
SELECT COMMITTEE ON REGENERATION, CULTURE AND ADULT EDUCATION
5TH MARCH 2008

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

CORPORATE ICT STRATEGY 2008-2013

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To comment on the development of the Corporate ICT Strategy which covers the period 2008 to 2013.

BACKGROUND

ICT STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

2. The Council's current Corporate ICT Strategy 2006 to 2007 was an interim strategy designed to allow the council to proceed with ICT developments against an uncertain background of Central Governments intentions in this area. It was published in September 2006. That strategy supported the local agenda set out in the Council's Action Plan, together with the national agenda promoted in the Government paper "Transformational Government: Enabled by Technology" published by the Cabinet Office in November 2005.
3. The Government's thinking on Transformation seems now to have become more closely interwoven with the efficiency agenda, and much of drive towards transformations stems from the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007. All public services have been set a target of achieving at least 3% net cash-releasing value for money gains per annum over 2008/09 to 2010/11 which would mean about £9m each year for Dudley compared to the £2.5m or 1.25% equivalent figure under the Gershon regime.
4. Sir David Varney's recent report on Service Transformation envisages transformed e-based services. Key recommendations are that the cost of operating public service contact centres be reduced by 25%; entirely avoidable contacts be reduced by 50%; the number of information requests handled by telephone be reduced by 50%; and that 80% of service requests should be dealt with at the first point of contact.
5. The most recent paper on Transformation is the Service Transformation Agreement published by the Treasury in October 2007. This sets out a progress measure on reducing Avoidable contact (National Indicator 14), although final details of this are still unclear.
6. Against this background this ICT Strategy concentrates on the development of a flexible corporate ICT infrastructure, capable of delivering both improved customer services and efficiencies arising from transformation .
7. The development of the Corporate ICT Strategy involves both officers and elected members. Members are engaged through the work of the Select Committee on the Regeneration.

8. Individual Directorates of the Council also maintain 5 Year ICT Plans, which also contribute to the development of the Corporate ICT Strategy.
9. The new ICT strategy is a natural development of the current strategy building on the e'government activities to deliver greater efficiency and integration, so there is a smooth transition from the one strategy to the other. The Council's ICT Services Division and the e-Dudley Steering Group will take the strategy forward.

KEY ISSUES

10. The key initiatives highlighted in the new strategy are:-
 - Making significant upgrades to the Council's ICT Infrastructure to ensure it remains reliable and supported.
 - Enhancing the Council's desktop equipment to ensure it remains reliable and supported and offers improved facilities
 - Supporting a variety of Flexible working alternatives, including Mobile and Home working.
 - Improving sustainability and reducing the Carbon footprint of the Council's ICT Provision
 - Dealing with the expiry of a number of major contracts, e.g. Centrex Phone systems and DGfL
 - Exploiting the Council's information to make use of this valuable resource

IMPLEMENTATION

11. The review of ICT Strategy has been carried out in the context of:
 - The Council Plan
 - Comprehensive Spending Review 2007
 - Service Transformation – Sir David Varney – December 2006
 - Service Transformation Agreement – October 2007
 - Progress against commitments in the current strategy
 - Increasing recognition of the need to gain maximum benefits from the information the Council manages.
 - The increasing need to support flexible working of staff to improve efficiency and support the council's Accommodation Strategy.
 - The need to exploit appropriate new developments in technology to improve the services we deliver to our citizens and businesses.

MONITORING

12. The Council Plan identifies national and community priorities as critical in ensuring that the council has a structured approach in delivering the best possible quality public services. This Strategy supports that approach.
 - It assists in the delivery of the Community Strategy by enabling sharing of information and systems with our partners to achieve the six key priorities of the Dudley Community Partnership.
 - It contributes to the Councils vision that local people matter by enabling the re-engineering of services around the needs of citizens, communities and businesses.
 - It relates to the Council themes, not only by delivering specific support and activities in the five service areas, but also by playing a major role in the sixth theme of Quality Service Matters.
13. The Corporate ICT Strategy is monitored by elected members, by the e-Dudley Steering Group and by the Director of Finance. Key elements are incorporated into the Council's overall performance management through the Council Plan.

PUBLICATION

14. The approved strategy will be published and publicised both within the Council and on the Council website.

FINANCE

15. The costs of meeting ICT strategy targets will have to be met from within existing resources or bids from new funding streams. Previous strategies have successfully delivered £900,000 in Implementing Electronic Government grants from the Government, but this funding stream is now complete.

LAW

16. Section III of the Local Government Act 1972 enables the Council to do anything which is incidental to, conducive to or which facilitates the discharge of its functions.

EQUALITY IMPACT

17. The development of electronic services is designed to improve customer choice and access to Council services and information.

RECOMMENDATIONS

18. It is recommended that:-
 - That members comment on
 - the ICT Strategy for 2008 - 2013
 - its subsequent publication
 - and implementation.



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List of Background Papers

Corporate ICT Strategy 2006-2007
Comprehensive Spending Review 2007
Service Transformation – Sir David Varney December 2006
Service Transformation Agreement – October 2007