

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

**COUNCIL
WEDNESDAY 16TH JULY 2008**

OPEN	
SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY THEME	Stronger Communities
CORPORATE PLAN AIM	A Well-Run and Responsive Council
CABINET MEMBER	Cllr Nathan Desmond
HEAD OF SERVICE	Paul Ryder – Head of Human Resources
CONTACT OFFICER	Dave Bradbury – Information Technology Manager Ext: 2139
APPENDICES	Appendix A – ICT Strategy 05 – 08 Appendix B – Extract from SOCITM Single Site ICT Strategy Appendix C – ICT Strategy Costings
Reference Document	The full SOCITM report is available on the Intranet access by password

1.0 **Purpose of report**

1.1 To recommend to Council the development of an ICT Strategy to meet the future needs of the Council.

2.0 **Recommendations**

The Council is asked to **Decide:-**

2.1 The sum of £2.54 million is added to the Council's approved Capital Programme for the delivery of the ICT Strategy over the period 2008/09 – 2012/13.

2.2 The Head of Human Resources be instructed, in consultation with the Head of Financial Services, the Head of Property and Operational Services and the Cabinet Member for Community and Corporate Services, to develop and implement an ICT Strategy to meet the future needs of the Council.

2.3 The Head of Financial Services, in consultation with the Leader be authorised to finance the £2.54m required to implement the ICT Strategy by way of external Prudential Borrowing over a ten year period or the allocation of unused capital receipts.

The assumptions in relation to the savings and on-going revenue implications indicated within the SOCITM (Society of IT Managers) report be reviewed and incorporated into the budget considerations for 2009/10 and beyond.

- 2.4 To retain SOCITM consulting to advise on the preparation and implementation of a detailed ICT Strategy.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 The previous ICT Strategy 2005 – 2008 (Appendix A) expired in March 2008. A new Strategy covering the period 2008 – 2013 is being prepared. This is regarded as the optimum duration in which it is possible to predict requirements and manage deliverables.
- 3.2 In November 2007 SOCITM Consulting were engaged to produce a single site ICT Strategy (Appendix B). Their report, presented in January 2008, has been endorsed by the Corporate Management Team. The new Strategy will take on board all the key findings.
- 3.3 The SOCITM report, whilst identifying ICT issues and costs for a new single site also identified areas where savings and efficiencies can be achieved by investing and enhancing ICT system. These areas need to be considered alongside the efficiencies that have been identified within the Centralised Office Accommodation report.
- 3.4 It is accepted that improvements in service levels, customer service and efficiency and partnership working will be heavily dependent on improved ICT technologies.
- 3.5 Current ICT budgets are based on historical capacities and will not cope with anticipated growth requirements and technological advancements. During the 3 years of the previous strategy the number of servers has increased from 45 to over 70. Data storage is increasing by over 20% pa.

4.0 Key Issues

National Context

- 4.1 The Government published Transformational Government, Enabled by Technology in November 2005. This strategy set out a vision for 21st century government requiring 3 key transformations:
- 4.2 Services enabled by IT must be designed around the citizen or business, not the provider, and provided through modern, co-ordinated delivery channels. This will improve the customer experience, achieve better policy outcomes, reduce paperwork burdens and improve efficiency by reducing duplication and routine processing, leveraging delivery capacity and streamlining processes.

- 4.3 Government must move to a shared services culture – in the front-office, in the back-office, in information and in infrastructure – and realise efficiencies by standardisation, simplification and sharing.
- 4.4 There must be broadening and deepening of government’s professionalism in terms of the planning, delivery, management, skills and governance of IT enabled change. This will result in more successful outcomes; fewer costly delivery failures; and increased confidence by citizens and politicians in the delivery of change by the public services.
- 4.5 The Council’s ICT strategy will support these key transformations and the need to deliver greater efficiency savings (Gershon).

Local Context

- 4.6 The strategy will support the Council’s Corporate Plan and will help to deliver its aims and priorities.
- 4.7 The strategy will also support the Council’s Customer Services Strategy and assist in achieving its 4 main objectives of Accessibility, Value for Money, IT technology and Service Delivery.
- 4.8 The Council’s first point of contact for all services is delivered via the Worcestershire Hub in partnership with Worcestershire County Council and the other District Councils in Worcestershire. The strategy will complement this and strive to make information available accurately, securely, at the right time and to all who need it.

5.0 **Corporate Issues/Drivers**

- 5.1 The ICT Strategy is required to implement organisation development including the preparations for future centralised accommodation.
- 5.2 Customer Services/Worcestershire Hub

The Strategy will assist with the Customer Service Strategy and will be flexible enough not to inhibit future plans and direction of the Worcestershire Hub.

- 5.3 The Worcestershire Hub will benefit from the centralisation and ease of access to information. Increased priority of self-service will improve customer service and relieve pressure on customer service employees.

6.0 **Financial Implications**

- 6.1 The total capital resources required to deliver the ICT strategy is £2.54m; this is detailed within Appendix C. Under the Council’s current policies this expenditure is not envisaged to be covered by the Council’s capital receipts.

- 6.2 It may be necessary to fund this expenditure by entering into Prudential Borrowing, and given that the investment is in relation to ICT that the borrowing has a ten year repayment period or by allocating unused capital receipts.
- 6.3 Detailed at Appendix C is the breakdown of the expenditure required to support the ICT Strategy along with an estimate of the revenue implications of this expenditure.
- 6.4 Indicative savings have been identified with both the ICT Consultants acting for the Council and the "Business Case for the Centralisation of Office Accommodation" produced by DTZ which is available to Members on the background papers circulated for this meeting. These savings and assumptions need to be fully reviewed and tested to ensure that any duplication is eliminated and that the figures quoted can be delivered within the authority. The result of this review of savings will be included within the budget considerations for 2009/10 along with any on-going revenue implications. The revenue implications identified for 2008/09 will be met from the earmarked reserve for Central Accommodation.
- 6.5 In addition to the costs detailed within Appendix C, Divisions will need to accommodate their own employees' time and resources to implement the organisational development and cultural change required to embrace new and flexible ways of working.

7.0 **Legal and Policy Implications**

- 7.1 This complies with previous policies and decisions of the Council.
- 7.2 Procurement implications will need to comply with legislative and Council Corporate Governance requirements.
- 7.3 The ICT arrangements under the revised strategy will need to be closely aligned with existing Council policies.

8.0 **Risk Management**

- 8.1 The ICT Strategy requires that the Council reviews the methods and processes which are used to deliver services. There has been an indication of the savings which could be achieved if this new technology is used most effectively. It should be stated that these are indicative savings and that these would need to be tested more closely before they could be included within the Medium Term Financial Plan.
- 8.2 The Council will also need to ensure that project management skills are used to manage the implementation to ensure that the Strategy is delivered within the timescales indicated.
- 8.3 Without an ICT Strategy, the Council will not have the IT infrastructure to meet the needs of a Single Site or improve efficient and effective working.

9.0 **Conclusion**

9.1 ICT is now an integral and essential element of the organisation and can make a major contribution to service levels, management performance and cost control.

9.2 The Council's current ICT infrastructure is extremely stretched primarily due to the need to support 6 main sites with the accompanying communication links, server rooms and software applications.

9.3 Irrespective of the need to deliver savings and efficiencies and prepare for centralised office accommodation, significant and regular investment is required simply to stand still. The investment in ICT will ensure existing services are able to be maintained to their current high standards.

9.4 There are new technologies available that are essential for effective and efficient working practices which will be invaluable preparation for a centralised office, this will also enable savings and efficiencies to be achieved in advance of any move. Technologies such as:-

- Electronic document processing to reduce paper and save on office accommodation and storage.
- Flexible working will help to increase productivity, increase job satisfaction, lower sickness levels and improve employee retention. It can also enable valuable savings in office space.
- Self service to provide customers and employees with the facilities to access their own information and to request services and monitor progress without the need for assistance.
- Improving data storage and virtualising servers (enabling one server to do the work of many) can reduce total cost of ownership, release valuable office space and provide greater availability.
- Electronic order processing and procurement can reduce manual processing time and speed up the time taken to process orders and invoices.

9.5 An annual work plan will be produced which will identify the investment and targets on a year by year basis.

10.0 **Consultees**

CMT
Cabinet

11.0 **Background Papers**

DTZ Business Case for Centralized Office Accommodation
SOCITM Consulting Information and Communication Technology Strategy – Exempt*
ICT Strategy 2005 – 2008

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