Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Strategic Information Management Framework
Date:	23 May 2008
Reporting Officer:	Peter McNaney, Chief Executive
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Relevant Background Information

Strategic information management is central to the Council's improvement agenda because it:
- is an essential element of good corporate governance
- provides Elected Members with the right information to support effective decision making
- challenges our thinking on how we deliver services and supports innovation in service design
- sets direction in terms of investment in technology assuring alignment to corporate objectives
- provides the basis of accountability to Elected Members and the citizens of Belfast for the stewardship and use of IT resources.

The purposes of this report are:
- To outline for Elected Members the proposed strategic information management framework for the organisation
- To agree governance arrangements for the development of strategy and delivery of services
- To agree to seek external assistance in the development of strategy within agreed budgets.

Key Issues

Key elements of the Council's strategic information management framework are outlined below:

Strategy and Business Alignment

It is important that the Council invests in the right technology to meet the business objectives of the Council both corporately and at service level. This becomes more important in the context of modernising public services and the drive to deliver efficiency and value for money. It is essential that planning for the use of IT is fully integrated with the financial, capital, human resources and business planning processes of the Council.
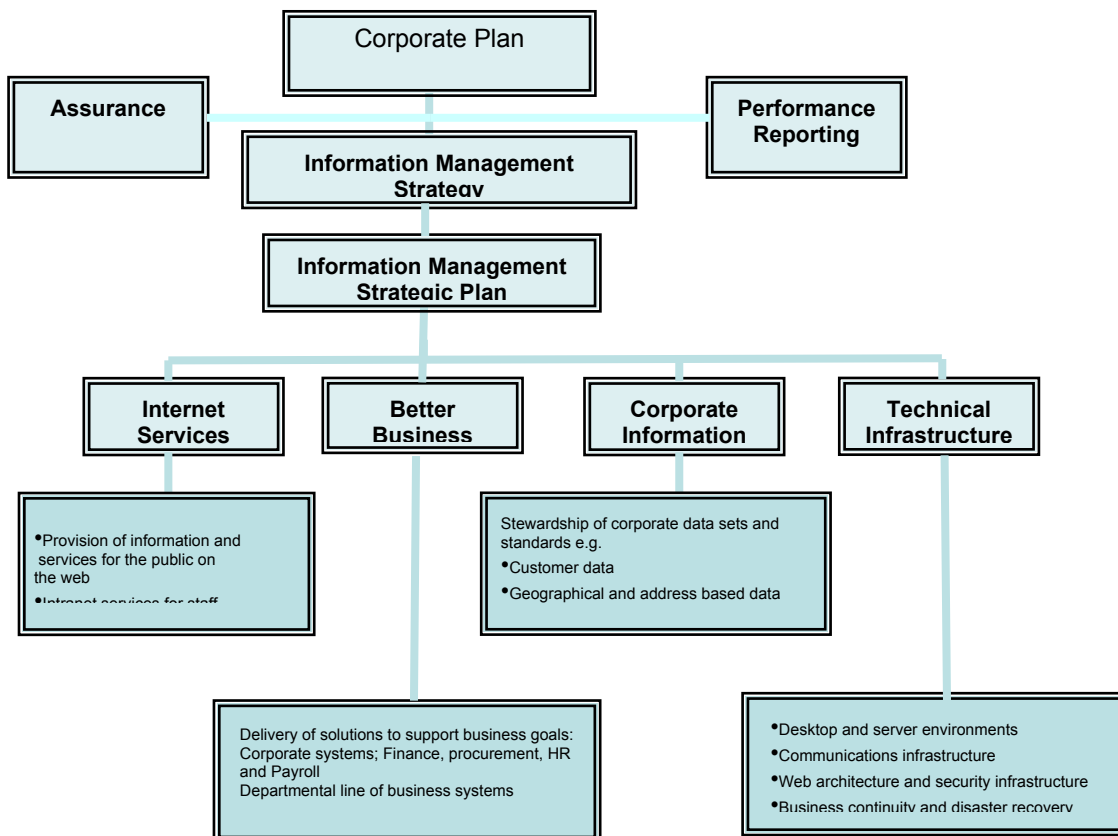
Management and Governance

The Council needs to direct and control IT resources to achieve the objectives of the Corporate Plan as well as employing good practices for managing the business operation of IT. **Figure 1** outlines the context of the information management strategy in relation to the corporate plan. It is proposed that an information panel of officers is established, chaired by a Chief Officer and reporting to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, to oversee delivery of the strategic plan and the work of the sub groups. Assurance that risks and issues are managed and quality outcomes delivered will fall within the remit of Audit, Governance and Risk service whose staff will fulfil a scrutiny role alongside project teams.

Technology and Architecture

A critical element of the framework is the underlying technology infrastructure e.g. communications, and the processes for developing, deploying, enhancing and supporting the business capabilities using technology solutions. It is equally critical that these solutions are measured in terms of their fitness for purpose and return on investment. Reporting on performance of KPIs against targets will form part of the routine reporting on corporate performance to the Strategic Policy and Resources committee.

Organisation and skills

An essential element is the capacity of the Council in terms of its IT skills as well as management ability to deliver change effectively and create and promote an environment of productivity, learning and employee satisfaction.

Summary of Strategic Policy and Resources Committee Forward Work Plan July-October for Information Management

June
- Establish governance arrangements with Information Panel and appropriate subgroups
- Commission work on developing strategy

Mid July -September
- Run a series of workshops to determine IM strategic objectives in line with corporate plan, define priorities, assess resource impact and develop strategy and plan.

October
- Report on IM Strategy with proposed strategic plan for 2009-2011

Recommendations

Members are requested to:

1. Note the contents of the report.

2. Agree to the information management forward work plan for July - October 2008 as outlined above.

3. Agree to commission external assistance to facilitate workshops and development of strategies to report to committee in October 2008.