Wyre Forest District Council

Human Resources Division

Information and Communications Technology Strategy 2005 – 2008

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

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1.   <u>INTRODUCTION</u>

1.1   This strategy replaces the Council's previous ICT strategy. Any issues outstanding or arising have been taken into account.

1.2   The revised Corporate Plan was launched in 2003 and sets out the Council's strategic direction for the next 5 years. The plan was developed as a result of internal and external consultation and aims to inform and shape service delivery and performance. The ICT strategy will underpin the Corporate plans organisational themes:-

- Providing community leadership
- Improving corporacy and performance
- Delivering quality services and
- Developing people and the workplace

<u>AIM</u>

1.3   The aim of the strategy is to set the direction for the many areas of work that ICT will be undertaking. Many factors have emerged over the past couple of years that will influence the direction of the new strategy. Significant new developments that are either in progress or about to make considerable impact are :-

- Implementing electronic Government
- The Worcestershire HUB
- Upgrade of existing Document Image Processing system within the Benefits Services to enable the application of workflow
- Corporate Document Image Processing (DIP) and Workflow
- Planning on-line
- E-procurement
- Replacement of the financial management software and Cash Receipting
- Consolidation and enhancement of the website and Intranet
- Replacement or enhancement of other business systems including Committee minutes and on-line booking facilities
- Achieve compliance with BS7799

1.4   Individual project groups have been set up and detailed plans have been, or will be, developed for all these areas as appropriate.

1.5   It is important to continue to support and enhance our existing ICT services and infrastructure. The main items that relate to this are :-

- PC, Server and printer replacement programme (approximately 60 PCs replaced each year)
- ICT help desk – Query, maintenance and support service
- Wide Area Network (WAN)
- Disaster recovery including on-site and off-site contingency testing
- Desktop software – support and upgrades
- Security – anti-virus, intruder prevention/detection, continuous upgrades
- Review housekeeping procedures including back-ups, storage capacities and recovery processes
- Regular ICT technical training to ensure up to date support for ICT services and infrastructure

2. ISSUES ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS STRATEGY 2002 - 2005

2.1   Table B, extracted from the previous strategy, is shown as Appendix 1. Most items are now complete but many now give rise to on-going development or enhancement.

2.2   Items A and B, the website and Intranet, are both well established and on-going developments plans are in place.

2.3   Items D, H, O and Q relate to a single site and the need to upgrade our existing voice and data infrastructure. Whilst we have not moved to a single site, the relocation to Duke House and the closing of Vicar Street and Land Oak has provided the opportunity for improvements. All servers have been upgraded with more memory, disk storage and newer versions of the operating system. Novell NetWare and GroupWise have been upgraded. Our previous 2Mb megastreams have been replaced by 10Mb short haul data circuits.

2.4   The one stop shop and customer contact implementations, referred to as item E, will be achieved by the Worcestershire HUB project. An interim solution will be implemented in February/March 2005. The permanent solution will be centred on the Town Hall in Kidderminster during 2006.

3.   DEVELOPMENT AREAS 2005 - 2008

3.1   In 2004 the ICT section was re-structured around 4 vertical strategic areas to reflect and support the ICT strategy. The areas are :-

PCs, Networks and infrastructure	Website, Intranet and e-Government	Business systems and application support	Operational and network support
PC/Networks	Web/e-Government	Business systems	Operations

3.2   The 4 areas inevitably overlap and the ICT strategy ensures that the need for integration is recognised and facilities are provided wherever necessary to ensure transparent working. It is accepted that technology and electronic communication expertise constantly need updating and it will be vital to make sure that dedicated skills are available within the ICT section to ensure the efficient and effective delivery of ICT services. Every year as part of the Employee Development Review Programme (EDR) a schedule will be produced based on specific employee and strategic requirements.

3.3   With so many major programmes of work being planned over the next few years it will be most important to ensure that sufficient project management skills are in place. Project management is much wider than ICT.   Members of the Council's Information, Communications and e-Government (ICE) Group have already received project management awareness training. There will be a flexible approach to it using a mixture of supplier and in-house skills and ensuring appropriate methodologies are employed where necessary.

3.4   A secure and responsive voice and data network infrastructure is essential to meet the growing needs for electronic service provision. It is also important to ensure sufficient resources are in place to support the 'day job'. The ICT helpdesk is operational from 8:00am until 7:00pm to receive requests for advice or for hardware and software maintenance.

Details of each vertical strategic area are described below. The ICT aims and objectives are detailed in Appendix 2. The ICT Strategy must be flexible and able to meet change over the 3 year duration of the Plan.

PCS, NETWORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

3.5   The reliance on PCs is now fundamental to the day to day running of the Council. Local Area Networks (LANs) exist within all major sites and are joined together by the integrated voice and data Wide Area Network (WAN). The networks are vital to all electronic communications within the Council and with the outside world via e-mail and remote access. The LAN also includes wireless capabilities at a number of sites for use by members and employees.

3.6   ICT aims to ensure that everyone who needs a PC has one and that it will always be suitable for the work that they carry out. PCs will be continuously refreshed to reflect the demands of the persons that use them and the applications that need to be accessed. There are over 300 PCs and more than 80 laptops currently in use.

3.7   The networks consist of cabling, switches and routers within buildings, telecommunication links and equipment joining buildings together and over 30 servers that carry out various functions throughout the Council. We will ensure that sufficient capacity and speed is always provided. Equipment will be replaced as necessary, lines will be upgraded (links between sites are currently standardised as 10Mb) and servers will be upgraded or replaced when required.

3.8   The software that is used to manage the network is Novell NetWare and this is supplemented by Novell GroupWise for e-mails. The Council uses the Novell Strategic Enterprise Agreement (SEA) to ensure that all software is supported and can be refreshed with new releases as and when required.

WEBSITE, INTRANET AND E-GOVERNMENT

3.9   Whilst e-Government is much wider than just ICT the two are very closely linked. The Council is committed to meeting the Government's targets for electronic service delivery (ESD). In particular "achieving 100% capability in electronic delivery of priority services by 2005, in ways that customers will use". Implementing Electronic Government (IEG) statements/returns have been successfully submitted in 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2004. Full details are available on the website at www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/tmbc/egovernment.html

3.10   The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) provided further definition of priority services in April 2004 – "Defining e-government outcomes for 2005 to support the delivery of priority services & National Strategy transformation agenda for local authorities in England –Version 1.0". This enables Councils to categorise their priorities into "Required", "Good" and "Excellent" outcomes.

3.11   To assist with meeting the ODPM's priority outcomes the Council has created the following Working Groups :-

       Planning on-line
       Corporate DIP and Workflow
       E-procurement
       Leisure facilities bookings
       Worcestershire Hub
       Web issues Group

3.12   During 2004 all Members were issued with laptops and provided with broadband access to the Council's network. A Member/Officer Working Group has been set up to monitor future progress and identify continuing ongoing benefits.

3.13   The website is often seen as the focal point for delivering e-government. A vibrant, interesting and highly functional website will be at the heart of electronic service delivery. The Intranet is growing in importance and is becoming a vital medium for day to day news and access to a host of internal information. Development plans are in place for the website and Intranet.

3.14   E-Government and electronic service delivery is an on-going process that will always have to evolve around the needs of the customer. To this end the strategy needs to flexible to be able to react to new technology and new requirements. Undoubtedly there will continue to be many enhancements in mobile technology and audio and visual media.

3.15   There are major Government projects and initiatives that may lead to changes in priorities as they become reality – Smart cards is one that immediately comes to mind. Therefore it is reasonable to assume that, as the current project groups are completing or carrying out their objectives, then new groups will need to be created. Similarly ICT resources will need to be flexible to meet demands as they arise.

BUSINESS SYSTEMS AND APPLICATION SUPPORT

3.16   Every service of the Council relies on its business systems. Some are service specific i.e. Housing Benefits, Council Tax, Environmental Health but others are used corporately such as Financial Management and cash receipting. The ICT section has a major role to play in providing assistance with feasibility studies when replacements are required, programming interfaces, producing reports and liaising with suppliers for day to day support.

3.17   In 2004 assistance was provided with the feasibility, specification and supplier selection for a new committee minutes system. This will significantly improve the democratic process and provide automatic updates to the website and Intranet. The system will be introduced in 2005.

3.18   The new financial management system being implemented in 2005 will require significant ICT support both during and after implementation. The various project groups set up to meet e-government priorities will all have implications for the business systems team. E-procurement in particular will require ICT resources and will impact upon procedures and working practices throughout the Council.

3.19   Within Housing Benefits there is an immediate need to upgrade the existing DIP and workflow systems to allow for business improvements and ensuring that the service meets Central Government standards. This development will depend largely on funds being provided from Central Government under performance standards funding.

3.20   Business systems always need to be subjected to regular reviews to make sure that they are still meeting the needs of the Council and our customers. The ICT section will assist with feasibility studies and provide technical input to enable either the upgrading or replacement of software and hardware as necessary.

3.21   The Worcestershire HUB highlights the need for integration between "front" and "back" office systems. Initially a "Back Office Information" viewer is planned that will need ICT assistance to provide data from the back office to be viewed by the front office. Much greater levels of integration will be essential in the future to ensure that anticipated efficiencies are achieved and that customer transactions can be resolved at the first point of contact. Although this will primarily rely on external suppliers working together, it will undoubtedly require significant ICT resources.

OPERATIONAL AND NETWORK SUPPORT

3.22   This broad strategic area covers the ICT helpdesk, security, disaster recovery, anti-virus protection and day to day operational functions such as backups, batch runs, error detection, purchase ordering and telephone bill monitoring and payment.

3.23   The ICT helpdesk receives around 500 calls per month either by telephone or e-mail. Where possible they are resolved at the first point of contact. A knowledge base is available to assist with calls for which previously experience exists. Otherwise calls are categorised, prioritised and allocated to an appropriate ICT specialist. Where necessary users are given a helpdesk reference number and kept informed of progress via automated e-mails. The helpdesk will continue to evolve to ensure customers are kept informed and to monitor levels of satisfaction.

3.24   Security is continuously reviewed both internally and externally. Access to the network and business systems is strictly controlled by user ids and passwords that need to be changed on a regular basis. Work will continue to assess compliance with the security standard BS7799 and, where necessary, revised procedures and policies put in place. Although disaster recovery

procedures are in place it will be important to document these and ensure that all contingency plans have been considered.

3.25 Good housekeeping is vital to ensure appropriate and regular back-ups of data and software are produced. Back-ups will be stored in on-site media approved safes and rotated between sites to enable access for disaster recovery purposes. Back up procedures and storage requirements will be regularly reviewed and updated.

3.26 As well as ensuring no unauthorised access takes place we need to ensure that our website is secure against hackers. We will carry out penetration testing and continually monitor attempts to access our network or website. Our anti-virus software is loaded on all servers and PCs and is updated daily or more frequently if required.

3.27 The ICT work programme detailed in Appendix 2 has been drawn up encompassing the Council's priorities and ensuring conformity with the priority outcomes. It also reflects work that is needed to support and enhance the ICT service.

4. <u>USE OF RESOURCES</u>

4.1 With so many major projects planned or in progress there will be a need to regularly assess the impact on resources.

4.2 Financial implications have been recognised and provisional budgets allocated from Government grants or through the service option process.

4.3 Existing ICT manpower is in place to support projects and to assist with technical evaluations, installations, testing and "live" implementations.

4.4 It is important to realise that it is impossible to give exact estimates of likely resources, both manpower and financial, ahead of the detailed feasibility studies and market appraisal that each project carries out.

4.5 Two major projects, Member's on-line and the Worcestershire Hub have already required significant manpower.

4.6 Existing budgets are shown in the table in Appendix 2.

4.7 Every effort will be made to keep projects within projected budgets and utilise existing manpower. However, there may be a future need for additional finance or increased manpower.

TABLE B

Previous ICT Strategy

	Action	Details	Targets
A	Website	Provision of transactional website capable of interaction and electronic forms	Website 'live' by December 2002 Enhancements on-going
B	WFDC Intranet for employees and Member's	Internal website for committee minutes , reports, policies, phonebook etc.	Intranet in place by December 2002 Enhancements on-going
C	Secure remote access	Setting up of Virtual Private Network (VPN) for Employees, Members and authorised personnel to access internal network.	Pilot at Bewdley TIC by December 2002 Limited secure access in place by March 2003
D	Single site / Infrastructure upgrade	Preparation of new infrastructure for single site including rationalisation of servers, integration of GIS, extended use of DIP. If single site is not likely in the near future then significant upgrades will be necessary to our existing infrastructure for e-Government.	
E	One stop shop / customer contact implementation	Provision of communication links and software for integration between back and front office systems	
F	National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG)	Creation of Local Street Gazetteer (LSG), Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) to interface with NLPG.	LSG in place for March 2003 LLPG by October 2003 NLPG and interfaces by March 2004

G	Members on-line	Provision of ICT equipment and access to internal Intranet for Members. Initial consultation to be followed by pilot scheme.	
H	Local and wide area networks	Upgrade existing Lines and equipment if not moving to single site in near future	Timetable subject to single site decision
I	PC replacement programme	Rolling programme for the replacement of approximately 60 PCs per annum	On going
J	Replacement for Financial management software	Assistance with feasibility study followed by data conversion and testing.	New system 'live' in 2004
K	Voice and data communication network	Leases and maintenance agreements for the support and maintenance of telephone switches and associated data communication equipment expire 31st March 2003. Negotiations and planning will be required.	
L	'Worcestershire Hub'	Liaison with other members of the Worcestershire partnership. Attendance at meetings. Assistance with planning for one stop shops, Worcestershire portal and integrated telephony.	
M	National Non Domestic Rates (NNDR)	Conversion and testing to move to IBS software as per Council Tax and Benefits	January 2003
N	Links between CLACS Servitor system and WFDC financial systems	New programs to receive and transmit data for FMS, Creditors and Debtors	September 2002
O	Server upgrades	Upgrades to servers at	March 2003

		Civic Centre, New Street, Coventry Street and Land Oak. New server for Vicar Street.	
P	Disaster recovery testing	Off site testing of recovery procedures for IBS, REALITY and NOVELL environments. Off site testing for recovery in the event major server disaster.	November 2002 November 2003
Q	Novell NetWare and GroupWise upgrade	Upgrade for NetWare 4.11 and GroupWise 5.2 to NetWare 6.0 and GroupWise 6.5	Dependant upon Single site
R	Implement software products from Novell SEA agreement	Implement Single sign on, Border Manager and Zen works	

ICT WORK PROGRAMME 2005 – 2008

	CORPORATE THEME	CORPORATE PRIORITY	TITLE	DESCRIPTION	ICT STRATEGIC AREA RESPONSIBILITY	TARGET DATE	BUDGET
1.	Improving Corporacy & Performance	Financial & Asset Management	DIP and Workflow	The improvement and upgrade of the existing Document Image Processing system within Housing Benefits to allow for the introduction of workflow efficiencies.[1] The roll out of Document Image Processing and workflow. Building on experience from existing usage in Housing Benefits. Implementing for Planning and Building Control and expanding throughout whole Council as appropriate. Electronic Document Records Management (EDRM) will also be introduced.	PC/Networks Business systems	Housing Benefits/ Planning & Building Control – Dec 2005 Other DIP & Enterprise workflow – Ongoing	£250,000 for DIP and Workflow and back office integration was approved as a service option by Council on 23rd February. £40,000 has been allocated from IEG3 grant. A bid has also been submitted to the Department for Works and Pensions for additional funding.
2.	Improving Corporacy & Performance	Organisational Performance	Planning on-line	Replacing existing database systems with new e-enabled software in conjunction with national initiatives.	PC/Networks Business systems	December 2005	£100,000 from IEG3 Grant. Further funding may be available from the Planning delivery

[1] The upgrade of the existing system will be subject to the success of the Council in obtaining financial assistance from the Department of Work & Pensions (DWP) Performance Standards funding

						grant.
3.	Delivering Quality Services	Utilising new Technologies	Members on-line	Providing support for all Members with the use of laptops and broadband.	PC/Networks Operations	March 2005	£39,645 from IEG3 Grant. £53,890 revenue implications to be taken from IEG4 for 2005/6.
4.	Delivering Quality Services	Improving Customer Services	Intranet development	The Intranet development programme will ensure the Intranet continues to be a valuable reference point for employees and members.	Web/e-Government Business systems	On-going	Within existing budget although expenditure may be required in 2005/6 from IEG Grant.
5.	Delivering Quality Services	Utilising new Technologies	Website development	Priority in the website development programme will be for a new modern "look and feel" to make the site more attractive. There will also be emphasis on introducing more transactional features and a wider range of on-line payments. However, work will continue to ensure compliance with Government standards. Deep links will be provided to the HUB portal and other partner's websites as appropriate.	Web/e-Government Business systems	On-going	£13,000 from IEG Grant. Further expenditure may be required in 2005/6 from IEG4 Grant.
6.	Delivering Quality Services	Improving Customer Services	Worcestershire HUB	The provision of a one stop shop service, integrated telephony and Portal in partnership with Worcestershire County Council and the other 5 Worcestershire Districts and partners. This will mainly focus on Kidderminster Town Hall and satellite centres at Stourport-	PC/Networks Business systems Web/e-Government Operations	During 2006 – Exact date to be confirmed	£90,000 from IEG3 Grant. £38,500 from IEG4 Grant.

			on-Severn and Bewdley.			
7.	Improving Corporacy & Performance	Financial & Asset Management	Financial Management System	The implementation of new financial management software including new servers and data conversion where necessary. A new cash receipting system will also be introduced.	PC/Networks Business systems	FMS – April 2005

Cash Receipting - August 2005 | £138,500 is included in the capital programme. |
8.	Delivering Quality Services	Financial & Asset Management	E-procurement	Introduction of Corporate purchasing using electronic means and reducing the need for paper orders and invoices.	Business systems	March 2006	£50,000 allocated from IEG3 Grant.
9.	Delivering Quality Services	Improving Customer Services	Leisure bookings	Provide electronic methods, in conjunction with partners as necessary, for the booking of leisure activities and facilities	PC/Networks Web/e-Government Business systems		£32,000 allocated from IEG3 Grant.
10.	Delivering Quality Services	Utilising new Technology	Desktop software	Investigate options and implement replacement for Microsoft Office. Ensure compatibility with existing software. Investigate/Review options for desktop operating system	Business systems	December 2005	£67,650 approved as service option by Council on 23rd February.
11.	Delivering Quality Services	Utilising new Technology	PC, Server and printer replacements	On-going programme to ensure all equipment is continually refreshed and is capable of meeting growing demands.	PC/Networks	On-going	Within existing budgets.
12.	Improving Corporacy & Performance	Risk Management	Disaster Recovery	Provision will be made for equipment to be made available on-site, or remotely, to ensure service continuity in the event of a disaster. Testing will take place at least annually to ensure recovery procedures and	PC/Networks Operations	On-going	Within existing budgets.

				data restoration can be carried out successfully.			
13.	Improving Corporacy & Performance	Financial & Asset Management	Security	An audit will take place to ensure compliance with the standard on Information Security Management - BS7799. Where necessary procedures and policies will be amended or replaced.	Operations	March 2006	Not known at this stage. Results will be available by September 2005.
14.	Delivering Quality Services	Utilising new Technologies	Back-ups and storage	Procedures, processes and capacity will be regularly reviewed and updated.	Operations	March 2006	Within existing budgets.
15.	Delivering Quality Services	Communication & Consultation	Remote/mobile working	There is continuing demand to provide access to ICT facilities remotely. This may be for home working or for employees who need to carry out visits. Work has already taken place to set up a Virtual Private Network (VPN) but this will be enhanced to improve both flexibility and security.	PC/Networks Business systems Web/e-Government Operations	December 2005	Within existing budgets.
16.	Delivering Quality Services	Improving Customer Services	Business systems enhancement or replacement	Review current Business system when nearing the end of their contacts and carry out feasibility studies with a view to either keeping, enhancing or replacing them.	Business systems	On-Going	Subject to future feasibility studies
17.	Delivering Quality Services	Utilising new Technologies	Regulatory Services	On-line submission for licensing applications, housing grants and other regulatory services.	Web/e-Government	December 2005	Within existing budget although expenditure may be required from 2005/6 IEG4 Grant