

REPORT TITLE: INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY STRATEGY 2015-2020

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF REVENUES, BENEFITS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
EXECUTIVE MEMBER: COUNCILLOR T.W. HONE

1. SUMMARY

1.1 To present to Cabinet the IT Strategy for the next five years.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That Cabinet adopts the Strategy with any amendments it considers appropriate.

2.2 That authority to make amendments to the Strategy in light of changing technology or business requirements be delegated to the Strategic Director of Finance, Policy & Governance in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance & IT.

2.3 That the planned expenditure detailed in section 6.3.7 for the period 2016/2017 to 2019/2020 be included in the Capital Programme.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 To enable the Council to move forward with its planning for IT development and expenditure over the next five years.

3.2 To ensure the Service is modern and fit for purpose and able to adapt to the ever changing software and hardware solutions that service departments are required to use.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 The Strategy presented is considered to be the best option having considered many different possible options during its preparation.

5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

5.1 Consultation has taken place with the Council's Senior Management Team, the Executive Member for Finance & I.T., Members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee who sat on the Citrix and Web Site Task & Finish Group and with the Finance, Audit & Risk Committee.

6. FORWARD PLAN

6.1 This report contains a recommendation on a key decision that was first notified to the public in the Forward Plan on the 12 August 2015.

7. BACKGROUND

- 7.1 This will be the first I.T. Strategy to be formally adopted by the Council.
- 7.2 In the last ten years or so, there has been an increase in technological solutions to meet business needs, which has resulted in efficiencies being made across the Council. This has placed a greater burden on the I.T. Service to manage and maintain these applications to enable the Council to go about its business.
- 7.3 There are no signs that this trend is likely to reduce and indeed with a greater emphasis on channel shift, there is an even greater drive towards technological solutions to meet the need for promoting self-help and reducing the number of contacts with Council staff.
- 7.4 Apart from being good practice to have a formal written strategy so all stakeholders are aware of the aims and priorities of the service, this has become even more necessary as a means of detailing the profiled capital spend for the service over the next five years following the removal of the I.T. Reserve.
- 7.5 Previously, the Council had a General Fund Reserve for I.T. from which purchases were made to replace obsolete kit. This has now been removed and the I.T. Service is required to make capital bids for equipment replenishment each year. This Strategy sets out, as far as is possible, the expected capital spend on equipment for the next five years and explains the policy now to retain (sweat) assets for a much longer period than previously before replacement is required.
- 7.6 The IT Strategy supports the Council's current Priority of "Living within our Means". It will support the Corporate Objective for 2016 to 2021 "to ensure that the Council delivers cost effective and necessary services to our residents that are responsive to developing need and financial constraints". Additionally, having a clear IT Strategy was included in the continuous improvement plan from the IIP re accreditation in 2014.

8. ISSUES

- 8.1 As well as dealing with the expected capital spend for the next five years, the Strategy emphasises the commitment to work with colleagues to implement the best solutions that meet their continued business needs and changes within their software solutions provided by external software suppliers.
- 8.2 This could be either implementing a proprietary solution or one developed in-house by the Council's skilled Application Development Team. There are a number of examples of in-house developments acknowledged in the Strategy and several more are in the process of being developed. It will also involve using in-house skills to integrate various applications both proprietary and in-house with each other.
- 8.3 When considering a solution, the final decision will be that of the User Service and I.T. will only veto a solution where it is not compatible with the Council's network or does not meet the Government Security standards.
- 8.4 There is particular emphasis on developing solutions that sit on smart phones and tablets, (both Android and IOS technologies), which will promote self-help for customers and thereby create efficiencies. The integration of GIS mapping into

solutions will also make it easier for customers to report matters such as fly-tipping, missed bins etc. and promotes greater use of mobile working.

8.5 I.T. is clearly a quickly developing industry in both hardware and software solutions so it is with some difficulty that accurate predictions can be made five years in advance. Almost certainly there will be advances in technology during the life of this Strategy of which the Council would like to take advantage and consequently this is a document that will need to be updated should this apply.

8.6 To remove the requirement to keep referring minor changes back to Cabinet, it is proposed that authority to amend the Strategy be delegated to the Strategic Director of Finance, Policy & Governance in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance & IT.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Cabinet's terms of reference include at 5.6.1 "to prepare and agree to implement policies and strategies other than those reserved to Council".

9.2 Where the implementation of specific elements of the strategy require procurement or contract advice, the legal implications of those elements will be considered at the time.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 It is expected that the Strategy will be delivered within existing revenue budgets.

10.2 The capital costs associated with the Strategy are detailed within it as far as it is possible to predict.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The Strategy sets out the service requirements and philosophy adopted by the I.T. Service in addition to its commitment to support colleagues in meeting their business needs. As such this document should reduce any risk of uncertainty on the role of I.T. and its relationship with other service departments.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

12.1 The Equality Act 2010 came into force on the 1st October 2010, a major piece of legislation. The Act also created a new Public Sector Equality Duty, which came into force on the 5th April 2011. There is a General duty, described in 12.2, that public bodies must meet, underpinned by more specific duties which are designed to help meet them.

12.2 In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of its functions, give **due regard** to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

12.3 Any IT solutions procured or developed in house by the authority will be mindful of any equalities implications which may arise, but there are already significant benefits which can be identified by the increasing use of mobile technology, which reduces the need for customers to travel to the Council's offices for assistance or to make applications etc.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 As the recommendations made in this report do not constitute a public service contract, the measurement of 'social value' as required by the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 need not be applied, although initial equalities implications and opportunities are identified in the relevant section at paragraphs 12.
- 13.2 Individual projects which emanate from the IT Strategy will be subject to the application of the authority's Go Local Policy (for procurement up to the value of £50k) or its compliance with the requirements of the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 (for procurement in excess of £172,514) as appropriate.

14. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1 There are no specific Human Resource implications to this report.

15. APPENDICES

- 15.1 Appendix A - I.T. Strategy.
- 15.2 Appendix 1 to Appendix A – I.T. Structure.
- 15.3 Appendix 2 to Appendix A – I.T. Customer Survey July 2015.
- 15.4 Appendix 3 to Appendix A – I.T. Risks.

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17. BACKGROUND PAPERS

17.1 None.