



Scrutiny Board

30 June 2015

Report title	ICT Strategy	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Andrew Johnson Resources	
Wards affected	All	
Accountable director	Keith Ireland, Managing Director	
Originating service	Information and Communication Technology (ICT)	
Accountable employee(s)	Andy Hoare Tel Email	Head of Service, ICT 01902 554044 Andy.Hoare@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	Strategic Executive Board Executive Team Cabinet	19 May 2015 01 June 2015 16 September 2015

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Scrutiny Board is recommended to:

1. Approve the Council's Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Strategy 2015 – 2018 to go forward to Cabinet on 16 September 2015.

Recommendations for noting:

The Scrutiny Board is asked to note:

1. This item is being considered as pre-decision scrutiny and will therefore not be available to call-in once a decision is made by the Executive.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to gain approval of the Council's Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Strategy which will guide the Council's investment in ICT during the next three years (Appendix A).
- 1.2 Following approval of the strategy the presentational appearance of the strategy will be aligned with council branding guidelines and the agreed format for associated strategies, such as the Customer Services Strategy, before final publication.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Prior to April 2014 the strategic focus for the Council's investment in ICT was to procure and implement third party solutions, which enabled the Council's mainframe platform and systems to be retired. This key objective has now been achieved following the implementation of Agresso during 2014. It is now imperative the Council maximises the benefit from the investment already made in ICT and has a shared vision for future investment.
- 2.2 The Council like all local government faces a very uncertain period and this strategy is set against a backdrop of reduced budgets and increasing financial pressures that will continue to significantly influence the Council's plans for service delivery. At the same time customers' expectations and demands are changing, and the Council has to position itself to take advantage of any new opportunities that may arise from these challenges.
- 2.3 ICT is a critical business service that is essential to the efficient operation of any modern organisation. As the Council transforms to meet the challenges and pressures of a new age, the way services operate, are organised and delivered will need to be enabled, supported and underpinned by an effective, cost efficient, agile and flexible ICT service. The ICT strategy sets out how the Council's Information and Technology portfolio will be managed to enable the integrated delivery of better public services and outcomes in a constantly changing environment
- 2.4 ICT is changing at such a rate that it is impossible to predict what opportunities technology will present in the next three to five years. The Council could not have predicted the widespread use of tablets, smartphones and social media such as Twitter and Facebook for business engagement. However, the Council does broadly know some of the technology themes that will affect society and this Strategy and Action Plan is focused on pragmatic actions that the Council can take over the next three years in order to achieve its objectives.

3.0 Discussion

- 3.1 This ICT strategy is not a technology led strategy aimed at technical specialists; it is a strategy about how ICT can enable the Council to provide better services that meet customer demands, delivering better outcomes while addressing the Council's savings challenge.

- 3.2 The focus of the strategy is on the achievement of four key objectives of the Council's Corporate Plan whose results are greatly dependent on the performance of ICT. These are customer centricity, digital services, cost reduction and ICT enabled business transformation.
- 3.2.1 Customer centricity: The Council like many local government organisations has not kept pace with changing technology and consumer dynamics. The Council is behind the private sector in aligning its ICT capability to meet customer expectations. To succeed in this fast-changing environment and achieve sustainable cost savings while satisfying customers, driving efficiency and reskilling the workforce, the Council needs to focus on redefining customer relationships. The key to managing expectations and achieving customer satisfaction is to accurately and clearly convey what is to be delivered and when. ICT will support the Council to embrace information and digitalisation to help understand demand, support innovation and inform strategic decision-making.
- 3.2.2 Digital services: It is clear that more and more people are expecting their public services to be available through a range of digital channels. Online banking, internet based telephony and video conferencing have gained acceptance across the generations. Social media such as Facebook and Twitter are now considered established as a method of communication, proactively engaging, participating and guiding local conversations. The Council aims to have all public services available digitally across all channels by 2018 exploring opportunities to leverage emerging technologies and delivery models including the increased use of mobile devices, cloud technologies and social media. This strategy emphasises a cloud first and mobile first approach to service design and provisioning, supporting the councils 'digital by design' aspirations.
- 3.2.3 Cost reduction: ICT has for a long time been viewed as only a cost; however, in the second decade of the 21st century it is clear that ICT is a cost as well as an enabler. It is an investment in predicative intervention and cost avoidance, enabling and supporting better services and increasing operational efficiency and the reduction of per unit cost. At this time of great uncertainty and reduced budgets the Council must be sure that it delivers best value by reducing the cost of service provision where possible. Investing in ICT capability that can be shared can reduce the overall costs of Council services e.g. by automating transactional processes or implementing a single assessment capability.
- 3.2.4 ICT enabled business transformation: The Council's programme of embracing modern working practices, provisioning up-to-date technology when beneficial, digitalising engagements and services, rationalising office accommodation, eliminating unnecessary bureaucracy through single assessments, streamlined administration and supporting community based service delivery will drive efficiencies at the same time as building Council wide capability. The ICT strategy will place an emphasis on driving innovation from technology solutions that the Council has already invested in, as well as providing transparency on the basis on which all future ICT investment decisions are made.
- 3.3 This strategy has been developed to meet the needs of the Council's customers within this uncertain and ever changing environment. Its objective is to position ICT to be able to deliver value from the opportunities presented by business change and/or advances in technology such as digital services at a time of shifting customer expectations and tight financial constraints.

4.0 Financial implications

- 4.1 The ICT Strategy is part of the Future Works work stream. The C3 programme is intended to deliver transformation, improve efficiency and the increase the quality of services and will, therefore, directly contribute towards the delivery of the Medium Term Financial Strategy, including challenging savings requirements.
- 4.2 There will be financial implications from the future investment in ICT. These investments will be subject to the Council's procurement and governance arrangements.

[GE/27052015/G]

5.0 Legal implications

- 5.1 There are no legal implications in implementing the recommendations in this report. Future investments in ICT will need to be considered by Information Governance in relation to the impact on policies, information risk and the appropriate use of ICT.

[Legal Code: TS/27052015/K]

6.0 Equalities implications

- 6.1 An initial equality analysis has been carried out. There are no equalities implications.

7.0 Environmental implications

- 7.1 There are no environment implications in implementing the recommendations in this report.

8.0 Human resources implications

- 8.1 There are no HR implications in implementing the recommendations in this report.

9.0 Corporate landlord implications

- 9.1 There are no direct implications in implementing the recommendations in this report. The ICT strategy supports the rationalisation of the council's property assets.

This report is PUBLIC [NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED]