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INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY STRATEGY 2009 - 2013

1. BACKGROUND

1.1   This report introduces a strategy with supporting policies to develop the use of Information and Communications Technology at New Forest District Council for the next four years (2009 to 2013) in order to achieve continuous improvement across all services.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1   Information and Communications Technology (ICT) affects all our lives and brings with it many opportunities for improving change. The role of ICT in underpinning and delivering effective and efficient services is clear. At an operational level the council could not operate for any length of time without it. The pace of technology development is rapid and customer expectations are changing as technology becomes even more pervasive. The challenge for the Council is to exploit these ICT developments and to target resources to provide convenient access to services for our citizens, reduce operating costs and improve the working environment of our employees

2.2   This document sets out the strategic direction for ICT development in New Forest District Council. The ICT Strategy is essentially designed to support the drive to greater efficiency, especially at a time of significant financial constraint. Technology is a key component of the ICT Strategy but this is not primarily a technology strategy. Its main focus is on the way we plan to work and the way we use ICT to achieve the objectives set out in the *Corporate Plan* and in individual Service Action Plans*.*

2.3   The ICT strategy has been produced following discussions with Heads of Services, the Portfolio Holder (Finance and Efficiency) and lead scrutiny members on the Corporate Overview Panel. The ICT Strategy cannot exist or be developed in isolation. Its purpose is to enable other corporate strategies, objectives and priorities to be achieved. The ICT Strategy must support the People Strategy where changes in our workforce or to the way our employees work (e.g. from home or as mobile /visiting officers) are set out **and** the Financial Strategy where efficiencies through savings or corresponding service improvements are reflected (e.g. self-service payments or bookings via the internet).

2.4   The vision for the ICT Strategy is ***to provide a cost-effective, reliable and flexible ICT infrastructure that will:***

- ***Enable citizens, employees, council members, businesses and partner organisations to access information and services when, where and how they need it,***

- ***Enable services to be delivered more efficiently and effectively,***

- ***Enable more flexible ways of working to optimise the use of council premises, the timeliness of service delivery and to respond to changes in customer expectations about choice in how they interact with the council and its partners.***

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

3.1 A comprehensive range of requirements for ICT development have been identified from a regular consultation process with Head of Services and having regard to other internal and external factors shaping the council's priorities for the next four years. These (often common) requirements have been grouped into seven main development areas:

- Customer Focus;

- Improving Efficiency;

- Information Management;

- The Green Agenda;

- Flexible Working;

- Supporting Partnership Working (at both an organisation level and a case level);

- Developing the ICT skills of employees and council members to optimise the investment in ICT.

3.2 These development areas help to shape the **technology roadmap** for the
\# Council. They are described in more detail at Appendix A.

3.3 The ICT Strategy incorporates a high level action plan and a more detailed, project-based ICT Work Programme, complete with estimated costs and a broad implementation timetable. The ICT Strategy also commits to review and update the prevailing ICT policies and standards, where appropriate.

4. THE MAIN COMPONENTS OF THE ICT STRATEGY 2009 – 2013 (See Appendix I)

1) To maximise the benefits of the investment made in the ICT infrastructure (hardware, software and networks) to date;

2) To reduce the number of servers in use by implementing software technology known as server virtualisation, so reducing maintenance overheads and costs;

3) To support the strategic objective to optimise the use of Appletree Court and to prepare for the longer term aspiration of operating from a single site headquarters.

4) To develop the ICT infrastructure to expand the capacity for location independent working:

5) To ensure that the procurement and deployment of ICT is sustainable and aligns with the Green ICT Agenda;

6) To develop the ICT infrastructure to enable information sharing and joint working with partners.

7) To manage a major upgrade to the council's voice and data networks by migrating to the new Hampshire Public Services Network (HPSN2), incorporating affordable, high bandwidth applications such as internet based telephony, video conferencing and wireless networking;

8) To exploit emerging web technologies such as social networking (e.g. *facebook and twitter*) in a way that does not compromise the councils ICT resources, but enables the use of such tools to promote democratic engagement;

9) To develop the concept of information management supported by an electronic document and records management system (EDRMS) to enable flexible working, reduce wasteful paper storage and promote "the less paper" office;

10) To support the further development of low cost, convenient access channels to services (e.g. self-service via the web site);

11) To continue to raise the ICT skills of council members and employees via a structured ICT Training strategy;

12) To review, update and where appropriate develop new policies and standards to support the updated ICT strategy.

5. KEY OBJECTIVES OF THE ICT STRATEGY

5.1 The main direction of this ICT strategy is to build upon our existing ICT investment so that we can achieve the degree of improving change in services and operations that is made possible by ICT. There is no major problem to fix or gap to fill, but rather a requirement to best position NFDC to respond to the external and internal business drivers that will impact on our ability to deliver services. The ICT strategy is set against a background of financial constraint, so raising the importance of ICT investment being targeted at real improvements in efficiency.

5.2 The ICT strategy contains a number of specific objectives that are closely linked to the major themes of the Corporate Plan:

- To make the council's services as accessible as possible to the people who need them.

   links to corporate theme – improving the ease and equality of access to public services of all our customers and citizens.

- To use ICT to achieve greater efficiency in the way council services are delivered.

   links to corporate themes – maintaining excellent performance and improving effectiveness and efficiency / working to reduce the carbon footprint of the Council and District.

- To manage information better by ensuring that information is made easier to find and use.

   links to corporate theme – managing our assets including exploring the scope for one site administration.

- To achieve improvements in support for new ways of working by increasing the flexibility of the ICT infrastructure and introducing an electronic document records management system.

   links to corporate theme – managing our assets including exploring the scope for one site administration.

- To support the increasingly close working arrangements with partners, and internally between departments and to make information flow freely and securely between all those involved in providing a service.

   links to corporate theme – leading and enhancing local partnerships including the Local Strategic Partnership.

- To improve the ICT skills of our employees and council members to make sure that we get the greatest value from our investment in ICT.

   links to corporate theme – maintaining excellent performance and improving effectiveness and efficiency.

- To develop a first class web site and use other communications technologies (e.g. SMS text, social networking and electronic consultation systems) to aid public participation and engagement.

links to corporate theme – engaging local people and communities in all we do.

6. THE CONTEXT FOR THE ICT STRATEGY

6.1 In the course of the next four years the council will need to develop the capacity to respond to several key business drivers. These business drivers will be both external and internal to the organisation.

6.2 The **external** business drivers are ordinarily derived from national policies and direction. A major influence on policy affecting the whole of the public sector across the UK is the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR07**)** for 2008 to 2011, published in October 2007. This put even greater pressure to cut costs and be efficient than previous policies such as the Efficiency Review. **The next Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR10)** will reflect the tough financial settlements for the public sector alluded to Chancellor of the Exchequer's 2009 budget speech. These tight financial constraints are being imposed when demand for some council services such as social care or housing benefits is on the increase.

6.3 *Future Matters* is the title of the **Sustainable Community Strategy for the New Forest District for the period 2008 - 2012**. The Community Strategy has been developed in consultation by the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) for the New Forest District. The Community Strategy covers important community themes, including; Community Safety, Economy, Children and Young People, Health and Well Being, Housing, Tourism and Transport. The activities of the LSP (known as the *Changing Lives Partnership)* are directed at positive outcomes for each of these themes, achieved through close partnership working enabled by information sharing and common information systems or infrastructures that are secure and reliable. The ICT Strategy must support the objectives of the Community Strategy.

6.4 **Customer expectations are changing**. For **citizens** the ICT strategy is about providing access to information and services at times and locations which are appropriate to their needs. More opportunities will be made available for self-service, including booking and paying for councils services on-line. This will reduce the need to telephone or write to the council or make visits to council buildings. Such facilities can improve ease of access to services for disabled people or people in areas where transport links are poor.

6.5 For **businesses** the ICT Strategy is about providing an easy to use "portal" to a range of business information and services e.g. applying for specific licenses.

6.6 As part of a streamlining of the old best value performance indicators, the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) introduced a new indicator of performance (NI14) for avoidable contact (also known as failure demand) to act as a catalyst for efficiency improvement. The purpose of the indicator is to measure the cost of failure demand and then reduce it.

6.7 The latest figures from the Society of IT Managers (SOCITM) confirm that on average, the lowest cost access channel by far is the web at £0.27 per transaction compared with £3.22 for the telephone and £6.56 for face to face contact. SOCITM research also shows that although the web now attracts the

highest volume of interactions, it also attracts the lowest level of satisfaction due to failure to find information or complete a service transaction. This issue can lead to costly and avoidable contact via other channels, most likely to be the telephone as customers look for alternative ways to resolve their enquiries.

6.8   The web site is a low cost access channel but unless it works right first time and every time, it can just add costs. **Reducing avoidable contact** by improving access to services and "getting it right first time" is another key factor driving the ICT strategy.

6.9   The **internal** business drivers include:

- The council's **Corporate Plan,** *Leading Our Forest Communities* which sets out how the council will continue to engage with the people of the area and shape the future of the New Forest District. The key themes of prudent financial management, excellent service performance, partnership working, and reducing the carbon footprint provide clear indication of where ICT resources should be targeted.

- The detailed service developments and improvements identified in **Portfolio Plans and Service Action Plans** (e.g. improved management of council vehicles, more home working, and extension of contact centre working, optimisation of property assets and greater use of electronic consultation tools to engage with citizens).

- The council is working on the production of an **Efficiency and Savings Programme**, including a better utilisation of offices and developing inter-authority partnership working to achieve shared services. These initiatives will place a heavy reliance upon ICT to be used in an enabling role.

- The need to develop an **Information Management** strategy to improve the way that we manage, store, use and share information;

- The **Performance and Risk Management** framework has been further developed in NFDC and again it is likely that ICT will be used to capture and manipulate relevant data for monitoring purposes.

6.10   NFDC has a mature ICT operation where there is a predominantly centralist approach to ICT procurement, support and development. New technology and services are now easily accessible via the internet and as a value added component to professional services (e.g. *Google maps*, on-line consultation and other internet services). Whilst this is generally a good thing, the availability, reliability and integrity of the council's ICT infrastructure must be maintained.

6.11   The new ICT Strategy will require existing **ICT policies and standards** to be reviewed and updated to underpin changes in the underlying technology, procurement, support, security, training and the acceptable use of ICT.

7.   THE CURRENT ICT FRAMEWORK

7.1   NFDC has developed an effective and reliable ICT infrastructure that has become a critical component in the delivery of council services. The current ICT infrastructure comprises;

- A mature and expanding Contact Centre operation with sophisticated telephone call handling and payment processing features.

- A comprehensive "corporate" Geographic Information System (GIS).

- A state-of-the-art corporate financial systems suite.

- A Local Land and Property Gazetteer (standard address database) conforming to national standards.

- A consolidated suite of enforcement and regulation information systems for planning, environmental health, building control, tree management, land charges and licensing.

- Utilisation of the Hampshire Public Services Network (HPSN) for voice and data communications.

- A transactional Web Site.

- Members that are fully engaged with ICT.

- A mixed economy of ICT procurement with good supplier relationships.

- An effective ICT security structure (conforming to stringent Government Security standards).

- A dedicated ICT training resource to aid the optimal use of ICT.

- A proven working partnership with Hampshire County Council to provide selected server hosting and Internet services.

- A well trained and customer focussed ICT support service.

8. THE TECHNOLOGY ROADMAP

8.1   The ICT infrastructure outlined above points to a solid foundation for future ICT development. There is still one significant problem that will need to be overcome if the council is to progress its plans for ICT. The current computer operations suite at Lymington Town Hall (and to a lesser extent, Appletree Court) would need to be significantly upgraded to become a fit for purpose facility. For example, any improvements to the ICT operations suite would need to include more reliable air conditioning facilities and improved energy efficiency measures in the design specification, to align with the Green Agenda by reducing energy consumption and therefore costs.

8.2   There are currently no plans to upgrade the computer operations suite at the Town Hall in Lymington, particularly while the feasibility study into a single site headquarters facility is underway. This is understandable but the facilities in the computer suite at Lymington are beginning to pose a risk to business continuity and some interim improvements may need to be made in the short term.

8.3   In the meantime planning is underway to relocate the data centre to Appletree Court as part of a project to optimise the use of the accommodation at Appletree Court. The new data centre would provide an opportunity to design and implement a more efficient facility in terms of energy use, physical layout, environmental management (air conditioning), security and disaster prevention.

8.4   Some action has already been taken to mitigate the risk of disruption to key information systems, (e.g. Housing, Leisure Bookings / Memberships and Council Tax and Benefits). These software applications have been transferred to run on servers located at the headquarters of Hampshire County Council. The hosting of NFDC information systems by Hampshire County Council is a first, exploratory step towards the development of an **ICT services partnership** with Hampshire County Council and possibly other local authorities in the region.

8.5   The council has also contracted with Hampshire County Council (HCC) as an internet service provider (ISP) whereby **HCC is hosting** the council's web site and web services. These arrangements are working very well and have produced savings.

8.6   ICT continues to evolve at a rapid pace with new technologies and opportunities emerging each year. It is increasingly difficult to predict what's over the horizon either in terms of technology innovation, or innovation in the way that technology is used and exploited. There is however one significant technology trend that has the potential to reduce the council's ICT hardware estate and by so doing reduce energy consumption and running costs. Reducing the server hardware estate would also enable the ICT renewals fund to be reduced. This technology, known as *Server Virtualisation* will feature in future ICT procurement and training plans. Server virtualisation would be applied to the migration of the data centre into a considerably smaller area at ATC. The concept of Server Virtualisation is discussed at Appendix B.

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8.7   The Head of ICT Services maintains a regular dialogue with the other Heads of Services in order to identify any other corporate or service related requirements to inform the ICT strategy. This process has highlighted the following common technology areas to be included in the ICT strategy:

- the requirement to enable **location independent working** (e.g. hot desking, mobile and home working) through the implementation of a scalable, remote access system linked to key business information systems and adapted to work for mobile workers.

- the requirement to continue to develop more **self-service features** for customers (e.g. booking swimming courses on-line).

- The requirement for Information Systems to assist the "technical" services to manage their operations (e.g. **Building Maintenance)**

- **Reducing the amount of paper in circulation** by enabling more information to be available in electronic form as a result of an improved use of email, the intranet and electronic document management technology.

- Introducing **secure wireless networks** in council premises to aid flexible working, where it is opportune to do so.

- Refreshing the specification of requirements for **members to have access to on-line information** (e.g. to track matters reported to the Customers Services Contact Centre).

- To enable **data sharing** with partner organisations to improve service delivery.

- Using the potential of **social networking** technologies such as *Twitter, Facebook, Youtube* and podcasts in order to engage with all sections of our community.

- Developing a more enabled ICT user community comprising **departmental ICT champions**.

8.8 The common areas identified above feed into the overall technical direction of the ICT Strategy.

8.9 In addition to the business-led ICT requirements, a major upgrade of the voice and data communications network is planned to commence in 2010. NFDC has been a leading partner in the process to procure and implement a state-of-the-art, regional telecommunications network, known as the Hampshire Public Services Network 2 (HPSN2). Using the Hampshire Public Services Network, local public sector partners can share systems, data and services anywhere in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. The new network contract (with *NTL Telewest*) will bring with it facilities such as;

- Higher and more affordable bandwidth connectivity;

- Enhanced telephony, text and video services;

- CCTV Services based on a cost efficient (digital) infrastructure;

8.10 The procurement and deployment of the technologies set out in the Technology Roadmap will need to reflect the council's commitment to sustainable procurement and support targeted reductions in CO_2 emissions.

9. SUSTAINABLE ICT

9.1 The importance of combating climate change means that there is a significant role for ICT to play, as it is a large consumer of energy and other non renewable natural resources. For ICT Services to meet this challenge it is necessary to ensure that sustainable ICT procurement and deployment policies are developed to underpin the ICT Strategy.

9.2 The strategic objectives will be for ICT Services to:

- help business units deliver their services in a more environmentally friendly way;

- challenge what ICT Services is doing to minimise its own carbon footprint and undertake all reasonable measures to achieve this by setting and achieving targets for the reduction of its own energy consumption and impact on the environment;

- include the impact on the environment as part of any project in the ICT work programme;

- procure ICT goods and services that will reduce energy consumption and other non renewable natural resources;

- lead on corporate, environmentally friendly ICT projects (e.g. video conferencing, improved shared printing facilities and electronic document records management).

9.3 As part of the ICT strategy a specific "Green" ICT action plan has been developed. This follows up on recommendations made in the Green Audit Draft Improvement Plans (Reported to Cabinet on 4th March 2009).

\# 9.4 The Green ICT Action Plan is attached at Appendix C.

10. PRODUCING THE ICT WORK PROGRAMME

10.1 The external and internal business drivers taken together with the specific priority development areas have been translated into a number of ICT projects to make up the **ICT Work Programme**. The associated ICT work programme \# including notional capital and ongoing revenue costs is attached at Appendix D.

10.2 A high level action plan for delivering the overall ICT Strategy is shown at \# Appendix E.

10.3 The ICT strategy will need to be kept under review, being especially mindful of new technology development that could affect the estimated costs of projects identified in the ICT Work Programme. The ICT work programme will also have regard to the prevailing technology standards operating in NFDC. A brief summary of the technology standards underpinning the current ICT \# infrastructure is attached at Appendix F.

10.4 The ICT Strategy sets out the investment direction for Information and Communications Technology for the next four years. In order for this investment to provide the anticipated benefits (efficiency gains or other service improvements) the ICT Strategy will need to be approved by Council Members.

10.5 NFDC has a successful track record in implementing ICT projects. It is important that all such projects are managed in a structured way to ensure they are delivered on time and to a sufficient standard of quality whilst remaining in budget. The Head of ICT Services is engaged in discussions with the Head of Human Resources concerning some formal project management training for senior and middle managers, who are often seconded to operate on Project Boards and Project Teams.

11. UPDATING EXISTING ICT POLICIES

11.1 The ICT Strategy will also need to be supported by up-to-date policies to guide users from the procurement process right through to the proper use of information systems and data.

11.2 There is an established ICT Governance Framework in operation at NFDC. The Service Action Plan (setting out objectives and key performance indicators for ICT Services) links up with the appropriate Portfolio Plan (covering the ICT work programme and expenditure plans). This information provides the fundamental basis for monitoring the performance of ICT Services and the delivery of ICT Service objectives. The main components of the ICT Governance Framework include;

- An accessible Portfolio Holder;

- Lead Members on Corporate Overview Panel;

- A separate ICT Security function (based in Internal Audit);

- An ICT Investment Panel to monitor the ICT Work Programme project funding and to scrutinise benefits realisation;

- Regular reports brought to EMT meetings by the Head of ICT Services concerning corporate and strategic ICT issues;

- ICT Services participates in the SOCITM Benchmarking Service for comparative performance monitoring of the ICT Services operation.

11.3 A complete list of the ICT standards and policies to be reviewed and updated
\# is shown at Appendix G.

12. SHAPING ICT SERVICES TO DELIVER THE ICT STRATEGY

12.1 The Head of ICT Services has been working with the ICT Services team on a significant programme of change to the way that ICT Services is organised to support over 1,000 users. These changes are scheduled to coincide with the implementation of the ICT Strategy as new ways of working enabled via the ICT Strategy will require a revised service support model (e.g. if there were a significant shift to location independent working).

12.2 ICT Services is moving towards a *Service Management Framework* conforming to a national quality standard known as the *Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL).* Service Management focuses on the ongoing provision of the ICT service to other services or business units. The objectives of effective service management are as follows:

- To align ICT Services with the needs of the business.

- To improve the quality of services delivered.

- To improve customer satisfaction.

- To provide more reliable services to support business critical services.

- To reduce the long term cost of service provision.

12.3 ITIL Service Management provides the following benefits to the **ICT Services** operation:

- ICT Services develops clearer working practices.

- ICT Services makes more efficient use of resources.

- ICT Services is more focused on corporate objectives.

- It encourages being proactive and reduces the need for being reactive.

- ICT Management is more involved in changes and changes become easier to manage.

- It supports a customer focussed culture.

13. ENSURING THAT BENEFITS ARE DELIVERED

13.1 The ICT Investment Panel

13.2 In order to ensure that the investment in the ICT strategy delivers real benefits by transforming service delivery and improving efficiency it will need to have the support of Members and the senior management team in order to promote **improving** changes to business processes and service delivery.

13.3 Working with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Efficiency and lead scrutiny members from the Corporate Overview Panel, the Head of ICT Services has set up an ICT Investment Panel to:

- To evaluate business cases (produced by project sponsors) requesting funds for ICT investment from the ICT Work Programme budget.

- To consider business cases for ICT investment, arising outside of the cyclical expenditure planning process.

- To record the benefits identified in the business case and to assess the realisation of those benefits at a structured post implementation review of the system, provided by the investment funding.

- To maintain an overview of progress on the annual ICT Work Programme.

13.4 The ICT Investment Panel process requires project sponsors proposing projects with a total "capital" value of £15,000 and over to attend one of the quarterly ICT Investment Panel Meetings. Robust **business cases** that provide an explicit benefits analysis (e.g. by detailing improvements and / or savings) will be required before a project can move to the Project Initiation stage.

13.5 Expanding the use of Business Process Re-design

13.6 The council's services are delivered through hundreds of processes. By conducting **business process redesign (BPR)** we are seeking to replace, adapt, enhance or streamline processes in order to deliver a better outcome, greater satisfaction or greater cost-efficiency. BPR exercises should be undertaken **prior** to the implementation of major systems in order to avoid the automation of inefficient processes.

13.7 Ensuring that users are properly trained to use ICT effectively

13.8. The **ICT learning and development initiative** is intended to ensure that employees and members have sufficient skills to optimise the use of the ICT deployed. The ICT learning and development initiative provides a blended approach to ICT training (e.g. e-learning, classroom training, one-to-one training, a network of ICT champions and the adoption of the European Computer Driving License). ICT Services has established a dedicated resource to provide ICT training to ensure that there is a sufficient level of ICT skills throughout the council organisation.

13.9 The feasibility of using this training resource (and possibly the resources of partners) to help to develop on-line services for target groups to ensure that they are not excluded, is planned.

14. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

14.1 The ICT work programme for 2009/10 became effective in April 2009. The expenditure plan bids associated with the ICT strategy beyond 2009/10 will follow the expenditure plan timetable for 2010/11 and will be subject to the normal scrutiny of members.

15. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

15.1 The ICT Strategy is intended to ensure that ICT is used efficiently and effectively to aid the delivery of services. Improved self-service (via the internet or telephone) provides more choice about how citizens and businesses can access services. An Equalities Impact Assessment for the
\#   ICT Strategy is attached at Appendix H.

15.2 Where appropriate, specific projects in the proposed ICT work programme will also be subjected to an Equalities Impact Assessment.

16. CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

16.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

17. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

17.1 These are included within the body of the report.

18. CONCLUSION

18.1 There is a need for the council to deploy ICT that will improve efficiency and reduce costs. This will need to be balanced with providing convenient and effective access to services for customers. In a period of severe financial constraint this will mean making more of the existing investment in ICT infrastructure by using it in more innovative and imaginative ways (e.g. making more self service facilities available via the council's web site or enabling more service contacts to be directed through the customer services contact centre).

Using ICT to support new ways of working and to support new service delivery models will be crucial if we are to demonstrate continuous improvement in such difficult times. Where an investment in new information systems is proposed, it will be subject to a business case being considered and approved by the ICT Investment Panel.

19. FINANCE AND EFFICIENCY PORTFOLIO HOLDER COMMENTS

19.1 "I support the adoption of the ICT Strategy as detailed. The Strategy sets out a programme for general improvement of the Council's systems. In particular the development of an Electronic Document and Records Management System is proposed that will enable flexible working and promote 'less paper in the office'. A virtualisation programme is also proposed that will reduce the number of servers, so reducing maintenance, overheads and costs. These specific items together with a comprehensive range of other requirements will shape the Council's priorities for the next four years."

20. RECOMMENDATIONS

20.1 That the ICT Strategy for 2009 - 2013 and associated ICT Work Programme be approved; and

20.2 That progress on implementing the ICT Strategy be reported annually to the Finance & Efficiency Portfolio Holder and the Corporate Overview Panel.

For Further Information Please Contact: **Background Papers:**

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BUSINESS PRIORITIES INFORMING THE ICT STRATEGY

1.   Customer Focus

Access Channels and Customer Insight

1.1   A focus on the people that use our services is the first business priority of the ICT Strategy. To concentrate on our customers (residents and businesses) we must first understand who they are. We will need to improve our management and use of statistical information to develop a "whole" view of each customer. This means being able to see all the contacts relevant to an individual, subject to the appropriate rules of confidentiality. When someone calls or visits us they must get a consistent response from someone who can see their case history. Contact must be better coordinated between our business units and between us and other public services.

1.2   A better understanding of the demographic and social make up of the New Forest district will help us to design and target services more effectively. We can extend existing methods of understanding customer views and needs (e.g. citizens' panel) by exploiting customer contact and other data (e.g. specialist third party demographic data) to generate better **insight** into the wants, needs and behaviours of our customers.

1.3   ICT development to support this business priority would build on the work already undertaken to set up the corporate contact centre. The development of a contact centre forms part of the wider strategy to improve customer access to our services via telephone, web and face-to-face access channels. The aim is to improve the customer experience when contacting the council and reduce, over time, the cost per customer contact.

Making services and information relevant (personalisation)

1.4   Services and information are easier to find if they are organised in a way that matches the user's preferences. We must ensure that we take this into account as part of the regular review of the customer access channels (web sites, contact centre and face-to-face).

Democratic engagement

1.5   NFDC is more than just a provider of services. It is a democratic and accountable organisation. ICT can be used to aid accountability. The web site is already used to provide information about councillors and aid decision making processes but there is scope to improve in the following ways:

- Further development of Members web pages,

- Developing our consultation mechanisms,

- Examining new means of working with the public (blogs, on line surgeries etc).

Service Design

1.6   The area where ICT can make the greatest impact is in enabling services to be designed differently to meet the needs of their users. To date, ICT has tended to be applied to make existing services more efficient and more accessible. In future we need to make sure that its potential is realised in terms of different forms of delivery and innovation in service design.

1.7   While the ICT infrastructure needs to be developed to make sure that it can support innovation better, the main challenge here will be bringing together:

- A full understanding of what is possible to achieve.

- A good understanding of what is wanted and needed.

- The support and empowerment to make improving changes.

1.8   Finding ways to create the right environment for this level of change will be one of the main responsibilities of the recently introduced Customer Access Project Team.

1.9   Alongside innovation in the way services are designed for delivery through conventional channels, we will look particularly for ways in which technology can help to develop new approaches such as on-line self service and new community based models. We should be able to learn from the growing use of social networking on the internet.

2.   Improving Efficiency

Efficiency

2.1   Efficiency is a cross cutting priority and a key driver for much of our current and future ICT investments.

- The contact centre enables us to handle contact more efficiently and should allow service professionals in departments to spend more time on the core tasks.

- increasing the ability of citizens, businesses and employees to self serve over the web provides the potential to reduce costs.

- technologies for mobile and flexible working linked to the review of property could provide accommodation savings and help us to work in more efficient ways.

- where we have already invested in state-of the-art business applications (such as Agresso Business World and the Plantech suite of applications) we must follow through and maintain a process of continuous improvement to maximise return on investments.

- better capture and management of electronic information will save physical storage space, increase productivity, support new ways of working and improve decision making.

3.   Information Management

3.1   The emphasis for information management must be on making sure that we can find and use information, rather than on how we can file and store it. Facilities for those who provide information must primarily be designed to be easy for them to make information readily available to those who need to use it.

3.2   Information can only be found if it's consistently classified and held in accessible places. The objective must be to make it possible to conduct a search (which subject to confidentiality restrictions) is able to find relevant information held in documents, spreadsheets, images and records in operational systems. The effective management of information will depend on having the appropriate technology in place. In particular, this means acquiring and implementing an electronic document and records management system (EDRMS).

4.   The Green Agenda

4.1   The following are examples of the contribution that the ICT strategy could make to the Green Agenda.

a) Reduction in energy by:

- consolidation and then the virtualisation of servers;

- redesigning server rooms to optimise airflow for cooling;

- replacement of CRT monitors with TFT screens;

- improved print management through the use of Multi-functional devices;

- improved energy management;

- specifying environmental friendly hardware as part of procurement;

- implementing hardware efficiency options on existing machines.

b) Enabling meetings to take place without the need to travel by enabling video conferencing.

c) Compliance with the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Directive for the disposal of ICT equipment. This to be linked with:

- better asset management by striving to re-use equipment that is no longer wanted but is not completely outdated;

- extending the asset life of existing ICT equipment where appropriate.

d) Issue policies that guide behaviour in relation to exploiting the Green capability of ICT.

e) Migrate those users who have both a laptop PC and a desktop PC to a laptop PC only, wherever feasible.

f) Measure, record and publish data centre power consumption.

5. Flexible Working

5.1 Flexible working practices have the potential to deliver benefits to the organisation, the employee and the environment. They will require new approaches to the office environment and location, working times, role definition, management styles and organisational culture.

5.2 There is no one size fits all approach to developing a new style of working. Every team will have different needs and will be constrained by operational requirements and capability. Human Resources, ICT Services and the Asset Management Team will need to provide a range of options to suit different team work styles.

6. Supporting Partnership Working

6.1 The increasing importance of partnership working and multi-disciplinary teams means that a number of developments are needed to support both improved collaborations between organisations and more effective joint working on specific cases.

6.2 At the organisational level the ICT Strategy NFDC will need to:

- Ensure the compatibility of networks and improve access so that people working at each other's premises can get to the systems they need.

- Develop shared sources of data for partnership working.

- Use secure, collaborative working technologies such as *Microsoft Sharepoint*.

6.3 At the case level we will need governance measures and protocols for sharing information.

7. Developing the ICT Skills of Employees and Council Members

7.1 There is a requirement to build on the recently introduced role of ICT Trainer. Initial feedback about this role has been very positive. Through this role we have been able to identify that basic ICT skills across NFDC are patchy whereas they should be a core competency.

7.2 ICT Services and the HR team are working on a framework of basic ICT skills to be built into the PDI process and for corporate induction. It is particularly important to develop a mixed approach to training recognising that people learn in different ways at different times. Learning should be available through classroom courses, on-line materials and via one-to-one training sessions.

7.3 Raising the level of overall ICT skills will help to keep calls to the ICT Service Desk to a minimum and ensure that information systems are used to best effect.

THE CONCEPT OF SERVER VIRTUALISATION

ICT Services regularly look for opportunities to reduce operating costs. One area to be targeted for cost reductions is the server estate in operation at NFDC. The server estate currently comprises almost one hundred physical server devices.

Recent technological advances are enabling a more innovative approach to deploying and managing servers. This requires a shift in thinking, away from seeing the server as a physical entity (e.g. where one device is the e-mail server, another is the web server and so on) towards regarding servers in terms of the work they do and the services they provide. This change in approach leads to the concept of virtualisation. Virtualisation is where multiple, **software-based** servers are logically stored on one physical server. In other words virtualisation software pretends to applications that it is a physical server and as a result several software (virtualised) servers can reside on one physical device.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF SERVER VIRTUALISATION IN THE ICT STRATEGY?

The Head of ICT Services is promoting an initiative to re-locate the ICT Data Centre and the ICT Services team to Appletree Court as an early phase of the project to optimise accommodation at Appletree Court. The rationale to migrate the ICT Services Data Centre to Appletree Court is based on three factors;

- To reduce the risk of catastrophic disruption to systems availability posed by the failing facilities at the Town Hall, Lymington.

- To enable medium to long term investment decisions about the design of the NFDC data communications network to be made with certainty.

- To improve efficiency and effectiveness.

Problems with the computer room set-up at the Town Hall have been referred to earlier. In essence the current ICT infrastructure has outgrown the facilities at the Town Hall. The air conditioning at LTH is failing regularly and is in need of an upgrade; in the meantime the security of information is being compromised.

The technology strand of this ICT Strategy proposes moving to a virtualised server environment. This would aid the migration of the ICT data centre to ATC for the following reasons;

- A much smaller footprint for the significantly fewer physical servers would be required.

- Fewer physical servers would consume less power to run them and could utilise a more efficient air conditioning facility.

- Virtualised servers can be copied to a second site or a third party disaster recovery centre and in the event of a disaster could be re-instated very quickly.

THE SUSTAINABLE (GREEN) ICT WORK PROGRAMME

Power Consumption (short term)

Project	Activity	Complete By
Baseline power costs and consumption	ICT Strategy	Dec 2009

Printing Strategy (short / medium term)

Project	Activity	Complete By
Reduce the number of printers and choose models that are networked multi-function devices.	Printing Strategy	Oct 2010

Policy Development and Implementation (short term)

Project	Activity	Complete By
Remove Active Screensavers.	Policy	Apr 2010
Switch monitors to standby after x minutes on inactivity.	Policy	Apr 2010
Shutdown PCs after office hours.	Policy	Aprl 2010
Enable active power management on desktops.	Policy	Apr 2010
Use timer switches	Policy	Apr 2010
Set green printing, including duplex and greyscale as default.	Policy	Apr 2010
Optimise sleep mode on printers	Policy	Apr 2010
Reduce the number of electronic devices per individual.	Policy	Apr 2011

Specification / Procurement (medium term)

Project	Activity	Complete By
Ensure re-use of old PCs and laptops.	Specification / Procurement	On going
Specify low power consumption in central processing units and high efficiency power supply units.	Specification / Procurement	With effect from Oct 2009
Specify low power consumption, low voltage servers.	Specification/ Procurement	With effect from April 2010

Virtualisation (medium / longer term)

Project	Activity	Complete By
Produce Server Virtualisation Plan	Virtualisation	Oct 2009
Implement Server Virtualisation Plan.	Virtualisation	Apr 2012
Decommission unused servers and data discs.	Virtualisation	With Effect from April 2010

Data Centre (medium / longer term)

Project	Activity	Complete By
Carry out a data centre audit.	Data Centre	July 2009
Specify data centre requirements	Data Centre	April 2010
Migrate to new data centre	Data Centre	April 2012

DRAFT ICT WORK PROGRAMME 2009 – 2013

TABLE 1   Notional Capital Estimates as this expenditure is financed by Revenue Funding.

Project	2009/10 (£)	2010/11 (£)	2011/12 (£)	2012/13 (£)
Customer Services System (Enhancements)	15,000	20,000	20,000	20,000
Agresso Systems (Optimisation)	15,000	20,000	20,000	20,000
Web Site Development (e.g. increased self service)	10,000	20,000	20,000	20,000
ICT Security Projects	15,000	15,000	15,000	
Remote / Mobile Working Infrastructure	30,000	30,000	20,000	
Data Archiving and Retrieval Software	60,000			
HPSN2 Migration (Data Communications – WAN)		20,000	20,000	50,000
HPSN 2 Migration (Telephone Systems)		20,000	20,000	10,000
Cleansing Services Information System		50,000	10,000	10,000
Access Channel Development (Face to Face)		15,000	10,000	10,000
Sustainable Printing Strategy (Primary Funding)		20,000		
Electronic Document Records Mgt System		150,000	120,000	50,000
Performance and Risk Management System		20,000		
E-Procurement		20,000	10,000	10,000
Information Systems for Technical Services		40,000		
Totals	**145,000**	**460,000**	**285,000**	**200,000**

DRAFT ICT WORK PROGRAMME 2009 – 2013

TABLE 2   Associated Revenue Estimates

Project	2009/10 (£)	2010/11 (£)	2011/12 (£)	2012/13 (£)
Customer Services System (Enhancements)	3,000	4,000	4,000	4,000
Agresso Systems (Optimisation)		4,000	4,000	4,000
Web Site Development (e.g. increased self service)	2,000	4,000	4,000	4,000
ICT Security Projects	2,000	2,000	2,000	
Remote / Mobile Working Infrastructure	5,000	5,000	4,000	
Document Archiving and Retrieval Software	10,000			
HPSN2 Migration (Data Communications - WAN)		10,000	10,000	20,000
HPSN 2 Migration (Telephone Systems)		10,000	10,000	5,000
Cleansing Services Information System		10,000	2,000	2,000
Access Channel Development (Face to Face)		2,000	2,000	2,000
Sustainable Printing Strategy (Primary Funding				
Electronic Document Records Mgt System		30,000	20,000	10,000
Performance and Risk Management System		3,000		
E-Procurement		5,000	3,000	3,000
Information Systems for Technical Services		6,000		
Hants e-Partnership Joint Projects Funding	5.000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Totals	**27,000**	**100,000**	**70,000**	**59,000**

Note: These costs are in relation to maintenance and licenses associated with the ICT work programme.

THREE YEAR ACTION PLAN 2009 – 2012

| Area for Action | 2009/10 | | 2010/11 | | | | 2011/12 | | | | 2012/13 | | | |
	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Implement approved ICT Work Programme	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓
Business Case for Information Management	▓													
Review and update ICT Policies and Standards		▓	▓	▓	▓									
Develop and implement a sustainable ICT Procurement Policy	▓	▓	▓	▓										
Identify projects to utilise Social Networking tools (e.g. consultation)		▓	▓	▓										
Enable Information Sharing partnerships		▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓
Develop and implement Server Virtualisation Plan		▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓
Produce and implement HPSN2 Migration Plan for Voice and Data Infrastructure			▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓
Plan and implement Access Channel Shifting Strategy		▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓
Implement information Management Framework		▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓					
Procure and implement EDRMS					▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓
Develop / Implement ICT Training Strategy	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓
Implement (ITIL Based) Change Control in ICT Services			▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓
Review ICT Services											▓	▓	▓	▓
Establish Service ICT Champions												▓	▓	▓

ICT TECHNOLOGY STANDARDS AT 31st MARCH 2009

1.1   The ICT Infrastructure is based upon a complex series of hardware and software components forming the NFDC ICT standards.

- Microsoft 2003 Server Operating Systems (Active Directory / Single Domain Model).

- Microsoft XP and Vista Desktop Operating Systems.

- Microsoft Office 2003/2007.

- Internet Service Provision is provided by Hampshire Council IT Services.

- The Voice and Data Communications (HPSN2) network is provided as a managed service by *ntl Telewest.*

- The corporate anti-virus software is Symantec Endpoint and Firewall.

- The corporate Geographic Information System is Cadcorp *SIS.*

- The standard Computer Aided Design is *Autocad.*

- The corporate Financial and Human Resources Systems is *Agresso Business World.*

- The Regulatory and Enforcement Systems (Planning, Environmental Health, Building Control and Tree Management is the Accolaid suite provided by Plantech (IDOX).

- The Housing Management Information system is provided by *Orchard.*

- The Tax and Benefits Applications are provided by *Northgate.*

- The Remote Access Server Solution us provided by *Juniper.*

- The Local Area Network is Cat 5 Switched Managed.

- Selective server hosting (including internet service provision) is provided by Hampshire County Council.

ICT POLICIES

ICT Policy	Completion Date
Sustainable ICT Procurement Policy	**March 2010**
ICT Security Policies (employees and members)	**June 2010**
The E-mail Best Practice Charter	**Completed**
ICT Service Level Agreements	**Amended and Completed**
ICT Change Control Procedures	**December 2009**
ICT Printing Strategy	**March 2010**
ICT Support for Flexible Working	**March 2010**
Implement ICT Training Strategy	**March 2012**

Equality Impact Assessment – ICT Strategy 2009 – 2013

What is the aim or purpose of the ICT Strategy?

The document sets out the strategic direction for ICT development in New Forest District Council. The ICT strategy aims to target ICT resources towards improving the way the council provides services to its residents, businesses and visitors. The ICT Strategy is essentially designed to support the drive to greater efficiency, especially at a time of significant financial constraint. Technology is a key component of the ICT Strategy but this is not primarily a technology strategy. Its main focus is on the way we plan to work and the way we use ICT achieve the objectives set out in the *Corporate Plan* and in individual Service Improvement Action Plans*.*

Is the ICT Strategy designed to meet the specific needs of minority ethnic groups, older people and disabled people etc?

Race: The strategy would have a neutral impact on people of different ethnic backgrounds.

Disability: ICT supports inclusion, giving similar life chances to all, e.g. where users require specialist equipment, such as larger screen where there is a visual impairment, then that would need to be supported.

Age: The ICT strategy has a neutral impact on people of different ages.

Sexual Orientation: The ICT strategy applies equally to all but it is not expected to impact specifically on this group.

Religion and Belief: The ICT strategy applies equally to all but it is not expected to impact specifically on this group.

Gender: The ICT strategy applies equally to all but it is not expected to impact specifically on one gender or another.

How will the ICT Strategy assist with the corporate aim to provide equal opportunities?

Above all the ICT Strategy is about delivering information and communications technology that will help people to choose how, when and where they access the services of the council and its partners. These choices (for example using the internet or via the telephone to request a service or book a facility) will be based upon the circumstances and / or the preferences of the individual citizen. For those customers that prefer a face to face contact then ICT will be deployed to ensure that the same level of service can be provided as would be the case with any other access channel.

ICT STRATEGY 2009 – 2013 ON A PAGE

1		**To maximise** the benefits of the investment made in the ICT infrastructure (hardware, software and networks) to date.
2		**To reduce** the number of servers in use by implementing software technology known as server virtualisation, so reducing maintenance overheads and costs.
3		**To support** the strategic objective to optimise the use of Appletree Court and to prepare for the longer term aspiration of operating from a single site headquarters.
4		**To develop** the ICT infrastructure to expand the capacity for location independent working
5		**To ensure** that the procurement and deployment of ICT is sustainable and aligns with the Green ICT Agenda.
6		**To develop** the ICT infrastructure to enable information sharing and joint working with partners.
7		**To manage** a major upgrade to the council's voice and data networks by migrating to the new Hampshire Public Services Network (HPSN2), incorporating affordable, high bandwidth applications such as internet based telephony, video conferencing and wireless networking.
8		**To exploit** emerging web technologies such as social networking (e.g. *face book and twitter*) in a way that does not compromise the councils ICT resources, but enables the use of such tools to promote democratic engagement.
9		**To develop** the concept of information management supported by an electronic document and records management system (EDRMS) to enable flexible working, reduce wasteful paper storage and promote "the less paper" office.
10		**To support** the further development of low cost, convenient access channels to services (e.g. self-service via the web site).
11		**To continue** to raise the ICT skills of council members and employees via a structured ICT Training strategy.
12		**To review**, update and where appropriate develop new policies and standards to support the updated ICT strategy.