



Subject:	ICT Strategy
Date:	14 th December 2018
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Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	Digital Services has recently worked with Deloitte on a new ICT Strategy for Belfast City Council which will provide a framework for members, under the remit of the Strategic Policy and Resources committee, to oversee the development of the Council's ICT platforms and systems, over a period of three years, according to the Council's key business priorities.
1.2	One of the key aims of the new ICT Strategy will be to establish the business and technical capabilities needed for BCC to deliver ICT services that meet strategic expectations, while acknowledging budget and staff constraints. This paper outlines a new vision for ICT services and highlights the key strategic themes that are required to deliver the new ICT Strategy.

1.2 The new strategy must also be flexible enough to ensure it aligns and supports the City's ambitions which will be delivered through the Innovation and Digital pillar of the Belfast Region City Deal and the Smart Belfast framework.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee are asked to;

- endorse the new ICT Strategy.

3.0 Main report

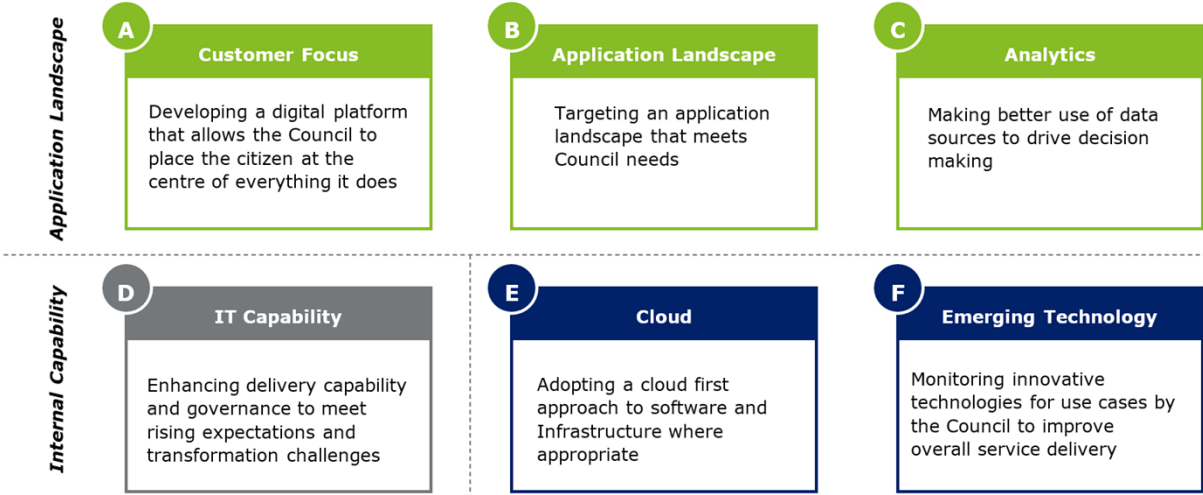
3.1 Key Issues

The ICT strategy sets out a vision that “the Council will become an exemplar in the use of innovative technology to deliver improved outcomes for Belfast and its citizens.”

3.2 The key challenges for Digital Services are to:

- Develop a deep understanding of business areas to be the Council's trusted advisory and delivery partner,
- Lead the use of innovative technologies to deliver better outcomes for citizens,
- Drive the improved use of data to support better decision-making,
- Be a key technology delivery partner supporting the Belfast Agenda and innovation initiatives.

3.3 Whilst Digital Services has strong foundations to deliver the technical requirements of the Council, there are 6 strategic themes that should be prioritised to deliver the new ICT Vision.



3.4 **Customer Focus Programme** – *Developing a Customer Digital Platform*

The recommendations contained in the ICT Strategy are closely aligned with outcomes of the Customer Focus Discovery exercise. Detailed planning for a strategic Customer Focus Programme of work will be completed before April 2019. Digital Services will be using the assessment of the current state of citizen experience and engagement to determine the digital technologies and practices that are needed to meet the vision of a citizen-centred digital council.

The customer journey maps identified through discovery will help to prioritise new opportunities for 'digital services' and the required technology investments that will be needed to accelerate progress toward implementing improved citizen services.

The Customer Focus Programme will have an impact on many areas of technology including:

- BCC Website
- Online Customer Portal
- Online/Mobile services
- Corporate CRM
- Back Office Integration
- Telephony and networking services
- Social Media

3.5 **Application Landscape** – *Targeting an application landscape that meets the Council's needs*

The new ICT Strategy recognises that demand management is becoming increasingly difficult for Digital Services, with a requirement to deliver a large number of corporately significant projects (**Appendix 1**), alongside an increase in line-of-business demand for technology and improvements to office productivity. Also, due to the political nature of Council business, like every Council service, Digital Services must react to unforeseen circumstances meaning drivers for new projects can come from many and varied sources.

Digital Services is also facing the challenge of dealing with two apparently opposite pressures:

- A pressure for continuous change: Designing and delivering business applications that drive new innovative processes.
- A pressure for controlling change: Providing a robust, scalable, reliable, secure and cost-effective environment to support core, mission-critical business processes.

The ICT Strategy focusses on delivering a strategic view of the ICT Programme of work looking at a new approach to integration that will allow the Council to maximise business and customer benefits from our current application estate and help with application rationalisation, while we prioritise the delivery of essential corporate and line of business applications.

Removing or upgrading an application will result in changes to how business units currently operate and will require significant business change. This will necessitate careful prioritisation to manage the replacement of corporately significant applications alongside line of business application upgrades which should now be aligned with the Customer Focus programme of work.

3.6 ***Analytics*** – *Making better use of data sources to drive decision-making and improve services*

At its core, a 'Digital Council' is about using data to improve decision-making and to provide more-effective services to citizens.

At present our information is often managed in silos and is not readily available to help with strategic decision-making. There is general recognition across the Council that significant improvements can be made to information management and governance and that the potential value of our information can be better leveraged.

The ICT Strategy recommends that we develop a data strategy to define an organisational approach to the management of information, which can help us gain better insight from the information we hold and improve analytics capability across the organisation. To be effective the strategy must also consider how it will align with the Innovation and Digital pillar of the Belfast Region City Deal and the requirements of the Smart Belfast framework.

3.7 ***IT Capability*** – *Enhancing delivery capability and governance to meet growing expectations*

One of the biggest challenges for Digital Services will be to build and maintain a cost-effective and agile IT service that can meet our complex and changing business demands. A focus will be needed to identify the individual resources and skills required to maintain a high-performing IT service.

As technology becomes pervasive throughout every aspect of the Council, Digital Services must ensure continued engagement with business and operational managers and also with the department of City and Organisational Strategy to understand the role Digital Services can bring to shaping the solutions and services required to deliver continuous improvement.

Through delivery of the ICT Strategy Digital Services will work to improve business alignment, provide improved transparency around governance and project prioritisation, and will concentrate on identifying and improving key skills and succession planning within the service.

3.8	<p><u>Cloud</u> – <i>Adopting a cloud first approach (where appropriate)</i></p> <p>Meeting organisational expectations around the inevitable migration to cloud services involves more than choosing technologies. The migration from on premise ICT Services to cloud-based services will involve governance, procurement, disaster recovery/business continuity, financing, security, citizen services, mobile workforce, subscription pricing models and risk management. Cloud services will also have a major impact for our business units who may need to accept more frequent software updates and standardisation of business processes. This is why the ICT Strategy is recommending the creation of a Cloud Strategy and adoption plan that meets our specific requirements and which focusses on the delivery of the strategic aims of Belfast City Council.</p>
3.9	<p>Through the delivery of a Cloud strategy business users should expect to see increased agility with speedier implementations over traditional on-premises models, this will allow innovative initiatives to be delivered faster.</p> <p><u>Emerging Technology</u> – <i>Monitoring innovative technologies to improve service delivery</i></p> <p>New technologies are constantly emerging, raising citizen and business expectations, and changing citizen behaviour as innovations become the new normal. Significant changes in how Council services are offered and consumed are inevitable. The rate of change, and the manner and degree of shifts in government's approach to service delivery, is exceedingly difficult to predict with accuracy as service transformation is a long-term endeavour. However, agility will be essential and keeping a constant eye out for new opportunities will be critical so that we can adapt to changes as they emerge.</p> <p>The customer focus programme will be a key area to look at how emerging technologies can be incorporated into service delivery. One of the first places that artificial intelligence and machine learning tools will have a major impact on is CRM and Customer Experience. Exploiting conversational interfaces with chatbots and virtual customer assistants to improve customer experience and bring additional value to the business will be an early area for investigation.</p> <p>The ICT Strategy is recommending the establishment of new ways of managing and financing a new approach to innovation. The aim will be to ensure innovation skills can be grown not only within Digital Services but right across the organisation.</p>
3.10	<p><u>Other Strategic priorities</u></p> <p><u>Information Security</u></p> <p>One of the Council's key corporate risks is around how we manage 'Digital Information Security'. There is a growing realisation from Elected Members and within CMT that information security</p>

management must be strategically aligned with the delivery of the Council's key aims and objectives. This will require improved governance of business risks and greater oversight of cyber security risk management and technical controls. We will need to develop processes that integrate information security into all areas of the Council including technology, processes and staff behaviours.

To mitigate Cyber security risks, Digital Services is working with our external security partner to develop a new IT Security Strategy based on a business impact assessment which assesses the potential impact of any compromise against the confidentiality, integrity and availability of our electronic information and ICT systems.

Full Fibre Connectivity

The Belfast Agenda recognises that improved digital connectivity is integral to the sustainability of our city. The BCC Local Full Fibre Network (LFFN) programme, being delivered by Digital Services, will help to create the circumstances in which technological innovation can flourish in support of the visions of the Council.

Through the BCC Public Sector Anchor Tenancy project, the Council intends to connect council buildings across the city to create a gigabit capable fibre network which will future proof BCC's own connectivity requirements for the next 25 years.

The Council is also seeking to maximise the availability and benefit of gigabit capable broadband services in the City Centre through, the Public Sector Asset Reuse (PSAR) project, which aims to allow ducting within the Streets Ahead area to be used to deploy fibre services to businesses in this area much more cost effectively than is currently the case.

The BCC LFFN programme also supports the aims of the Belfast Region City Deal and Smart Belfast Framework. The BCC LFFN project will open up new opportunities to support digitally transformed user focussed Customer services, and innovative digital infrastructure covering networking, IoT sensors, modern devices, data management systems and 5G smart districts and test-beds.

3.12 Financial & Resource Implications

Delivering the ambitious recommendations contained within the new ICT Strategy will require careful planning. The corporately significant projects (**Appendix 1**) and the implementation of the Customer Focus programme will be given the highest priorities for delivery.

Projects emerging from the strategy that require capital funding will require business cases to be developed and taken through the council's gate review process.

Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment

None

4.0 Appendices – Documents Attached

Appendix 1 – Corporately Significant Projects

Appendix 2 – ICT Strategy Roadmap

Appendix 3 – ICT Strategy

