meet single service needs to cross-cutting 'corporate systems' that link to each other effectively and facilitate	• Clear process for tracking additions and changes to the applications portfolio,	February 2011	ICT Programme Office Manager	• Regular updates to the Officers Working Group
	• Identification of MS Access Databases used for service delivery	Sept 2011	ICT Operations Manager	• Replacement of Access databases where possible and documentation to support those that are retained

Objective / Aim	Action	By When	By Whom	Outcome
information sharing across the Council. • Increasing the use of technology that supports mobile working, providing opportunities for more staff to work flexibly from different Council buildings, from home and in the field.	• Review availability, costs and effectiveness of hand held devices (laptops, mobile phones, Blackberry's etc) and develop a single policy across the Council	March 2011	ICT Desktop Manager	• Ensure provision of these devices is cost-effective, and ensure that all provided to staff support them working as effectively and efficiently as possible
• Working with other aspects of corporate governance and business procedures to review security procedures on a continuous basis, keeping information secure wherever or whenever it is handled including remote access.	• Review of ICT data security procedures • Infrastructure/Desktop changes to reflect increased security requirements for Government Connect	Ongoing April 2011	CIMU Manager ICT Operations Manager	• Quarterly reporting on data security issues to Corporate Governance Working Group • Network and remote access to the Council's services comply with national and local requirements
3. **We will endeavour to reduce existing ICT infrastructure costs by:** • Reducing reliance on bespoke applications and reviewing server utilisation and efficiency	• ICT will monitor all requests for customised and non standard application requests. Working in conjunction with the new governance arrangements for ICT projects, we will continue to	Ongoing	ICT Programme Office Manager	• Reduce reliance on bespoke applications, which are often expensive to purchase and maintain

Objective / Aim	Action	By When	By Whom	Outcome
	encourage staff to use and adapt existing systems where possible and escalate those requests where we unable to deliver using existing systems.			
	• We will complete our plan to virtualise servers within our Clarendon Data Centre environment.	March 2011	ICT Operations Manager	• ICT will continue with the plans to virtualise infrastructure services and will evaluate and deploy a virtual desktop solution subject to financial approval. We will also review any emerging market solutions that will reduce and make our existing technology estate more efficient and will submit plans for approval.
• Reviewing hardware and software usage and identifying opportunities to promote, develop, eliminate and consolidate existing technologies.	• Review existing hardware and software usage and identify opportunities to promote, develop, eliminate and consolidate existing technologies where we can.	March 2011 / ongoing	Deputy Head of ICT Services	• Using our hardware and software asset register, we will ensure that the staff have the right equipment and the most appropriate software to carry out their roles in the most efficient way, and understand how to use it effectively.
	• Review availability, costs and effectiveness of hand held devices (laptops, mobile phones, Blackberry's etc) and develop a single policy across the Council	Summer 2011	ICT Desktop Manager	• Rationalise the number and cost of these devices, and ensure that all provided support staff working as effectively and efficiently as possible
• Exploring the potential for change to technologies and applications that provide a positive contribution to the -	• Explore more energy efficient solutions to address new requirements / needs, and review efficiency of existing technologies	Ongoing	ICT Contracts Manager	• Maximise the use of the investment made by OCC, reduce the amount of power currently being consumed and help the Council to achieve its overall carbon reduction objectives

Objective / Aim	Action	By When	By Whom	Outcome
Council's efforts on climate change	with a view to replacing them where it is also financially beneficial to do so.			