

AGENDA

Strategic Monitoring Committee

Date: **Monday 21 September 2009**

Time: **9.30 am**

Place: **The Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road,
Hereford**

Notes: Please note the **time, date** and **venue** of the meeting.

For any further information please contact:

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Agenda for the Meeting of the Strategic Monitoring Committee

Membership

Chairman	Councillor PJ Edwards
Vice-Chairman	Councillor WLS Bowen
	Councillor PA Andrews
	Councillor ME Cooper
	Councillor AE Gray
	Councillor KG Grumbley
	Councillor TM James
	Councillor RI Matthews
	Councillor PM Morgan
	Councillor AT Oliver
	Councillor PJ Watts

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AGENDA

		Pages
1.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE To receive apologies for absence.	
2.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST To receive any declarations of interest by Members in respect of items on the Agenda.	
3.	MINUTES To approve and sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 July 2009.	1 - 8
4.	SUGGESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ON ISSUES FOR FUTURE SCRUTINY To consider suggestions from members of the public on issues the Committee could scrutinise in the future.	
5.	SCRUTINY REVIEW OF INFORMATION COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGY SERVICES –CABINET’S RESPONSE – PROGRESS REPORT To consider a progress report on Cabinet’s response to the scrutiny review of Information, Communication and Technology Services.	9 - 28

PUBLIC INFORMATION

HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

The Council has established Scrutiny Committees for Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing, Childrens' Services, Community Services, Environment, and Health. A Strategic Monitoring Committee scrutinises corporate matters and co-ordinates the work of these Committees.

The purpose of the Committees is to ensure the accountability and transparency of the Council's decision making process.

The principal roles of Scrutiny Committees are to

- Help in developing Council policy
- Probe, investigate, test the options and ask the difficult questions before and after decisions are taken
- Look in more detail at areas of concern which may have been raised by the Cabinet itself, by other Councillors or by members of the public
- "call in" decisions - this is a statutory power which gives Scrutiny Committees the right to place a decision on hold pending further scrutiny.
- Review performance of the Council
- Conduct Best Value reviews
- Undertake external scrutiny work engaging partners and the public

Formal meetings of the Committees are held in public and information on your rights to attend meetings and access to information are set out overleaf

PUBLIC INFORMATION

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Please note that the Committees can only scrutinise items which fall within their specific remit (see below). If a matter is raised which falls within the remit of another Scrutiny Committee then it will be noted and passed on to the relevant Chairman for their consideration.

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Remits of Herefordshire Council's Scrutiny Committees

Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing

*Statutory functions for adult social services including:
Learning Disabilities
Strategic Housing
Supporting People
Public Health*

Children's Services

Provision of services relating to the well-being of children including education, health and social care.

Community Services Scrutiny Committee

*Libraries
Cultural Services including heritage and tourism
Leisure Services
Parks and Countryside
Community Safety
Economic Development
Youth Services*

Health

*Planning, provision and operation of health services affecting the area
Health Improvement
Services provided by the NHS*

Environment

*Environmental Issues
Highways and Transportation*

Strategic Monitoring Committee

*Corporate Strategy and Finance
Resources
Corporate and Customer Services
Human Resources*

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- Inspect background papers used in the preparation of public reports for a period of up to four years from the date of the meeting. (A list of the background papers to a report is given at the end of each report). A background paper is a document on which the officer has relied in writing the report and which otherwise is not available to the public.
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HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

BROCKINGTON, 35 HAFOD ROAD, HEREFORD.

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HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of Strategic Monitoring Committee held at The Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford on Wednesday 15 July 2009 at 9.30 am

Present: Councillor PJ Edwards (Chairman)
Councillor WLS Bowen (Vice Chairman)

Councillors: PA Andrews, ME Cooper, AE Gray, KG Grumbley, TM James, RI Matthews, PM Morgan, AT Oliver and PJ Watts

In attendance: Councillors H Bramer (Cabinet Member - Resources), RJ Phillips (Leader of the Council) and PD Price (Cabinet Member ICT, Education and Achievement).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor JP French (Cabinet Member – Corporate and Customer Services and Human Resources)

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

The Chairman welcomed Councillors ME Cooper, AE Gray and PJ Watts as new members of the Committee.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2009 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4. SUGGESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ON ISSUES FOR FUTURE SCRUTINY

There were no suggestions from members of the public.

5. FINAL REVENUE AND CAPITAL OUTTURN 2008/09

The Committee considered the final revenue and capital budget outturn for 2008/09.

The Acting Head of Financial Services presented the report which had been considered by Cabinet on 4 June. She added that the Statement of Accounts for 2008/09 had now been approved by the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee.

She highlighted that the net revenue underspend on directorate budgets had been £42,000 with an overall revenue underspend of £249,000. This underspend had been transferred to the social care contingency reserve. She also drew attention to new reserves that had been created as set out on page 94 of the report.

There had been slippage on the capital programme with an outturn of £48.05 million against an original budget of £57.9 million. However, no conditional resources had been lost.

In the ensuing discussion the following principal points were made:

- It was proposed that the net revenue underspend be welcomed as evidence of good financial management, mindful of the level of projected overspend earlier in the financial year.
- In response to questions the Director of Resources and the Acting Head of Financial Services commented as follows:
 - It was confirmed that a legal opinion was still awaited on how rates underspends by voluntary aided schools could be used.
 - The cost of the Whitecross PFI scheme was being evened out over the 25 year contract by building up a reserve in the earlier years from underspends to offset costs in the latter part of the contract. The cash flow would become negative in 2020 requiring transfers from the reserve from that point. It was agreed to provide clarification on how the condition of the building was monitored to ensure that it was in good condition on the eventual transfer of the building to the Council and how this would be assessed.
 - Asked about the position on the Rotherwas Access Road the Director confirmed that the work ongoing to complete the financial arrangements was normal for a Scheme of that size.
 - The Director explained the action taken in respect of the Hereford City grounds maintenance contribution.
 - The creation of a new reserve to fund redundancy costs due to falling school rolls was discussed, noting reports of pressure on school places nationally. The Director reported that there was still a surplus of places in the County. The position was monitored and reflected in the School Organisation Plan.
 - The Director explained that the overspend within the Audit section was a result of expenditure on agency staff in relation to undertake specialist computer audit. A permanent post had now been established with a saving to the Council.

RESOLVED: That the net revenue underspend of £249,000 for 2008/09 be welcomed as evidence of good financial management, mindful of the level of projected overspend earlier in the financial year.

6. INTEGRATED CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Committee considered the end-year performance for 2008-09 against the Council's key indicators from the Corporate Plan 2008-11, the Local Area Agreement and the Herefordshire Community Strategy, and any other indicators where data is available against which a Red/Amber/Green rating or direction of travel judgement can be made.

The report had been considered by Cabinet on 4 June 2009. The Assistant Policy Officer presented the report. He also informed the Committee of a number of changes to the printed report reflected in changes to the headline figures in the report. He highlighted the following points:

- 57% of key indicators (Corporate Plan, LAA and HCS) achieved target (32% last year); 32% failed to achieve target (36% last year).

- 57% of indicators have improved, compared with 60% last year; 39% have fallen back (30% last year)
- 20 of the 30 LAA indicators achieved Year 1 targets; 8 are currently behind target.
- Performance highlights In terms of the Council's key priorities, were set out at paragraphs 5-6 of the report.

In the ensuing discussion the following principal points were made:

- Concern was expressed about performance against a number of indicators under the corporate priority of best possible life for every child. These included NIS 61 (the timeliness of placements of looked after children for adoption), and 221a and 221b (the percentage of young people getting a recorded or accredited outcome). The Assistant Policy Officer explained that although targets BVPIs 221a and b had not been achieved, Youth Services had been successful in engaging a larger number of young people in youth work than originally planned.
- In the updated figures provided to the Committee it was noted that a number of targets had moved from an amber rating to red (NI 60, 64, 65 and 67). In a number of areas it was also noted performance was well below that in the previous year. The Cabinet Member (ICT, Education and Achievement) commented on the need to note that some targets, some of which were set nationally were very demanding. The Deputy Chief Executive said that the new performance management system, on which the Committee would be briefed, would provide Members with a clearer understanding of performance and put it in context.
- It was proposed that in continuing to monitor performance the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee should prioritise some underperforming areas, for example, safeguarding
- In relation to target 115, substance misuse by young people, it was noted that the response to a survey had been very low and the figure quoted was an average of neighbouring authorities.
- Performance against the health and wellbeing corporate priority was also questioned, noting that many indicators were red.

RESOLVED:

- That**
- (a) performance for 2008-09 be noted taking account of the Committee's observations;**
 - (b) in continuing to monitor performance the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee should prioritise some underperforming areas, for example, safeguarding; and**
 - (c) the observations on performance as set out above be reported to Cabinet.**

7. PRESENTATION BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

The Leader of the Council made a presentation to the Committee making the following principal points:

The last year had been a challenging one with the significant impact of the credit crunch and the recession to be addressed.

The Council's performance had improved, the Audit Commission's assessment being that the Council was now improving well. He emphasised the importance of the Council and its strategic partners working even more closely together to achieve further improvement.

He outlined developments at Regional Level consequent upon the imminent demise of the West Midlands Regional Assembly. This included the establishment of the Board of Leaders which had sharpened delivery.

He had worked with the Regional Minister to maintain Herefordshire's profile and press the case for investment. There were 20 'Impact Investment Locations' across the region as priorities for investment in transport, housing, regeneration and economic development. Two benefitted the County directly: a rural housing development in Herefordshire and Shropshire and the Edgar Street Grid Development. Herefordshire was also recognised as a sub-regional growth centre.

He continued to work with other authorities to make the case to Government on the funding needs of rural areas.

Priorities for the year ahead included Children's Services. Safeguarding issues were a concern reflecting a national problem in recruiting social workers. Consideration also needed to be given the criteria that would govern the future of schools in the County. The recession would also impact on those neither in employment, education or training. The provision of adequate funding to Councils to enable them to take back the role of the defunct Learning and Skills Council would also be important.

The Audit Commission had recognised the improvement that had been made in adult services and the benefits being derived from the joint working with the Primary Care Trust. However, the provision of care to adults would also be a challenge.

The County's economy was another major issue. He considered the Rotherwas Access Road had made jobs safer on the industrial estate. He highlighted the importance of the provision of Broadband and the Edgar Street Grid (ESG) development. He expressed concern about the impact of the recession on the Market Towns suggesting there was a role for local councils in addressing this.

Housing including provision of temporary accommodation would also be challenging.

The expectation was that Local Government would face tight financial settlements in future. He considered the accommodation strategy and the Herefordshire Connects programme were examples of areas where the Council had already taken steps to prepare for that eventuality.

He requested that Scrutiny contribute constructively to addressing these significant challenges.

In the ensuing discussion the following principal points were made:

- The role of the Board of Leaders and the influence it could wield was discussed. The Leader commented that in his view it raised the profile of Local Government adding that an effective sub-regional link would also be important in the face of the likely restriction on public sector expenditure.
- The role of the ESG Board was discussed. The Leader commented that whilst the Board had been set up to oversee the ESG project, the Council and Advantage West Midlands were responsible for taking the key decisions on the development. He added that the project was a long-term one and as such would need to be adapted as it progressed to reflect changing circumstances.
- A Member commented on concerns being expressed by businesses and the public about the ESG project. The Leader observed that those who were critical of the proposal needed to consider the alternative. He was convinced of the importance of taking advantage of the public funding available for the project to ensure the continued development of the City.

The Committee noted the presentation.

8. PRESENTATION BY CABINET MEMBER (CORPORATE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES AND HUMAN RESOURCES)

The Cabinet Member (Corporate and Customer Services and Human Resources) was unable to attend the meeting.

The following principal issues were raised on her report:

- A Member expressed reservations about aspects of the section of the report on communications.
- A Member suggested the level of sickness absence needed to be addressed in the forthcoming year. It was noted in reply that this would be monitored through the new performance management system.
- In response to concern about the cost of parish elections which it was suggested discouraged democracy, the Leader said that an application was to be submitted by Herefordshire Association of Local Councils, with the Council's support, for Government funding for Parish Council elections in Herefordshire in 2011 as a pilot exercise.
- In response to criticism of the Council's response rates to correspondence the Deputy Chief Executive replied that work was underway to establish a Customer Insight Unit to ensure responses of a consistent quality were made in accordance with agreed timescales.

The Committee noted the report.

9. PRESENTATION BY CABINET MEMBER (RESOURCES)

The Committee received a presentation from the Cabinet Member (Resources) outlining the key elements of the Resources portfolio, progress to date and the challenges for the future.

The Cabinet Member highlighted the following points:

- An improvement in benefit claim processing times that had led the Audit Commission to rate the Benefits Team as excellent.
- Benefit and Business Rate collection rates remained high.
- Good financial management was reflected in the revenue underspend for 2008/09 and the action taken in response to the global financial crisis to protect the Council's position.
- The continued efforts to improve financial reporting, which the Audit Commission had rated as excellent.
- The Audit Commission's new Use of Resources evaluation would represent a harder test.
- Property Services was managing a large number of projects adding value to the Council.
- Increased demand for benefits advice and support.
- The prospect of tight financial settlements in future.
- The importance of work with Partner Organisations to develop shared services.

The Director of Resources commented that the recession was the dominant feature. Action was being taken to reduce time to pay suppliers. More reminders were having to be sent out to the Council's debtors. Reduction in investment income was a concern although steps had been taken to mitigate this where possible including rescheduling debt.

In the ensuing discussion the following principal points were made:

- Asked about the Accommodation Strategy the Director advised that in addition to delivering the back office project thorough area based reviews of accommodation were underway.
- In relation to benefit payments the Director said there was some evidence of people experiencing difficulties in making payments with more applications for discretionary relief. In response to concern expressed about the tone of some of the Council's correspondence the Director said he was aware of the issue and was addressing it.

The Committee noted the report.

10. PRESENTATION BY CABINET MEMBER (ICT, EDUCATION AND ACHIEVEMENT)

The Committee received a presentation from the Cabinet Member (ICT, Education and Achievement) reviewing past performance, identifying key issues and commenting on future plans.

He praised the Joint Director of ICT and his team for their work in undertaking a huge task. He highlighted the following issues:

- The work to upgrade the Thorn Data Centre to an appropriate standard.

- Support for Herefordshire Connects and the development of Frameworki, the new social care system.
- Reductions in carbon emissions from the data centre hardware through the process of virtualisation.
- The performance of the website team in having the website ranked as one of the top ten local authority sites.
- In 2009/10 Herefordshire Connects would be ongoing, the development of the Community Network and the integration with partner organisations.

In the ensuing discussion the following principal points were made:

- Asked about services provided to schools the Support and Development Manager replied that these were provided under individual service level agreements with schools. Regular termly meetings were held between Children's Services, ICT services and Head Teachers at which school needs were discussed.
- A Member expressed some concerns over the operation of Frameworki, referring to the absence of a finance package as part of the system. The Director of Resources acknowledged that integration of Frameworki with the Council's financial system was vital. The issue had been discussed at officer level. Further clarification of the concerns would be sought. In response to a further concern expressed about the Council's financial ICT system he said the acquisition of the new Agresso package and implementation of phase 2 would address this concern.
- It was agreed to provide a written reply in response to a question about the capability of the Planning ICT systems.
- A briefing note was requested on reductions in carbon emissions from the data centre hardware through the process of virtualisation and how this was calculated.
- Asked about progress on sharing information between the Council and NHS Herefordshire it was confirmed that work on integration was continuing.
- It was agreed to provide a written answer to the Committee on the operation of surveillance software by the Community Protection Team.

The Committee noted the report.

11. ASSET MANAGEMENT AND PROPERTY SERVICES

The Committee considered the review of Asset Management and Property Services and the proposed alignment of the work with the emerging Shared Services activity.

The report to Cabinet on 25 June was appended.

The Director of Resources noted that Cabinet had excluded Asset Management and Property Services from the negotiations over a service delivery contract with Amey PLC with a separate review of those services to be undertaken. The Strategic Monitoring Committee had requested in September 2008 that the Committee be re-consulted once that review was completed.

He reported that circumstances had changed since then, noting for example the development of the Shared Services project and he considered any decision on the

Asset Management and Property Services Division to be premature. A management action plan was in place and service improvements were being made.

He commented on the range of activities the Property Services Team needed to undertake, as described in the report. These included planned reviews of public sector asset transfers to community organisations and the national Carbon Reduction Commitment scheme, and work in connection with the Comprehensive Area Assessment.

In reply to a question about integration with the Primary Care Trust (PCT) the Director of Resources commented that the PCT had its own smaller property team. Some property advice and assistance was being provided by the Council to the PCT. The PCT had contributed staff resource to the Plough Lane accommodation project.

The Committee noted the report.

12. SCRUTINY ACTIVITY REPORT

The Committee noted the work being undertaken by the scrutiny committees.

13. WORK PROGRAMMES

It was noted that further informal work on the development of the work programme was being arranged.

The meeting ended at 12.30 pm

CHAIRMAN

MEETING:	STRATEGIC MONITORING COMMITTEE
DATE:	21 SEPTEMBER 2009
TITLE OF REPORT:	SCRUTINY REVIEW OF INFORMATION COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGY SERVICES – CABINET’S RESPONSE – PROGRESS REPORT
PORTFOLIO AREA:	ICT, EDUCATION AND ACHIEVEMENT

CLASSIFICATION: Open

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To consider a progress report on Cabinet’s response to the scrutiny review of Information, Communication and Technology Services.

Recommendation(s)

- THAT** (a) the report be noted, subject to any comments the Committee wishes to make;
- and
- (b) the Committee considers the content and frequency of any further progress reports it wishes to receive.

Introduction and Background

- In November 2008 this Committee approved the findings of the Scrutiny Review of ICT Services. The Committee considered the Executive’s response in March 2009 agreeing that a further report on progress in response to the Review then be made after six months with consideration then being given to the need for any further reports to be made. A progress report is appended.
- The Director of ICT comments that a number of actions have now been completed. A number of others, such as the importance of information security will always be ongoing. He therefore suggests that if the Committee wishes to receive a further progress report that report should focus on the following recommendations:

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Zack Pandor, Joint Director of ICT (Herefordshire Council / NHS Herefordshire) on (01432) 347611

- Completion of Data Centre Refurbishment works at Thorn (Recommendation b)
 - Completion of Community Network Contract Refresh (not a specific recommendation, though referenced in Recommendations c and h)
 - Completion of laptop encryption project (recommendation e)
 - Roll-out of council approved memory sticks (recommendation f)
 - Conclusion of HR policy on staff reimbursement of training costs, if they leave within a specified period (recommendation w)
4. One current ICT issue that did not form part of the recommendations of the ICT review is the development of both technical and governance ICT links between health and social care. Both the Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing Scrutiny Committee and the Health Scrutiny Committee have been considering this issue leading to some duplication. To overcome this it is proposed that progress reports on this issue should also be incorporated into future progress reports to this Committee on the ICT review.

Financial Implications

6 These are referred to in the appended report.

Appendices

- Progress report on the Executive's Response to the ICT review.

Background Papers

- None identified.

STRATEGIC MONITORING REVIEW OF ICT SERVICES, NOVEMBER 2008

#	Recommendation	Recommendation Response (and update)
a)	That the following recommendations which are outstanding from the ICT Review of 2006 be actioned without further delay: (recommendation references are to the original 2006 report)	Recommendations agreed and incorporated in other recommendations below.
	(a) Responsibility for the line management for all the authority's ICT staff should be placed within the ICT Services Division and implemented with immediate effect. To be actioned in conjunction with new recommendation (t).	See recommendation t
	(c) A review of the financing of ICT Services is undertaken examining the way directorates account for ICT spend, base budget for ICT Services, as well as the corporate funding of ICT programmes. To be actioned in conjunction with new recommendation (x).	See recommendation x
	(e) The existing ICT procurement policies and procedures, including taking positive action to address non-compliance, are enforced. Further that the appointment of the Strategic Procurement & Efficiency Review manager will progress the need to develop the council-wide procurement policy. To be actioned in conjunction with new recommendation (n).	See recommendation n
	(h) The responsibility for providing ICT training and its procurement be centralised under the management of the ICT service. As part thereof, the identification of ICT training needs should be formalised as part of induction and recorded. To be actioned in conjunction with new recommendations (s) and (u).	See recommendation s and u
	(l) A single website for all council services is developed ensuring consistent branding and access to services for all. Further that the website should consider the potential for a single, obvious directory of contacts for all council services To be actioned in conjunction with new recommendations (l) & (n).	See recommendation l and n

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Zack Pandor, Joint Director of ICT, on 01432 347601

#	Recommendation	Recommendation Response (and update)
	<p>(m) <i>The options for “growing own talent” through training and the use of a form of “golden handcuffs”, possibly by means of recouping the cost of training should the individual leave the authority within a given period, be explored by Human Resources. To be actioned in conjunction with new recommendations (v) and (w).</i></p>	<p>See recommendation v and w</p>
b)	<p>That the need for a fit for purpose, sustainable, secure and resilient replacement Data Centre at Rotherwas be addressed as a priority.</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted and in progress. Funding allocated within the capital programme.</p> <p>There is a project underway with the mandate to provide a fit for purpose data centre.</p> <p>Detailed feasibilities have been carried out and specifications for work completed. An electrical power supply issue has arisen which will require additional work; however, this will be done within the original budget.</p> <p>Hi-level costs have been provided by the contractors (Amey), currently awaiting detailed costs. Project completion date November 2009, this is later than originally planned (October 2009) and has been escalated to ensure sufficient priority is given to complete the project.</p>
c)	<p>The necessary investment required in order to build a new data centre should be leveraged by investigating the possibilities of using the Community Network to provide increased broadband provision to the Rotherwas area.</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted and in progress</p> <p>Broadband speeds from BT on the Rotherwas estate are quite variable, from 512Kbs to 2Mbs. Businesses requiring higher bandwidths have either been forced to use multiple connections or purchase leased lines from BT. AWM funding was used to subsidise a higher bandwidth wireless</p>

#	Recommendation	Recommendation Response (and update)
		<p>service, from Airband, for 3 years starting around 2003. The service ended after 5 years in March 2008 due to equipment failures and lack of funds to replace the equipment. Take-up of the service had been fairly low with only about 17 users out of 125 businesses on the estate, and this contributed to the service failure.</p> <p>As part of the project to build a new data centre at Rotherwas the use of the Community Network's fibre optic cable, or ducting, from Rotherwas to central Hereford was considered as a way of improving the broadband service for all businesses on the estate. However, it was eventually decided that this was likely to involve the Council in unacceptable additional responsibilities for support and policing the use of the network. An Invitation to Tender was therefore prepared and issued in July 2009 that simply required a minimum broadband service of 2Mbs to be provided at Rotherwas, with no constraints on the technology used.</p> <p>Ten responses to the tender have been received. Two proposals involved providing fibre to premises but offered no prices or timescales, one would use satellite broadband and the others some form of wireless broadband. These have been evaluated to produce a short list of 3 wireless providers, whose proposals are now being compared in detail. All these providers propose to use a BT fibre optic link to the Hereford exchange. A decision on the provider will be made by end September, and the initial capital grant funding will be provided from the Rotherwas Futures</p>

#	Recommendation	Recommendation Response (and update)
		<p>project. Production of the tender brief and the evaluation is being carried out by a consultant previously responsible for the West Midlands broadband improvement project for AWM. The intention is that the service provider chosen will be able to offer up to a 20Mbs broadband service with low contention and fast upload speeds, to meet demands from heavy users, as well as a cheaper entry level service at 2Mbs. Costs to users will be similar to business packages provided by BT, but will not be as cheap as residential services on offer. If there is demand from homes in the area a residential type service may be offered.</p> <p>Despite the planned provision of a wireless broadband service it is still the intention to lay ducting for fibre optic cabling as part of the infrastructure works to be carried out on the estate. This will allow businesses on new plots to obtain fibre optic connections at minimum cost, and may lead to some cheaper connection costs for other businesses on the estate. Multiple ducts will be laid to allow use by BT and alternative providers, which could include a future Community Network. If a future Community Network was opened up for business or public use it might still be used as the backhaul for the wireless service.</p> <p>A meeting with BT has been arranged (October 09) to explore wider provision of networks across the county.</p>

#	Recommendation	Recommendation Response (and update)
d)	<p>Principles of Information Security accreditation ISO27001 should be rolled out across the Council with certification being the eventual aim. Resource should be made available in each Directorate.</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted. To be resourced from within existing budgets. If full certification across entire council required, additional funding would be required.</p> <p>The remit of the current information security team is authority-wide and as such the work carried out by the team serves all areas. There is currently a lack of resource available within the central team, to carry out and sustain the required levels of training and awareness. This was highlighted to SMC with the suggestion that we should engage “information security champions” within each directorate. These ‘champions’ would then be the first point of contact for staff with information security, data protection or freedom of information issues. Support is required by all directors in order to engage appropriate staff as ‘champions’ and carrying this recommendation forward.</p> <p>‘Advanced’ Information Security training is now in place and being offered to directorates. During this training Information Security Champions are encouraged as key contacts for any issues.</p> <p>The scope of ISO27001 has been reviewed and extended to include new HC/PCT - ICT service joint team. Full accreditation across the new integrated team is likely to take 12 months.</p>

#	Recommendation	Recommendation Response (and update)
e)	<p>All Council owned laptops should be encrypted prior to commissioning.</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted and in progress. Budgets in place to deliver.</p> <p>All new laptops that are commissioned have the encryption solution as standard.</p> <p>As of beginning of September over 85% of the council's existing laptops have been encrypted (679 out of a total of 781). The plan is to have 100% by end of November 2009.</p> <p>The same solution is also being used across the NHS and a similar process of encryption is being undertaken.</p>
f)	<p>Only Council approved and supplied memory sticks should be used on Council equipment and this policy to be enforced by the use of remote tracking.</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted and in progress. Budgets in place to deliver.</p> <p>The Managing Media Devices Policy has been approved by JMT and the Information Management Group, and roll out is planned for early 2009</p> <p>A new process for applying for and rolling out approved secure memory sticks is in operation following a pilot phase.</p>
g)	<p>The Executive is urged to ensure that all Directorates/Services are fully aware of their responsibilities and the subsequent consequences of not putting in place appropriate planning in respect of their IT requirements taking into account at all times Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity.</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted and in progress. No additional resource requirement</p> <p>As a result of the efforts of the Council's/PCTs emergency planning teams, in response to the H1N1 (Swine) Flu situation, an extensive effort has been made across all services area in the two organisations to ensure that</p>

#	Recommendation	Recommendation Response (and update)
		<p>Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery plans are updated and tested. Emergency planning have sent communications to all directorate managers asking them to ensure they have considered their requirements for ICT in an emergency.</p> <p>Within ICT services two exercises have recently been carried out to test these plans.</p>
h)	<p>Use of the Community Network by the PCT should be strongly encouraged and supported.</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted and in progress.</p> <p>The PCT are now using the Community Network for their staff located at Bath Street and Plough Lane. There is also a link on the CNU for Council Staff located at Belmont (the PCT site). The potential use of the community network is now embedded into the decision making process for any accommodation related ICT connectivity decisions. This process will be phased as existing link contracts come to an end.</p> <p>A detailed plan for the linking the (HC and PCT) networks (whilst still maintaining appropriate access to applications and data) has been completed. Phase 1 of this plan to provide secure connectivity between the networks has been initiated and is expected to be complete by December 2009.</p> <p>To support this first phase of linking the networks, a formal funding bid is being submitted to the West Midlands Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership.</p>

#	Recommendation	Recommendation Response (and update)
		involvement in product evaluation is essential to sign-off any web interface compliance issues.
j)	<p>Wherever practical and reasonable web-based software applications should be AA compliant. If not practical an action plan to improve accessibility should be agreed.</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted and planning in progress, Implementation subject to available funding.</p> <p>New technology procurement:</p> <p>ICT (Web Service) will use the Connects 'Technology & Integrations Group' as a mechanism to maintain the AA compliance standard in the delivery of Connects and to establish accessibility mitigation action plans where required.</p> <p>ICT (WIMS) will use the IPG business case process as a mechanism to maintain the AA compliance standard in the delivery of technology projects and to establish accessibility mitigation action plans where required.</p> <p>This principle will be included as part of the Web strategy and Web based software will not be deployed unless AA compliance or accessibility mitigation action plans are established.</p>
k)	<p>The Council Intranet should be re-designed to make it easy for officers and members to use and promote good practice through a reliable and timely knowledge base, supporting effective decision-making.</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted and planning in progress. Implementation subject to available funding.</p> <p>June 2009 - This has been included in the Directorate and ICT Services Planning indicators and supporting actions. A staff user group will be used to support the redesign to make sure it is 'useful, usable and used' by staff. It must</p>

#	Recommendation	Recommendation Response (and update)
		<p>also take into account the digital brand policy required to support the HPS brand guidelines and the implications of working jointly with the PCT. Propose that a joint web strategy with the PCT will help in this process. Work on the strategy and digital brand policy is in progress and drafts will be available in January. Close working with the Records manager and Communications will also be required. ICT (WIMS) have requested that Communications lead on the naming of the intranet(s).</p> <p>September 2009 This will be incorporated into the Web Strategy action plan. The intranet InfoLibrary has been replaced by the new 'Sharepoint' Document Library and the search function by the new Sharepoint Search Centre. 78 contributors across the Council were trained and involved in the development of the document uploading screens and a test version was available to the whole council to comment on prior to going live.</p>
I)	<p>Education and school web sites should be consolidated.</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted and planning in progress Implementation subject to available funding.</p> <p>A work package to move core content to the council website is in progress – being led jointly by Communications and ICT.</p> <p>June 2009 - A number of additional work packages have also been identified but there is no budget currently in place to support the development work required. This work is competing with other organisational operational and strategic priorities as there is no dedicated resource.</p>

#	Recommendation	Recommendation Response (and update)
		<p>Consideration is being given to the creation of a temporary web developer post to support the transfer work, to be reviewed with regard to developing a business case if it can justify continuation of role.</p> <p>A risk is that the current schools extranet has proved insecure and that it needs to be replaced by a more robust extranet as part of this work package. Previously it was expected that the VLE would perform this function. Revised expectations mean that an alternative solution is required but no resource has yet been identified for this.</p> <p>September 2009 - Other options being considered are reviewing which documents are public and which restricted with view to creating an education portal on the Council website with most documents available to citizens and a second phase with restricted area. It is proposed that this work should be scheduled into the Web Strategy action plan.</p> <p>We are in the process of auditing all the school websites which are hosted by us and using our recently upgraded compliance software to scan security compliance for the 31 sites using the legacy content management system. This will enable us to identify priorities for action.</p> <p>Initial results have been obtained and further work is being done to put these results in context.</p>

#	Recommendation	Recommendation Response (and update)
m)	<p>Corporate ICT capacity should be increased, on an 'Invest to Save' basis, to allow for development work e.g. web site, intranet.</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted Implementation subject to available funding.</p> <p>Implementation of any new system (web or otherwise) needs to pass strict business case guidelines to ensure stated benefits are obtained.</p> <p>Within ICT services, an 'invest to save budget' has been set aside from normal operational budgets, to optimise future revenue expenditure.</p>
n)	<p>The Executive should make it clear across the authority that all ICT services and equipment should be procured either through or in consultation with ICT Services. This includes the development of all web sites, which will be used to deliver Council Information and services so as to ensure compliance to Council and National Policies.</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted and in progress. Funding not required.</p> <p>A new governance structure has been implemented to bring together the work of Connects, ICT Strategy and shared services. This will ensure that all ICT-related developments are channelled through one overarching approval mechanism. This will ensure that data and other standards are complied with, best use is made of existing systems prior to procuring new ones and that investment decisions are made in the context of an overall ICT strategy and not-adhoc.</p> <p>For those solutions that were put in place prior to the current arrangements being applied, a process of applying 'retrospective business cases' has commenced.</p>

#	Recommendation	Recommendation Response (and update)
o)	<p>The importance of Information Security and the consequences of non-compliance should be highlighted to all schools.</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted and in progress Funding not required.</p> <p>As at December 2008 members from the information security team have carried out briefing sessions on information security at 3 primary school IT co-ordinators meetings.</p> <p>June 2009 - A member of the information security team now sits on the schools e-safety board.</p> <p>We are in the process of auditing all the school websites which are hosted by us and using our recently upgraded compliance software to scan security compliance for the 31 sites using the legacy content management system. This will enable us to identify priorities for action.</p> <p>Initial results have been obtained and further work is being done to put these results in context.</p>
p)	<p>The link-up to JANET (The Joint Academic Network) is supported and it is urged that phase II of this project be completed as a priority.</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted and in progress. Resources in place.</p> <p>June 2009 - The project to link to Ja.Net is complete</p>
q)	<p>It should be communicated to schools that there is an imminent major upgrade to Broadband provision explaining the advantages that this will give them.</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted; action completed. Resources not required</p> <p>Communication went out to schools 18th Nov via Children's Services</p>

#	Recommendation	Recommendation Response (and update)
		Completed
r)	<p>That a further review be undertaken of the current web site filtering process in place in schools.</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted and in progress. Funding not required.</p> <p>June 2009 - Work on this is underway in conjunction with Children's Services staff.</p> <p>July 2009 – Schools have established an e safety board which determines which sites should be filtered.</p>
s)	<p>It is strongly recommended that all school employees that connect to the Council network have to attend ICT Induction training as proposed for Council employees in recommendation (u).</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted and in progress. Funding not required.</p> <p>June 2009 - This will be raised at the termly Schools ICT liaison meeting. As part of the Council Induction an ICT induction is being developed.</p>
t)	<p>Immediate action be taken to clarify the provision of ICT services to schools and that clear roles and responsibilities are identified between ICT and CYPD.</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted and in progress. Resourcing implications being worked through.</p> <p>Aligned SLA's formats between schools and CYPD / ICT and clarified the 'as is' ICT CYPD responsibility split regarding the web server.</p> <p>Schools representatives review ICT SLA's and the changes each year prior to them being issued.</p>

#	Recommendation	Recommendation Response (and update)
		<p>100% of schools SLAs have been returned for this year.</p> <p>The numbers of schools taking ICT support are:</p> <p>SIMS (schools management system): 100 Broadband provision: 101 Technical Support: 20</p>
u)	<p>All Council personnel and Members should have mandatory IT training at commencement of employment or on taking office. The level of training required should be assessed by use of questionnaire. ICT Training should be a matter of Continuous Professional Development across the authority.</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted and being progressed Funding not required.</p> <p>Members have access to ICT training, approx. two drop-in sessions per month (at Brockington), arranged and funded through member services.</p> <p>All new starters are now given basic Information security awareness training.</p> <p>Basic Skills IT training currently available through the technical college, this training has also been offered to Members.</p>

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v)	<p>Human Resources and Job Evaluation should revisit IT salary scales taking into account the relevant market forces as well as the financial consequences for the Council of not being able to recruit into key positions. The adoption of a pay scale for technical ICT staff may be appropriate.</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted. The issue has been referred to HR to advise on options available within the relevant equal pay legislation and frameworks, and to identify the financial implications of those options.</p> <p>Within the council, there is flexibility able to be applied to recruit and retain staff with key technical skills. Where skills are in short supply and recruitment is problematic, alternative sourcing of skills should be sought (e.g. using specialist suppliers, sharing with other agencies etc.)</p> <p>The integration with the NHS ICT services has strengthened both teams' capabilities.</p> <p>The current employment market situation is also attracting a broad range and greater number of job seekers.</p>
w)	<p>Consideration should be given to a policy whereby staff are asked to reimburse to the Council a specified percentage of training costs if they decide to leave the Council's employment within a specified period of time from receiving the training.</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted.</p> <p>HR is currently drafting a policy on study support and this recommendation will be addressed in that policy.</p>
x)	<p>The Executive should ensure that the proposal that Corporate ICT Services be funded from base budget from April 2009, be properly reflected and taken account of in budget proposals.</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted and in progress.</p> <p>Additional funding not required.</p> <p>Completed. From April 2009, ICT Services has operated from a base budget.</p>
y)	<p>Subject to the Review being approved, the Executive's response to the Review, including an action plan, is reported to the first available meeting of the</p>	<p>Recommendation accepted.</p> <p>Funding not required.</p>

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Zack Pandor, Joint Director of ICT, on 01432 347601

	Committee after the Executive has approved its response.	This will be scheduled.
z)	A further report on progress with respect to the Review be made after six months with consideration then being given to the need for any further reports to be made.	Recommendation accepted, Funding not required. This will be scheduled.

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