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To: Corporate Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 11 January 2012

Subject: Information and Communications Technology Strategy

Classification: Unrestricted.

Summary: Members are asked **endorse** the strategy ahead of formal cabinet member approval.

1. Introduction

(1) The council's ICT strategy has concentrated on developing technology infrastructure. This strategy has directly benefited the wider community and provided the opportunity for improved service outcomes and improved efficiency by linking public services across Kent.

(2) The architecture adopted by the Kent Public Services Network (KPSN) has contributed to increased availability of business broadband to companies across Kent. Achieving the same outcome through regeneration funding would have required investment of over £2 million.

(3) The number of partners in the KPSN shared infrastructure has continued to grow. In addition to all Kent local authorities, Kent Police, Kent Fire and Rescue, primary, secondary and tertiary education participates in this shared approach. Recent expansion has seen the network extended to a number of NHS sites with discussions underway for a more extensive unification programme.

(4) This core network infrastructure has been the basis for the development of other shared ICT solutions. A Regional Data Centre to host equipment from across public services has been established comprising two sites Gun Wharf at Chatham and Sessions House Maidstone. Co-location of equipment will offer further opportunities for joint solutions and reduced cost.

(5) While these themes are retained in the revised strategy, the primary focus is on the changes that will be required to support the ambitions and objectives within Bold Steps and the associated service strategies.

2. ICT Strategic Framework

Service Drivers

(1) The Customer Service Strategy is a critical element of the Council's strategy map that will underpin the transition from organisation-centric to citizen-centric public services, crucial for the delivery of Bold Steps ambitions. The extensions to the ICT strategy have been developed in tandem as technology represents a fundamental component in realising the outcomes of the Customer Services Strategy. The concept of 'channel shift' where migration from face to face interaction to telephone to online services, is seen as a means of improving service, increasing choice and reducing cost, is highly technology dependant and a part of the wider 'digital by default' agenda being promoted by government.

(2) Technology as a productivity tool for public services or as a point of access to service are currently the two most obvious applications of technology. It is anticipated that in the medium term this will change with an increasing reliance on services which include the deployment of technology as part of direct service solutions. The council remains a leading exponent of tele-health and tele-care technologies and participated in the highly successful Department of Health Whole System Demonstrator trial. Increased use of technology in curriculum delivery and remote learning is another area of rapid growth supported by the council's ICT function which provides an ICT support service to over 750 schools.

(3) Broadband provision across the county continues to be below national targets which are typically lower than global competitors. Application of public service infrastructure has already been referenced in this report. Innovative methods for supporting Kent's economy through enhancing broadband availability or services that make use of such availability remain a priority associated with all ICT investments.

(4) Efficiency is another holistic target. Consideration of both cost and carbon efficiency is an integral planning process in development of all ICT proposals. In most instances with rigorous application of business case preparation and benefits realisation the majority of ICT investment should be able to show a net reduction in total cost. It will be essential that efficiencies are identified and captured irrespective of where they occur across the council or wider public service.

National ICT Strategy

(5) The council contributes to discussion on the formulation of national ICT strategy through the Local Chief Information Officer Council (LCIOC) which maintains strong links with the Cabinet Office, Department of Communities and Local Government, Local Government Association and the Local Government Delivery Council. The strategy is strongly aligned with the LCIOC's response to the national ICT strategy which highlights the public service benefits to be derived from the national proposals. In support of the national agenda which closely follows the infrastructure path already taken by the KCC, a member of the KPSN team is currently on secondment to the cabinet office PSN team as an implementation advisor.

Regional and Area ICT Strategy

(6) KCC works with a group of six other south east local authorities comprising Medway, Surrey, East and West Sussex, Brighton and Hove and Hampshire on a range of initiatives including ICT. To gain maximum benefit from cooperation across this partnership a common approach is required leading to alignment of technology strategy. A similar approach is already well established across Kent public services and the KCC ICT strategy aligns with the objectives of the public services ICT partnership, Kent Connects, and will be incorporated within an integrated countywide strategy commissioned by the Joint Kent Chief Executives group.

Consultation

(7) The strategy has been shared with a number of groups internal and external who have contributed to the development of the approach. As well as consulting with other public services across Kent, the overview has also been shared with Gartner, a private sector research and advisory company. Internally the paper has been informed through discussions with:

- ICT Division & Customer Services Team
- Business Strategy and Support Management Team
- Cross Directorate Access and Assessment Board
- Cross Directorate Delivery Assurance Team
- Corporate Management Team
- Cabinet Members
- Cabinet

Implementation

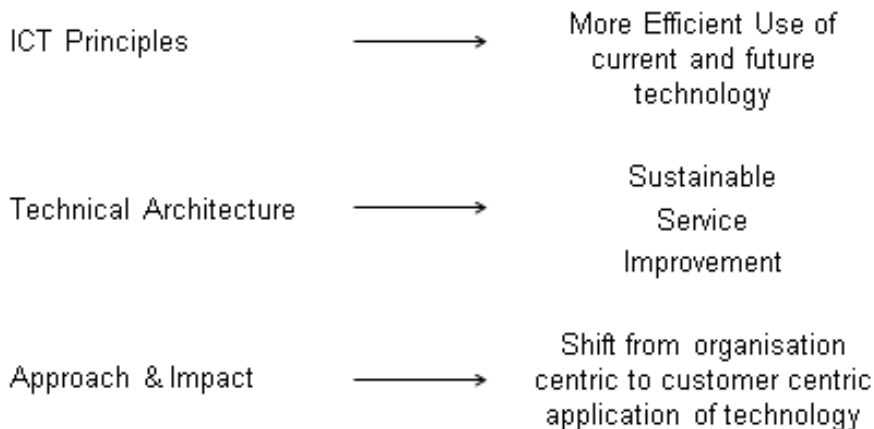
(8) The framework provided in the strategy creates a continuous link between policy objectives, business strategy and ICT investment to ensure that the maximum contribution is made to public service outcomes. A technical architecture will outline the physical environment required and the ICT Division's business plan the targets and objectives to deliver the architecture. The plan will also include the detailed proposals to support service objectives dependant on technology.

(9) Programmes and Projects are the vehicles used to deliver change and enhancement across the council. The key areas where it is already known that technology will need to be deployed are identified over a timeline incorporated within the strategy.

3. Priorities

(1) The strategy overview highlights 3 key areas where significant changes are required to the existing approach to ICT and these are also summarised in the table below.

The Delivery Framework



(2) Effective governance and clear terms of reference have been essential to the delivery of a common approach to ICT infrastructure across the council and the external agencies we work with. The changes within the strategy extend this model to software applications and line of business systems. This shift will be critical step in establishing a single view of the 'customer' and ensuring maximum value for money from ICT investment. The process currently in place has placed emphasis on functional capability within directorate or unit. The principles are designed to address this and avoid the duplication that can occur as a consequence.

(3) The strategy document identifies the constituent elements of the technical architecture which will provide the blueprint for technology over the medium term. While some aspects of the architecture are already well established such as the security and infrastructure layers, others need to be developed and refined in support of the future requirements of the council. For example service efficiency and quality can be dramatically improved through the application of business intelligence. In order to inform decisions and successfully target services at those most in need, it is essential that we adopt a more sophisticated approach to the management and use of data. This requires development of a comprehensive data and information architecture to inform the design of applications in support of a common view of the 'customer'.

(4) An important consideration for ICT support activity will be the transition over time from, systems used mainly by council staff to direct access of systems by members of the public. Where individuals chose to use technology as their preferred method of accessing public services, expectations will be informed by their experience of online commercial services. This will have implications for the level of ICT service performance and support which will need to be reflected in changes to the organisation of the council's ICT division.

(5) The same consideration will also demand a change in approach around performance monitoring and value for money. The well-established metrics reported at present, are designed around the value of technology as a service to council staff rather than the public.

4. Conclusion

(1) The ICT strategy overview (appendix a) expands on the successful approach to technology infrastructure and applies the same model in support of the systems and applications deployed across the 'one council'. The Customer Services and ICT strategies are interdependent and one cannot be delivered without the other. The combined strategies have been produced to improve customer service and through considered application of technology release financial benefits across all council services.

(2) Application of rigorous business planning and benefits realisation methods is to be applied to ensure value for money and return on investment. Adoption of a single technical architecture will support both sustainable infrastructure design and provide a roadmap for future technology investment that anticipates the opportunities for deployment of technology to improve service outcomes.

5. Recommendations

CPOSC are asked to endorse the ICT strategy overview.

6. Background Documents

National ICT Strategies

<http://knet2/directorates/chief-executive-s-department/teams-and-units/business-solutions-and-policy/information-services-group-isg/commissioning-team-1/our-teams/ict-strategy-1/ict-strategy>

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