

Cheltenham Borough Council

Cabinet - 13th February 2007

Information and Communications Technology Strategy 2007-10

Report of the Cabinet Member, Internal Performance and Service Improvement

- 1. Executive Summary and recommendation**
 - 1.1 The issue**
 - 1.1.1** The Council does not have a current information and communications technology strategy. Proper and innovative use of the advantages of information and communication technology is essential to the development and efficient provision of virtually all council services.
 - 1.2 I therefore recommend that :**
 - 1.2.1 Cabinet note the attached strategy and provide their views.**
 - 1.2.2 Cabinet invite all Overview and Scrutiny Committees to comment on the strategy with the intention of approving a final strategy at Cabinet on 17th April 2007.**
 - 1.3 Summary of implications (see over)**

1.3.1 Financial

The current assessment is that the strategy is likely to have some additional recurring costs totalling an estimated £9,000 per annum and a one off cost of £1,000. £7,000 of the recurring cost is for a proposed extension of ICT support cover and is not currently built into budgets for 2007/08. Once this has been properly costed the recipients of the service will need to consider how this should be funded. If funding cannot be found from within existing budgets these additional costs will need to be factored into the revised budget for 2007/08 the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) from 2008/09- if adopted. £2,000 is for future benchmarking which will not impact in the 07/08 financial year. It is anticipated that the one off costs can be met from within existing budgets. It is intended that a number of measures within the strategy will generate future cost savings and therefore the ultimate outcome will be a beneficial financial change. Once these savings have been properly assessed they should be built into the MTFS projections.

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1.3.2 Legal

There are no immediate legal implications arising from the strategy. Measures within the strategy are aimed at improving data management and compliance with data legislation.

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1.3.3 Other

The strategy outlines a need to review availability and quality of the ICT support service especially in relation to the out of office hours service. Therefore, minor changes will be required to be made to the way the ICT team currently operate. As the strategy develops, there may be future HR implications for a number of members of staff. The implications are likely to be around changes to roles or location of staff. Any proposed changes will involve consultation with employees and their Trade Union representatives.

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1.4 Implications on corporate and community plan priorities

1.4.1 There are no implications for the current business plan. Provisions within the strategy are aimed at improving prioritisation of ICT resources according to business need.

1.5 Statement on Risk

1.5.1 There are no areas of the strategy which immediately increase any business risk, the effect of the strategy should be decreased risks to data loss and corruption, improved data legislation compliance and an improved security environment for information and communication technology. However changes to the way ICT work is strategically prioritised may have an affect on the current business plan and any potential changes to ICT support arrangements will mean transitional problems have to be overcome and final business arrangements have to ensure proper levels of support.

2. Introduction

2.1 Cheltenham Borough Council invests over £2 million each year on information and communications technology (ICT) facilities and services. To justify this investment the Council must have a clear direction and focus on ICT is best harnessed centrally across the Council or within each Division.

2.2 Currently there are two strands to ICT provision within the Council – one which provides the core infrastructure for all ICT systems at a corporate level, and one which is based in the Divisions and provides several discrete systems for specific uses.

2.3 A new ICT strategy has been developed that aims to put our financial investment, and our use of systems and technology on a better footing. The strategy aims to help the Council to deliver better and more efficient services and achieve best value from its financial investment.

2.4 The ICT strategy is a short document, but it sets out the framework that by which all changes to existing IT systems and all future IT projects will be judged. This judgement is based on six key elements:

- Contributing towards the **strategic direction** of the council, its values and plans
- **Enabling** the full potential of information to be exploited
- **Driven by corporate business requirements** (external and internal customers)
- **Best value**
- **Innovative** and developing technology opportunities
- **Reliable and secure**

2.5 For each of these six key areas, the ICT strategy outlines a 'blueprint' for the new state of ICT: how it will look after the strategy changes have been implemented by the Council and what the implications are arising from changes to the way in which our ICT services are managed currently.

2.6 An accompanying ICT Strategy Action Plan lists the specific activities that will be performed to implement the changes required to move the Council to the new state of ICT.

3. Consultation

3.1 Consultation on the new ICT strategy has been extensive.

3.2 A strategy workshop was held by an IT consultant as facilitator, and attended by the Cabinet Member, all the available senior management team and key staff. The workshop covered the Council's current approach to ICT and where we needed to be to enhance service delivery. From this workshop, the key themes for our use of ICT were extracted.

3.3 Additional workshops and specific consultation has been carried out by the Assistant Director, ICT. Consultation has been internal to the council, primarily with the Board of Directors and senior managers who are affected by the strategy. The Assistant Director, ICT has affirmed the strategy as being a sound professional direction for the development of ICT services.

3.4 As a final affirmation of the approach and model used in the strategy, an external review is planned.

Background Papers	Shooting ahead of a moving target; An Information and Communications Technology Strategy 2007-10
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Scrutiny Function	Economy and Business Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee