

Cabinet

Thursday, 8 April 2021

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Assets and Finance

ICT Strategy 2020-2025 Cabinet Approval

Exempt Information

None

Purpose

To seek approval for the 5-year ICT Strategy, setting high level ICT strategic direction and ICT service delivery principles for the organisation.

Recommendations

It is recommended that approval be given for the 5-year ICT Strategy in Appendix 1. The strategy will inform a more detailed technology plan of activities, supporting the core themes, underpinning continued digital transformation, to be considered during the budget setting process for 2022/23.

Executive Summary

Over the next 5 years there will be increasing financial pressures on the organisation as well as increasing service level and access channel expectations from our residents. External pressures in the form of new legislation, central government policy, cyber threats and information security will also impact on ICT service delivery.

The recent pandemic has had a significant impact on the ICT service and the wider authority and has forced us all to think and work differently. The ICT service and the Council's staff have responded positively, relying even more on ICT tools to carry out their role whilst working remotely. The pandemic has further demonstrated the significant reliance on effective and robust ICT Infrastructure and tools but also how ICT can facilitate rapid transformation and change.

These challenges will also present opportunities to use ICT to do more with less, using technology as a key enabler at the heart of everything the Authority does and to improve the daily lives of our citizens and their experience when accessing our services.

The strategy will aim to be a framework to set our technology direction of travel and help inform service plans, other technical and non-technical strategies, our continued transformation journey, and a programme of technology improvement.

It has been created for a non-technical audience, designed to be a high-level document introducing our ICT Vision, setting out guiding principles by which ICT will deliver technology services to the Council and introducing 5 key ICT strategic themes. These will form key action areas to support the Council's vision and priorities as well as evolving our technology portfolio whilst maintaining information security and governance.

Resource Implications

Delivery of the Strategy and associated activities will require funding, both capital investment and ongoing revenue commitments. ICT cost models are moving from capital investment to a revenue supported model where cloud services are consumed, and alternative 'Software as a Service (SaaS)' application delivery methods are used. This allows for more accurate spend projections but increases to our licensing and support and maintenance costs.

As we start to understand more about outcomes from the Reset and Recover programme, these along with a plan of known corporate application and infrastructure upgrades and project activities already identified in the strategy will form a detailed technical roadmap including projected capital costs and increases to revenue budgets. The Council is aiming for this to be developed during the year and included in the budget process for 2022/23. In terms of staffing, ICT are well positioned, with support from our strategic application vendors, suppliers, and infrastructure partners, to deliver the core strategy themes and associated roadmap of activities.

Background Information

The strategy has been developed with a focus throughout on the following three core agendas to keep at the forefront, our corporate plan, and an underpinning technology plan:

1. Customer agenda
2. Organisational agenda
3. Technical agenda

The ICT strategic themes introduced in this strategy have been chosen based on common themes throughout local government ICT strategies but as seen through the lens of our specific challenges and corporate priorities. The themes focus on the following key areas:

- Our digital transformation aspirations and journey, supporting the Government's Digital by Default approach
- Using our intelligence, information, and insight to better inform the services we provide and the decisions we make
- Maintaining the security and integrity of our ICT systems and data in response to the ever-changing cyber security threat landscape and increased regime of compliance
- Using technology and culture change to adopt smarter, more agile ways of working
- Evolving our technology portfolio for the future

To support these themes, a roadmap highlighting some of the key projects over the next 3 years of the Strategy has been included.

Due to the pace at which technology evolves and the early stages of our organisational reset and recover programme, the strategy and associated technology plans need to be continually updated, managed, and monitored to ensure that our direction of travel for ICT remains relevant and in line with the organisational requirements. Recent events have shown we can boldly advance our digital agenda, its essential our ICT strategy supports maintaining the momentum of transformation, building on our successes and progress of the last 6 months.

To enable a collaborative approach to development of this strategy, a consultation process was carried out including presentations to I,S&G Scrutiny, CMT, Members working group, AD Direct Reports group, and the ICT Team. All feedback has been considered and included where relevant.

Report Author

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List of Background Papers

None

Appendices

ICT Strategy 2020-2025