

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **CABINET**

DATE: **TUESDAY, 15 APRIL 2014**

REPORT BY: **HEAD OF ICT AND CUSTOMER SERVICES**

SUBJECT: **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS
TECHNOLOGY (ICT) STRATEGY UPDATE**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To provide Cabinet with an update on progress with the implementation of the corporate Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Strategy.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 The Council's ICT Strategy defines the use of ICT to support the Council's priorities and services. The strategy is supported by an action plan with key milestones and allocated lead officer responsibility. The annual ICT service plan is informed by:

- i. the published strategy
- ii. the Council Improvement Plan and identified in-year priorities
- iii. Directorate and Service Plans
- iv. organisational change projects.

2.02 The ICT Strategy was due a major review in 2013/14 but this will now take place later this year following the implementation of the IT Service Review outcomes and the new Council Operating Model to ensure that it is strategically and operationally aligned, reflective of organisational priorities and continues to act as an enabler and a catalyst for change within the organisation.

2.03 Progress in implementing the strategy is overseen by the Corporate Management Team and ICT Management Team. Regular update reports are provided to Cabinet and Scrutiny.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 Since the last update report to Cabinet, considerable progress has been made in the implementation of the strategy. In addition, the IT Service Review has been largely implemented with the new structure currently being implemented designed to address and realign capacity requirements to provide a modern and effective service going forward

to meet the demands of a changing organisation. It is anticipated that the new structure will be implemented in April 2014.

- 3.02 A Microsoft Enterprise Agreement has been entered in to which provides the organisation with access to an extensive range of Microsoft technologies including email and collaboration tools, infrastructure management, software development tools and relational database technologies. This will support the Council in moving away from existing IBM technologies such as Lotus Notes to Microsoft Exchange and Lync, as well as adopting the latest versions of Microsoft Office and Windows Operating Systems. The introduction of these technologies is a huge programme of work which is taking a considerable level of resources but will deliver significant benefits to the organisation.
- 3.03 Support for Windows XP is withdrawn by Microsoft from 8th April 2014 which is driving a move to Windows 7 and 8. The Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI) project will deliver rapid upgrades to Windows 7 and 8 as well as further supporting agile working. This will mean that wherever a user logs on, they will get the same familiar desktop environment irrespective of what device they are using or where they log on to the network. This project will also deliver access to MS Office 2013 and a host of updated, modern office productivity tools. This project is due to complete during the early summer.
- 3.04 The project to implement Microsoft Exchange and Lync will begin shortly which will provide a new email and collaboration solution for service users as well as providing enhancements to existing instant messaging and presence awareness available currently to Lotus Notes users. These new facilities include the ability to have desktop to desktop audio and video conferencing as well as future integration to extend this to meeting rooms. The initial deployment of Exchange will be side by side with Lotus Notes to allow historic access to calendar and email. This element of the project is due to complete December this year. Further enhancements will be ongoing as the products are developed.
- 3.05 The Lotus Notes 8 rollout combined with IP Telephony to provide enhanced agile working capabilities (Instant Messaging, presence awareness etc) has been completed. This provides a mobile platform for access to email and telephony services and is required in order to facilitate the next stage which is the move to Microsoft Exchange as it provides safe continued historic access to Notes based email and business systems.
- 3.06 The Council Website and underlying technical infrastructure has been replaced moving to Microsoft based (.Net) technologies from IBM Websphere Portal together with the introduction of a new Web Content Management system as part of a collaborative procurement with several North Wales councils.

- 3.07 A new helpdesk solution has been implemented to support better call recording, resolution and reporting as well as self service. The solution was procured on a collaborative basis with several North Wales councils and will support the aspirations of the IT Service in increasing the number of calls resolved at the first point of contact and improving change management and overall customer engagement.
- 3.08 The rollout of Electronic Document Management (EDM) to the organisation continues, prioritising areas that have been highlighted within the Flintshire Futures Assets Programme. A successful implementation in HR is being developed into a case study which will be a useful guide for services wishing to undertake similar implementations. Work is also complete with Licensing and Asset Management. Projects are currently under way in Housing Renewals, Regeneration, Contaminated Land and Pollution Control.
- 3.09 Consolidation of Infrastructure and additional capacity provision to meet growing service demands has seen significant reductions in costs and allowed for terminations of leases that have been returned as efficiencies. Additional capacity has been delivered across server and storage systems to meet the increase in demands for IT services as well as protecting legacy systems and providing future growth.
- 3.10 A number of collaborative contracts to drive down costs and standardise technologies have been put in place including the Datacentre Server and Storage systems contract and the Networking contract both led by Flintshire to provide services at significantly discounted rates available regionally. Further work has also been undertaken recently as part of the corporate VFM work to reduce procurement spend working with our major suppliers to reduce margins on existing contracts with significant success with reductions from 5% to 3%.
- 3.11 Government Connect Secure eXtranet (GCSx) has transitioned to the Public Service Network (PSN) and the ICT Division are currently working through the rigid compliance process to ensure continued access to PSN services such as secure email and DWP electronic services for Revenues and Benefits. This is a major undertaking and continues to be a significant risk for the organisation as failure to achieve compliance will have a major impact on services such as Housing Benefits and Tell Us Once.
- 3.12 A new Unified Threat Management solution has been implemented that brings together a wide range of disparate security solutions, consolidating these onto a single management platform. The solution ensures continued security of data and higher visibility and reduction in threats from external factors allowing more sophisticated analysis of incoming and outgoing network traffic. The ability of the Council to ensure that the infrastructure and information is appropriately protected against external threats is critical to maintain information

security and an essential requirement to ensure compliance with accreditation bodies such as the Cabinet Office for PSN.

- 3.13 Rationalisation of Development Environments has seen a move to Microsoft .Net as a single environment for the development of business systems. This represents a move to what has become an industry standard development environment and expands the opportunities to collaborate with other organisations in developing and supporting business systems. Staff are currently being retrained and development managers are developing standards for future use of the product.
- 3.14 Around 950 business systems were developed using Lotus Notes along with a range of systems developed in Clipper and the legacy payroll application which pre dated Midland Trent which was developed in PROIV. A project is being run to assess and challenge use of these applications. This is to ensure that where possible, we remove duplication and aim to get best value out of our major investment in 3rd party business systems. Following this assessment, a programme of redevelopment will follow. To date, we have been able to close down around 300 Lotus Notes systems with plans to remove around another 150 in coming months. Over 200 will be replaced by improved utilisation of 3rd party applications and the remainder will be scheduled for redevelopment over the next 2 years.
- 3.15 The Welsh Government made grant funding available to Flintshire to support the implementation of the Government's Hwb initiative (creation of a virtual learning environment accessible to all Welsh schools). This funding has facilitated the replacement of all networking infrastructures within schools, provided modern facilities such as Wifi and provided upgraded communications links out of each school. This results in robust and scalable local networking infrastructures and also provides much needed additional capacity in the communications links serving each school. The implementation of these projects has required significant resource from both Corporate and Education ICT teams with extremely challenging project deadlines as prescribed by Welsh Government.
- 3.16 Flintshire's mobile app was launched in September 2013 and allows customers to contact the Council on Apple, Android and Blackberry devices. Flintshire is the first council in Wales to offer a fully bilingual mobile app available for use across a range of mobile devices. Customers now have the choice to access council services whilst on the move at a time and place convenient to them. Following an initial 'settling in period' the app is now being promoted through a range of channels such as the website, via Twitter and forms part of the auto signature on e-mails that are sent to customers. Customer Services are dealing with incoming enquiries from the app and the intention is to develop the app further to integrate with back office systems and the facility for customers to make on-line payments.

- 3.17 The eProcurement projects - P2P, e-Sourcing and e-Invoicing are at various stages of delivery. The Purchase 2 Pay (P2P) system is rolled out to all Directorates and is delivering significant business benefits and additional features are being regularly introduced such as Category Management which ensures that any spend classification such as IT related items ordered by any department are routed to IT for approval. This further ensures compliance with corporate contracts and also allows scrutiny of spend ensuring it is in line with strategic plans.
- 3.18 The e-Sourcing project is well underway and the project management arrangements are being combined with the P2P project to dovetail the two solutions ensuring integration and common process. Training for all users is due to commence in May.
- 3.19 An e-Invoicing solution which will allow all paper invoices to be scanned and matched automatically to orders on the P2P system is currently being evaluated. This could hugely reduce invoice processing costs and speed up payments to suppliers, which could provide opportunities for early payment discounts.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.01 That Cabinet note the progress being made in the implementation of the Council's ICT Strategy.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.01 None directly from this report.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

- 6.01 None directly from this report.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 7.01 None directly from this report.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 8.01 None directly from this report.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.01 None directly from this report.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

- 10.01 None.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 None.

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 None.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

None.

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