

APPENDIX 1

Cheltenham Borough Council's ICT Strategy 2010/11 to 2015/16

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This document requires the following approvals

SLT

Cabinet



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Executive summary

Over the last few years Cheltenham Borough Council has undergone many changes and ICT has been key to supporting these. The council has taken advantage of new technology to assist in the delivery of high quality services.

This strategy acknowledges that the pace of transformational change will continue to increase and it is vital that there is sufficient investment in technology and staff resource to ensure these changes are delivered successfully.

We have identified key technologies that will enable us to meet the challenges in supporting service transformation to deliver better and more efficient public services.

The strategy looks at the period 2010/11 to 2015/16 and has been developed in conjunction with the council's medium term financial plan, corporate strategy and will be reviewed annually.

Forward from chief executive Andrew North

We are facing a period of radical change in local government with the need to develop better services to our public at significantly lower cost. Finding new ways of using ICT is critical and as new technological opportunities arise we need to plan our response so that we grasp the right opportunities but avoid being led down blind alleys by the latest fad.

Intelligent leadership of the council's approach to ICT may well make the difference between success and failure in making the organisational changes necessary. This strategy provides a leadership road map for achieving success.

Statement from leader of the council Steve Jordan

Over the next 5 years ICT will continue to have a crucial role to play in the future of Cheltenham Borough Council. This will be both in supporting the systems that people increasingly rely on to access council services but also by providing the skills needed to support many of the projects carried out by the council.

As the council continues to seek more cost effective ways to provide services, the structure of ICT is likely to change, probably through creating a shared team with other local councils. However the ICT team continuously adapts to change and I am confident they will provide an excellent service to both the council and the wider population of Cheltenham.





1. Introduction

Implementing a coordinated corporate ICT strategy which is aligned with the needs of Cheltenham borough council and the citizens it serves is key to realising the council's vision.

This document has also been developed taking into account the emerging Government ICT strategy and gives consideration to our continued commitment to provide ICT services to Cheltenham Borough Homes (CBH) and Cheltenham Festivals (CF).

The purpose of this document is to define Cheltenham Borough Council ICT strategy for the years 2010/11 through to 2015/16.

In order to reflect the businesses need to meet the changing demands of our citizens and to keep pace with emerging technologies this strategy will be reviewed annually.

It builds on work already underway within the organisation and serves to reinforce how ICT can assist in the delivery of the corporate business aims. To ensure the council maximises the benefits of new projects it is vital that there is early input from ICT.

The possible provision of a joint ICT service with Tewkesbury Borough Council will provide opportunities for the introduction of common technologies across both organisations and will consider where appropriate closer alignment of the ICT strategies.

2. Method and Approach

It is vital that this strategy is business led and therefore has been written following consultation with the senior leadership team, service managers, staff, members and our partners.

Meetings with assistant directors and their teams were held and the approach was agreed. ICT arranged for a number of suppliers to demonstrate technologies that CBC might exploit in the near future. A questionnaire was also developed and distributed to service managers and senior leadership team. ICT also held discussions around ideas about services and the technology we could develop or introduce.



ICT Strategy

The team would like their customers to understand better how ICT might help them deliver their services.

The approach to defining the strategy has been based on the best practice guidelines from Socitm (Society of IT managers)



3. Context

Internal

The ICT strategy has been developed taking into account the council's key initiatives and priorities.

It directly supports the council's corporate strategy 2010 – 2015 which is proposing that the council adopts three community objectives:

- Enhancing and protecting our environment
- Strengthening our economy
- Strengthening our communities

These are supported by two cross-cutting objectives of:

- Investing in arts and culture
- Ensuring we provide value for money services that effectively meet the needs of our customers

This document also describes the approach to facilitating the delivery of the following

- Strategic commissioning
- Corporate sourcing strategy and shared services
- Accommodation strategy
- Working Flexibly
- Service access, delivery and improvement
- Sustainability

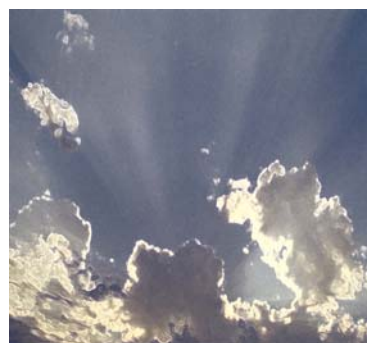
External

The organisation is under increased pressure from both central government and citizens to deliver better services at a cheaper cost.

In recognising these pressures it is vital that investment in ICT infrastructure and systems are seen to underpin the delivery of the organisation's aspirations. These will, in the longer term, support the drive to improve services and reduce costs.

We are also mindful of the need to ensure that the information we hold about our citizens is held securely and meets the requirements of central government legislation.





4. Vision

The vision for ICT is as follows:

ICT aims to be a cost effective service which is both an enabler and driver of transformational change, supporting the business and providing high levels of customer satisfaction.

Having taken into account the objectives of the council including other strategies currently being written our strategy for delivering our vision for the exploiting the potential of ICT to support the organisation is defined below.

Across the Organisation

Ensuring the continuity of Cheltenham Borough Council business is one of the primary aims of this strategy. Accordingly, operational support and maintenance accounts for most of the Council's spend on ICT. This includes

- Providing ongoing support, maintenance and enhancement of existing technologies and business systems thereby ensuring that the council maximises the investment it has already made in technology.
- Ensuring that the council can deliver its business continuity plan should it be required.
- Appropriate security to protect our information assets

Whilst developing our vision and strategy it is important to acknowledge some key council strategies which our work and guide the use of technology for our citizens, staff, members and our partners CBH and CF.

Commissioning

The commissioning proposal envisages an organisation which commissions the services it provides to the public, which may involve looking to external providers as well as providing them itself. Alternative providers might be found in the public, private or voluntary sectors for a large number of the council's services. The implications of this approach are being assessed as part of the commissioning programme.



Corporate sourcing strategy and shared services

The drive towards sharing services with other councils has accelerated with the introduction of joint approaches for Building Control, Legal, and Internal Audit and the possibility of other services being shared.

Each shared service creates a requirement for teams to work more flexibly and to share access to information and communication facilities. Taken together they emphasise the need for an ICT infrastructure which is flexible, open, and capable of integration with other organisations whilst retaining high levels of security and access control.

Where services are delivered in partnership with other authorities this strategy will drive forward the innovative use of technology thus allowing the council to realise the benefits of the following:

- Provision of ICT services with other authorities
- GO7 which is a partnership of 6 Gloucestershire district authorities and West Oxfordshire district council to share finance and HR services and systems
- Shared Legal, Building Control, Internal Audit and HR and possibly Revenues and Benefits
- Potential hosting of systems shared with other authorities

Accommodation strategy

This strategy will assist in the delivery of the key aims of the council's accommodation strategy which include:


- The desire for the borough council to have a presence within the heart of the town
- The need for flexible space that can adapt to changing work patterns, staffing numbers and emerging technologies.
- Improved member facilities

In order to meet these aims ICT will work towards ensuring that any investment in technology:

- Will be transferable
- Will allow services to deliver the same or better level of service

Working Flexibly

The council needs an agile workforce that has accurate information securely available where and when required. The use of technology and support of the ICT service will be critical.

An essential requirement for delivering the business benefits of shared services and commissioning will be the ability to work productively across different organisations and link  directly to the working flexibly project.

The key aims of the project are to:-



- Meet customer demands for more responsive and flexible services
- Meet employees needs for flexible working arrangements
- Take advantage of any opportunities provided by the council office accommodation plans
- Deliver a corporate strategy for flexible working backed up by mobile and home working policies
- Meet business demands of partnership working with other local authorities, for mobile or remote access to business systems
- Improve the facility members have to access council information from home

In order to meet the aims of collaborative and flexible working ICT will ensure that any investment in technology will support

- Working from home
- Mobile working
- Hot desking
- Remote working from other offices

Service access, delivery and improvement

The council is in the process of preparing a service access and delivery strategy which includes a program of service improvement work and proposes the development of a corporate contact centre. The strategy will ensure that future investment in new technologies is aligned with streamlined processes and provides more efficient services for the citizen

The use of technology and the support required from ICT will be key to a successful implementation and provide opportunities to:

- Transform customers' experience of the Council.
- Transform business efficiency.
- Transform customer access to the Council.
- Enable more efficient, easy to access services for customers

This strategy outlines our plans and ambitions to take advantage of existing and new technologies to directly benefit Cheltenham borough council citizens and others who access council services or the amenities of Cheltenham.

In order to meet these aims ICT will work towards ensuring that any investment in technology will support:

- Further transactional and information services via the website
- Increasing citizen engagement and participation using a range of social media including facebook, twitter and text messaging
- A "Tell us once" approach to engagement with citizens
- Sharing information with those who need it



Sustainability

One of the council's objectives in the corporate strategy is "enhancing and protecting our environment" and ICT have a responsibility to contribute to the reduction of CO2 omissions. This strategy will lead us to investigate and implement initiatives that support the council's objectives regarding this including:

- Realisation of the beneficial effects of our working flexibly project
- Introducing more e-forms and electronic processes to reduce or eliminate paper forms
- Looking at ways of reducing power consumption by the more efficient use of servers and desktops
- Considering power requirements when procuring new equipment
- Supporting the council in the joining of the national 10:10 campaign





5. The journey so far

During the development of this strategy, ICT reviewed their contribution to the improved services provided by the council to our citizens.

Since the last ICT strategy 2007 – 2010 key achievements include:

- The delivery of the telephony system which has resulted in significant year on year savings for the council.
- Assisted in the delivery of the new website
- Successful introduction of Multi functional devices increasing people to printer ratio from 4.11 to 14 and where possible setting duplex printing as standard
- Government Connect providing secure links for transferring personal data
- Reinstatement of leisure@
- New business systems including Artifax, Cascade reporting system, waste management, GP referral system
- Relocated staff from existing sites to new locations at Oakley, Bath Road and Lower High Street first stop
- Improved ICT support centre reducing average calls per month by 23%
- Replaced 350 pc's and 120 laptops
- Expanded internet and intranet mapping (GIS)
- Held several open days
- Pilot for working flexibly

The current standards and technology infrastructure in use are:

- Windows based hardware and software for Servers which are on a 3 year replacement plan
- Windows based hardware and software for PC's and Laptops which are on a 4 to 5 year replacement plan
- Internet Browser is Microsoft internet explorer
- Microsoft Exchange is used for email and calendar
- Microsoft office suite is used for word processing spreadsheets and presentations
- Sophos is the antivirus software on all desktops and servers
- Landesk is the tool used to apply software patches and upgrades
- Laptops and mobile devices have a Sophos personal firewall and Becrypt as an encryption tool



ICT Strategy

- Primary database languages are Oracle and SQL
- All office based staff have access to internet and intranet
- Telephony is a mixed IP and Digital environment with voicemail, call routing, hunt groups and IVR (Interactive voice response)
- Information security policy
- Acceptable use policy
- Government Connect and secure email for exchange of information with central government





6. Realising the vision

ICT is committed to delivering fit for purpose, modern, flexible, and transportable ICT solutions. These form the backbone of many of the council's services enabling them to respond to the changing needs of our citizens.

In realising our vision we must take advantage of innovative technology, services and access channels. The challenge for the ICT service is to balance and sustain the demands from business as usual while delivering the council's new initiatives.

While continuing to provide ongoing support for the council's projects, business systems and existing infrastructure, ICT will lead on the implementation of a range of key technology initiatives described below.

Technology Infrastructure

ICT will continue to develop the infrastructure to ensure that the council delivers the best possible service to its citizens. These developments include

- Changing the design of the network to remove single points of failure, improve disaster recovery and assist with the delivery of the accommodation strategy
- Providing the framework to increase revenue in our public buildings through the implementation of a public wifi network
- Increasing wireless hot spots providing flexible working for staff and members
- Regularly updating desktop software for example email, anti virus and internet browser
- Introducing a self service password reset facility
- Capitalising on new developments such as cloud computing and ensuring ongoing support from third parties
- Video conferencing to enable flexible and partnership working and reduce travel requirements.



Virtualisation

We will continue with the server virtualisation program, and where appropriate evaluate desktop virtualisation which will contribute to a range of efficiencies. This will:

- Enable business systems and other applications to be held centrally
- Increase the life of the pc's we currently have
- Allow us where appropriate to purchase lower specification desktop pcs or thin client devices
- Reduce power consumption
- Lower support overheads
- Deliver a more flexible workforce
- Provide a more robust business continuity environment
- Improve the security of council's data assets

Further development of telephony system

In order to fully realise the benefits of developments in telephony technology and recognising that this is the primary method of contact for our citizens, it is essential that we deliver a telephony solution, which will allow us to:

- Work more flexibly
- Deliver a unified communications solution
- Provide an improved service to our citizens
- Simplify ICT support and management of the system

Unified communications

Unified communications aims to integrate and ultimately simplify all forms of communications within an organisation.

In order to exploit the benefits that this will deliver to the business we will implement technology that will allow us to

- Send messages on one medium such as telephone call and receive on another such as email
- Use one number to contact someone no matter where they are – office, mobile, home etc
- Provide for the integration of the use of instant messaging, SMS, call control, voicemail, email and fax.
- Deliver opportunities to simplify and integrate all forms of communication with a view to taking maximum advantage of business improvement processes.

Customer access and service delivery principles

Customer relationship management is a key technology in supporting the aims of a one-council approach to service access and delivery. To ensure the benefits of CRM are delivered ICT will



- Support the development, integration and maintenance of council's key business systems
- Provide knowledge and expertise to increase efficiencies through streamlined service processes

Supporting the further development of the website

We will continue to support improvements to the website for our citizens, staff and members taking into account any requirements or actions identified by the web strategy. This includes:

- Giving easier access to service requests and information by building links into business specific systems
- Developing our GIS to make map based information more widely available and easier to use
- Taking advantage of new web developments such as social networking and cloud computing

Information management and data security

We will provide the council with a secure environment in which to manage information and data assets by

- Investigating and where appropriate implementing a document management system for corporate information
- Improving the retrieval of information, reducing duplication and introducing version control and revisit retention policies.
- Be part of the public sector network when it supersedes the Government connect (GCSX) network thus allowing more services to be available over a secure/ trusted environment.
- Where appropriate extending the use of encryption software
- Further developing the current information security and acceptable use policies in line with legislation (including Personal Card Identity)



7. Developing the ICT service

The last five years has seen a significant change in the importance that technology plays in the services delivered to the council and its customers (citizens, members, partners, businesses and voluntary organisations).

Moving forward ICT needs to become more strategically focused and be in a position to support, enable and challenge existing methods of service delivery. It needs to take opportunities which may arise to grow its service, delivering support to other organisations which could include partnering ICT teams from different authorities. The current job roles, responsibilities and structure of ICT Services will be reviewed to ensure they are aligned with the aspiration of CBC using the principles of systems thinking.

In addition ICT will:-

- Continue to benchmark ICT services to provide targets for improvements
- Introduce a service catalogue to define services provided by ICT (a proposed format is included as appendix d)
- Consider and if appropriate implement an ITIL (* see note 1) framework within the team
- Build on the current teams skills to ensure the effective delivery of the strategy
- Explore the benefits of broadening the role of the ICT helpdesk to provide a single point of contact which would deal with all corporate support services requests including self service reporting, tracking and FAQ's.
- Develop fully prioritised and resourced work plans for all ICT staff
- Continue to make use of business partnering to better understand the needs of our customers and to promote the benefits that technology can deliver

8. ICT Governance

This strategy will be reviewed through quarterly sessions at SLT where the following will be discussed

- Progress on current plans and projects will be reported
- Any issues will be highlighted and action plans reviewed and agreed
- The next six months work plan
- Agree future priorities including staff resources and budget
- Annual review of the ICT strategy
- Review the ICT service catalogue
- Highlight risks and agree actions

Note 1 – IT Information Library provides a cohesive set of best practice process for an IT service and is an internationally recognised standard



Appendices

- Appendix A** ICT work program defining all known ICT commitments
- Appendix B** Estimated costs
- Appendix C** Details of business systems with future development plans where known
- Appendix D** Service Catalogue defining services provided by ICT including processes, dependencies and timescales
- Appendix E** ICT Strategy risk register
- Appendix F** Topology of the CBC network

