

PERFORMANCE AND MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
22ND MARCH 2005
Report of the Head of Information & Communication Services

ITEM 6 ICT STRATEGY AND BEST VALUE IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN

Purpose of the Report

To enable the Committee to monitor and review progress made in implementing the ICT Best Value Improvement Action Plan and scrutinise the ICT Strategy.

Background

The ICT Best Value Improvement Action Plan (BVIAP) has not been subject to review since Resources Scrutiny Committee of 10th December 2003.

There have been many changes and developments in IT across the Council and the updated BVIAP reflects some of those changes and developments.

Also, in February 2004 the Association for Public Excellence (APSE) carried out an internal support service review of the ICT aspects of the Information & Communication Service (ICS) and the major organisational changes that have occurred as a result of that review and other organisational change undertaken through the Chief Executive include the following:-

- The printing service is now provided through a mixture of in-house facilities from within the Contact Centre Building and external suppliers.
- The responsibility for Data Protection and Freedom of Information has been transferred to the Assistant Chief Executive Risk Management.
- The responsibility for the development of the Council's website has been transferred to the Assistant Chief Executive Change Management
- ICS now lead on, and have a basic resource to carry out, Business Process Re-engineering processes – often referred to as Business Analysis.
- There is no longer a Stationery Stores section and such supplies are provided through agreed processes under the new Procurement Team within Financial Services.
- The internal provision of IT training has ceased and IT courses may now be procured through Human Resources (ICS help to facilitate), and IT issues have become embedded in the induction programme.
- The Contact Centre now provides a comprehensive telephone answering service for Housing Services and for Technical Services (Refuse and Cleansing) and has also carried out ad-hoc service provision on occasion for Electoral Registration (postal voting) and Land Drainage

The reliance of the Council on technological infrastructure is ever increasing & the daily support services offered to all users remains a major part of ICS's service delivery along with maintaining the annual production of vital processes such as

Council Tax billing and Rent Cards. There are many more software support functions carried out daily.

There have been many major projects undertaken either solely by ICS or in conjunction with other services. These include:-

- A Home working pilot in Environmental Services
- The provision of broadband connectivity for members and officers
- Wireless networking within the “old” Southfields Building
- The generation of an Intranet pilot within the Chief Executive’s Team (due for completion by the end of this month).
- The redevelopment of the Council’s website
- The introduction of improved centralised backup security services
- Further development of the Council’s Geographical Information System (GIS), which now contains over 200 datasets.
- The upgrade from Microsoft Windows NT to Microsoft XP and from Microsoft Office 2000 to MS Office 2003 is well underway
- IT equipment is being continually upgraded, there has been a rationalisation on the provision of local printers, and the “new” Intranet alongside the provision of wireless laptop computers to the Corporate Management Team initially will help on the way to reducing reliance on hard copies (prints) and aide the move to more flexible ways of working including hotdesking across the organisation.

The annual revenue budget of ICS has remained largely the same with many of the changes referred to being paid for through the efficiency savings that have materialised from the organisational changes that have taken place.

ICS monitors progress against national e-government targets (particularly, but not solely BVPI157) and have generated an ICT Strategy, IT Resilience Strategy, e-Government Strategy and a generic “Charnwood” e-Government Routemap all within the last 12 months and these have been key in ICS being in an improved position to help front line services with their own IT improvement such as those highlighted by the Head of Planning Services at the last meeting of this Committee (e.g. full integration with the National Planning Portal) and as recently as last month with Leisure and Cultural Services in enabling the Town Hall Booking System to integrate with Ticket Master for the purpose of booking theatre tickets on-line.

There has been some significant input into partnership working with the service contributing to the Leicester-Shire e-Government Partnership which has resulted in the following improvements/facilities:-

- Community portals – The Leicestershire Rural Partnership identified a need to provide better access to information in the rural parts of the Leicester-Shire region and beyond. As a result a project was jointly funded and supported to develop a standardised website development tool. This tool allows community members to create community interest websites free of charge. See <http://www.leicestershirevillages.com>

- Destination Management System (DMS) – The DMS is a Leicestershire wide integrated online booking facility, which supports economic development and tourism. See www.leicestershire.visitor-centre.co.uk/
- On line Planning – The partnership has supported the development and integration of Leicester-Shire websites into the Planning Portal. See <http://www.charnwood.gov.uk/environment/135.html>
- Unified Service Index, A-Z project – The project is currently in development, the outcome will be a list of common/standard service definitions and a common A to Z services (District and County) accessed via all Leicestershire websites (including Charnwood). See <http://www.charnwood.gov.uk/leicestershireatoz.html>
- MAGnet - MAGnet is an interactive geographical system (GIS) populated with County Council and community based service information, such as schools, public footpaths, public libraries, where is my nearest (post-office, GP surgery, leisure centre, etc). MAGnet has been integrated into Infolinx, an information resource and www.leicestershirevillages.com , village based website for the region. Within the CBC website, MAGnet info has been integrated to show Councillor Ward representation (see <http://www.charnwood.gov.uk/democracy/wards.html>) and find my nearest (<http://www.charnwood.gov.uk/findmynearest.html>)
- Reciprocal Service Delivery (RSD) – The project is currently in development. RSD is a behind the scenes link between councils. It works by allowing a customer to complete and submit a form online. Once the form is submitted, the RSD system determines where the form should be sent. These links can be developed for a number of service areas. The partnership has chosen to focus on abandoned vehicles. In this case, the citizen does not need to know which authority the abandoned vehicle is in, he can go to his Council website and report the vehicle and location by clicking on an online map. If the vehicle is outside the council boundaries, the system will transfer the report to the correct authority.

Initially it will handle reports from the public relating to problems in 'open spaces' e.g. abandoned cars, graffiti, fly-tipping, pot holes etc. Once this model proves to work, it will be expanded across other services which could be delivered electronically by partners for each other.

- LeicestershireCareOnline – a portal providing information for vulnerable adults and their carers. See <http://www.leicestershiretogether.org/print/careonline>
- Learning & Youth Portal – an online source of information aimed at young people. <http://dev.thejitty.com/>

The ICT Strategy was introduced and approved by Council in April 2004 and is due for review at Cabinet on the 28th April 2005. The current strategy can be found at Appendix I. ICS are examining necessary changes at the current time.

An updated ICT BVIAP is attached to this report at Appendix 2.

Officer(s) to Contact: Steve Horner, 01509 634790
steve.horner@charnwood.gov.uk