

CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL – 21 NOVEMBER 2019

ICT STRATEGY & BUDGET UPDATE

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to detail progress against the ICT Strategy 2018-2022 during the last two years and to provide an update on the budget.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In 2017, Council agreed a £1.5 million ICT Protect and Maintain budget over the following 3 years. This fund was to supplement our ongoing replacement of frontline and desktop equipment, which equated to £715k over 4 years. Cabinet agreed an additional £100k towards the Protect and Maintain budget in December 2018 to fund extra work to address additional areas of scope.
- 2.2 Cabinet agreed an investment of £750k as part of the Smarter Working programme. This was to cover the replacement of Exchange 2010 with Office 365, the replacement of the Avaya telephone system, and the replacement of the Meridio document management system.
- 2.3 The ICT Strategy 2018-2022 was structured into four distinct themes and this report will discuss investments in each of these themes in turn. It will look at what has been delivered so far and what will be delivered in the future. The four themes are:
- Resilient and secure information
 - Smarter working
 - Simple and standard applications
 - Better digital services for residents and businesses
- 2.4 The original budget estimates to deliver the ICT strategy 2018-22 are shown in the table below. Note that Smarter Working numbers were not included in this table originally but have been added to the updated numbers in section 8 of this report for completeness.

Description	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	TOTAL
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Resilience & Security		100	100	100	300
Members ICT Support		40	40	40	120
Digital residents and Customer engagement *	50	250	100		400
Other Applications *		250	250	250	750
	50	640	490	390	1,570

3. RESILIENT AND SECURE INFORMATION

3.1 Background

This theme is concerned with the replacement of our aged and 'out of support' ICT infrastructure and ensuring NFDC is secure against cyber-attacks and other failures. This covered circa 650 individual items including servers, storage, networks, remote working software, security management software, virtualisation software, and all necessary licensing. Critically it also covered the set-up of a new data centre for NFDC in a 'private cloud' and preparations for the use of 'public cloud' solutions. This theme has been funded from the Protect and Maintain budget to the value of £1,070k.

3.2 Delivered by end of 2019/20

All major elements required and summarised above will have been successfully delivered by end of 2019/20. This has made NFDC's ICT Infrastructure significantly more stable and secure from failure and has reduced the risk of a major systems outage and the consequent disruption and reputational damage this could have caused.

3.2 To be delivered in 2020/21

The only remaining items to be delivered in 2020/21 will be handled as 'Business as Usual' from the annual Resilience and Security budget of £100k to ensure that NFDC systems remain stable, up to date, and secure from cyber-attacks.

4. SMARTER WORKING

4.1 Background

In 2017, it was agreed that moving all staff to mobile devices would offer the council the most flexibility for the future. This approach was supported by the decision of EMT and Cabinet to implement Smarter Working at NFDC. As a result, the migration of all staff from desktop equipment to hybrids (light-weight laptops with touch screens) was accelerated and aligned with the rollout of Smarter Working. This was then combined with the replacement of Exchange 2010 with Office 365, the replacement of the Avaya telephone system with Skype, and the replacement of Meridio document management system with SharePoint into an overall Smarter Working programme. This theme has been funded both from the budgets for ongoing device replacement (£715k) and Smarter Working (£750k).

4.2 Delivered by end of 2019/20

Hybrid devices and smart phones have been issued to all appropriate NFDC staff and they have been trained and migrated to Office 365 and Skype for internal conferencing. Moving from the old Exchange 2010 email system has significantly reduced the risks of a major outage affecting email and the consequent impact this would have had on much of the council's day to day business. By the end of the financial year the

remaining 'fixed' users and devices (in H&L centres and Information Office) will also have been migrated.

4.3 To be delivered in 2020/21

The key project for 2020/21 is the replacement of the Avaya telephone system with Skype because HCC are decommissioning this system in September 2020, meaning we must be on an alternative telephone system. In addition, the replacement of the Meridio document management system with SharePoint is a critical but very complex activity with much data to migrate. This will be commenced and piloted for some services in 2020/21. Costs will be re-estimated once requirements are documented.

4.4 To be delivered in 2021/22

The migration from Meridio to SharePoint will be completed during 2021/22. Costs will be estimated once requirements are documented.

5. SIMPLE AND STANDARD APPLICATIONS

5.1 Background

'Application' is the term for software that performs a specific function or set of functions. Applications are accessed via a device (e.g. laptop or smartphone) and are the means by which council staff can store data and perform their business processes. Simplifying and standardising applications is an industry best practice aimed at ensuring the council has the most straightforward, best of breed applications for each of our business processes. We will aim to buy 'off the shelf' or 'vanilla' versions of software that have been proven in other local authorities. We have a range of old and complex applications at present and the aim of the ICT Strategy is, over time, to replace these with simpler, standardised solutions.

This theme has been funded to date from the Protect and Maintain budget (£530k) and in future will be funded from budgets (and supporting business cases) for Other Application replacements (£250k per annum). In addition, the HRA Fund can be used for Housing application replacements/improvements (up to £366k).

5.2 Delivered by end of 2019/20

The replacement of the 'out of support' Agresso HR/Payroll Application with an up to date and industry standard MidlandHR Application will be completed.

The replacement of the 'out of support' Agresso Finance Application with an up to date and industry standard Business World Application will be completed. This will require additional funding based on the new go live date of April 2020 (estimation in progress by project team).

5.3 To be delivered in 2020/21

Replacement of the Acolaid Application for Planning and Environmental Health will be started and progressed as far as possible during this year and will be completed in 2021/22. This application is at 'end of life' and will need to be replaced. Costs will be estimated once requirements are documented.

Review and possible replacement of the Orchard Application for Housing will be started and progressed as far as possible during this year and will be completed in 2021/22. This application is not 'end of life' and it may be appropriate to retain it with added features. Costs will be estimated once requirements are documented.

5.4 To be delivered in 2021/22

The Acolaid and Orchard projects discussed in 5.3 above will be completed.

We will review the possible replacement of the Northgate Application for Revenue and Benefits during this year and this project will be completed in 2022/23. This application is not 'end of life' and it may be appropriate to retain it with added features. Costs will be estimated once requirements are documented.

6. BETTER DIGITAL SERVICES FOR RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES

6.1 Background

We have seen many changes in how customers want to interact with the Council, and the increased use of online tools, whether that is using a website, app or webchat. There will also be opportunities for internal efficiency gains, cost savings, and income generation opportunities if we create the right digital platform. We need to update our website (Content Management System) and then create the right customer management solution (Customer Relationship Management system) to be able to offer as many of our services as possible via online channels. We will continue to offer a face to face service to those residents unable to access digital services and the most vulnerable. This theme is funded by the approved budget of £400k for Digital Customers and Customer Engagement.

6.2 Delivered by end of 2019/20

A vendor for a new Content Management System will be selected and the project to migrate and improve the existing NFDC website will begin.

6.3 To be delivered in 2020/21

The completion of migration and subsequent improvements using the new Content Management System will be actioned.

The selection of a vendor and creation of a new Customer Relationship Management system to create a better end to end experience for residents and businesses who use NFDC online services will be actioned. Costs will be estimated once requirements are documented.

6.4 To be delivered in 2021/22

We will improve upon and integrate the new Customer Relationship Management system with additional systems and portals within the council to expand its effectiveness. Costs will be estimated once requirements are documented.

7. CRIME AND DISORDER, EQUALITY & DIVERSITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Smarter Working and Digital Services for Residents has the potential to reduce the carbon footprint for staff and residents travelling less miles by car.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 This report is seeking approval for the future requirements described in this report, noting that these future requirements will then form part of the updated Medium-Term Financial Plan and Budget 2020/21, when reported to Cabinet and Council during February 2020. Future spending can be summarised as follows. Smarter Working has now been included with these numbers for completeness.

Description		2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	TOTAL
	Note	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Resilience & Security	1	100	100	100	300
Members ICT		40	40	40	120
Digital residents and Customer engagement	2	275	75		350
Other Applications	3	250	250	250	750
<i>Smarter Working (£750k less spend to date)</i>	4	450	75	0	525
		1115	540	390	2,045

Notes

1. Additional funding to complete Finance in 2019/20 will be flagged once estimated
2. We expect to spend circa £50k this year on website redevelopment, so the balance of the £400k is in the next two years.
3. Business cases for these projects will be agreed by EMT, along with any other business case driven ICT initiatives that may emerge. Each project will need careful estimation.
4. Added for completeness. £225k spent to date of £750k. Costs for replacement of Telephony and Meridio will be confirmed once estimated in detail as the initial estimates were only ballpark but both projects are essential.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The Council has taken some very big strides to transform its ICT since 2017, moving from an ICT environment more reminiscent of the late 1990s to an up to date one that is delivering improvements today. In doing so, the Council has also positioned itself for tomorrow and beyond.

- 9.2 The investments made in Protect and Maintain, Smarter Working and replacement devices are yielding real benefits across the council. For example, hybrid devices and Wifi have transformed mobility around ATC and the new screens, installed in all meeting rooms, are making presentations much easier and meetings more efficient and effective. The new cloud-based infrastructure and remote access software is enabling NFDC staff to work from anywhere at any time on any of our applications. The new HR Payroll system is enabling staff and management to view and control payroll information from anywhere. The implementation of Office 365 and Skype has enabled video conferencing and document sharing and editing in real time, increasing flexibility around office usage and reducing the council's overall impact on the environment and our carbon footprint.
- 9.3 Perhaps most importantly, the long overdue migration from old ICT infrastructure and email services has significantly reduced the risk of a major ICT outage that would have affected the council's ability to transact day to day business and could have had a major impact on the council's reputation within the district.
- 9.4 The Council has grown its technical and project management capabilities in order to deliver this complex programme of projects. High quality partnerships have been forged with new ICT suppliers to make sure projects deliver what they promise.
- 9.5 Investment in ICT continues to be essential for the Council. NFDC cannot afford to stand still when the projects described in this report are complete. If it does so it will once again fall behind. Continual improvement and renewal are the watchwords for the effective use of information technology. To put it another way, if you are not moving forward you are going backwards.

10. RECOMMENDATION

- 10.1 That the ICT Strategy and Budget Update detailed in this report be approved for inclusion in the Medium-Term Financial Plan, subject to the approval of individual Business cases.

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