

Scrutiny Review of ICT Services – Executive Action Plan Progress Report

1. General Update

Since publication of the report in December 2006, and the response by the executive on 22nd March 2007, there have been some significant changes within the ICT organisation.

Since April 2007 a review of the ICT Structure has been undertaken. This has resulted in a total of 22 posts either being deleted from the establishment list, contracts not extended or posts integrated. This work is continuing with robust challenges to all vacant posts.

Information Security Accreditation

The current ongoing Information Security Accreditation project will certify ICT and Modern Records to the International Standard of ISO27001. This standard is mandated by central Government for information exchange and sharing between other Government organisations, and is a prerequisite for closer working with the Primary Care Trust. The project commenced in May 2007 and is due to be completed by the end of November this year and will give Herefordshire Council ICT and Modern Records Services accreditation for ISO27001.

Working to a standard framework utilised by Red Island (the specialist agency in this area) we have:-

- carried out 70+ interviews with staff from ICT and modern records to determine exactly what computer equipment, applications, paper files and other information assets are required to undertake their day-to-day duties.
- rated the information assets in terms of their availability, confidentiality and integrity according impact on the organisation following unauthorised information modification, breach of security or loss of the asset.
- updated the Information Security Management System (ISMS) and all related policy documentation (such as e-mail usage, internet usage etc.)
- produced a Statement of Applicability (SOA)
- compiled management reporting Information
- amended or created processes and procedures where required to mitigate against identified information security risks

Risk Assessment and Risk Treatment Plans required for the Stage 1 external accreditation audit, which will be taking place during late October being worked on.

Other local authorities that have already gained the standard include Hampshire County Council, Wandsworth Council, Haringey Council and Cherwell District Council.

The intention is to roll the standard out across the rest of the authority once accreditation has been achieved for ICT Services and Modern Records.

ICT Audit

Herefordshire Council had not conducted a physical audit of its ICT Hardware since 1999, which was an undertaking for the year 2000 compliance project shortly after the formation of the unitary authority, though the Hedra report of 2005 indicated over 2,000 PC's were in use in the authority.

The purpose of that audit was to establish what equipment was being used in the council and its vulnerability to the Y2K bug. It did not provide an inventory of equipment being used within each Directorate. As the ICT Services charging model is based on this information, up until now ICT have had to rely on remote administration tools (such as LANDesk) to obtain this information, the accuracy of which could not always be verified.

It was identified by ICT management that a much-needed physical audit of ICT hardware across the authority was required, so that charging could be accurately maintained. Four students were employed during the summer holidays 2007 to carry out this task. They visited every desk in the authority, recording all ICT equipment people were using. This information was recorded into a database, which will subsequently be migrated into SAP so all equipment in use can accurately be recoded against the correct team and cost codes.

Initial findings have shown that extra revenue would be generated by equipment that was not being charged for prior to the audit. This is subject to further discussion with CMB, through the Performance Improvement Challenge (PIC) process currently underway, together with the continued focus on reducing unit costs.

2 Recommendations; Executive's Response; Progress Report

- (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.**

Executive's Response - March 2007

The Corporate Management Board has already agreed this position in principle. Although the recommendation makes specific reference to staffing in one directorate there is a need to separate out what is effectively service considerations and technical support and make adjustments to line management arrangements accordingly. In Children's and Young People's Services this implies a separation of curriculum and technical support. For

each area of the Council where staff are involved in some technical activity this clarification needs to be sought and will form part of overall realignment through the Herefordshire Connects programme.

Progress Update – September 2007

Recommendation No. (a) - Line Management of ICT staff

- (a) An initial review of ICT Services itself has taken place. Herefordshire Connects will impact on the style and type of service offered in the future, and this recommendation will be taken forward as part of those considerations. However greater clarity of the roles, particularly in Children & Young Peoples Services is developing as a result of the work so far.

- (b) **Consideration is given to the control for ICT expenditure being placed within the ICT Services Division subject to overall responsibility being held by the Director of Resources.**
- (c) **A review of the financing of ICT Services is undertaken examining the way directorates account for ICT spend subject to recommendation (b) above, base budget for ICT Services, as well as the corporate funding of ICT programmes.**

Executive's Response – March 2007

Overall responsibility for management of the budget arrangements for the Council rests with the Director of Resources in her role as section 151 officer. Within that framework the Director of Corporate and Customer Services has overall responsibility for the budget contained within the directorate and under financial standing orders needs to manage those as a whole. The commitment to the Herefordshire Connects programme has already placed an embargo on any further ICT development and procurement activity (with the exception of desktops). There is an exceptions process, which has been overseen to date by the Herefordshire Connects Board and will shortly shift to the Information Policy Group. In future therefore the expenditure on ICT platforms and software will be subject to the same rigours as at present and signed off in a business case approach demonstrating clear benefits on how these will be realised. More specifically in relation to the ICT budgets – corporate ICT projects and the trading account, the Director of Corporate and Customer Services has agreed with the Director of Resources that a fresh look needs to be taken at how these are set out, managed and accounted for.

The ICT projects budget needs to be focussed on support to the implementation of the Herefordshire Connects programme. To date much of it has been used to supplement external funding for web services, to implement

necessary email upgrades and to develop a corporate approach to GIS and to put in place server replacement capacity. A more fundamental review is required in respect of the trading account and the extent to which there is sufficient investment in this area and the need for that to be reflected and accepted as part of the Policy Improvement Cycle.

Progress Update – September 2007

Recommendation No (b) & (c) - ICT expenditure and funding

(b/c) A zero based budgeting exercise has been carried out by staff in the Resource Directorate and the ICT & Customer Services Division. ICT budgets have been separated from corporate services and the Corporate Programmes team, and in each case a major review and challenge of the establishment is resulting in revised projections from those reported in the month 4 IPR to be considered by Cabinet on 20th September. For example on the SLA account a substantial number of posts have been deleted or functions integrated.

Former ICT finance staff are now line-managed by the Director of Resources.

(d) **A council-wide policy should be developed and implemented that provides for greater standardisation of desktops and server infrastructure and that ICT Services should have the responsibility for the management and control of this policy ensuring that it provides equipment and software to meet the requirements of the post rather than the wishes of the individual. Further, that this policy provides all ICT assets are corporate and not the possessions of individual services or staff. In effect this means that ICT assets will not be relocated with individuals but rather that individuals will be relocated to existing assets.**

Executive's Response – March 2007

The authority needs to consider provision such as the community network and other infrastructure as a corporate asset and deal with it accordingly.

The call for greater standardisation for both servers and desktops is welcomed. The complexity of the server infrastructure and desktop configurations currently in use has long been a source of frustration and the support thereof takes up a disproportionate amount of capacity. The ICT Strategy also sets out the need to standardise. Work is already well advanced on server consolidation as referred to above. In terms of desktops, BT is currently conducting an eleven-week analysis of the requirements of specific job roles. This will not prescribe the technology to be used but will set out a range of options. Clearly the move to standardisation also involves consideration of the way in which ICT is financed in the future because, for a transitional period at least, there will be a 'gap', which needs to be managed and ultimately a rolling programme of replacement every three to four years. Again this will need to be picked up in conjunction with the funding review.

Progress Update – September 2007

ICT Services are currently progressing desktop standardisation as follows:

- Evaluating standard desktops computers to determine suitability
- Carrying out a physical asset audit to determine what computers are in the authority
- Compiling figures on the age of computers and when replacements will be required
- Starting the process of consolidating all desktop spend into a single corporate budget managed by ICT Services
- Reached agreement on a 4 year desktop replacement cycle
- Identified LANDesk as a critical dependency in enabling both Herefordshire Connects and the standardisation of desktops which is being progressed though the exceptions process.

The report provided by BT looked at the feasibility of flexible working (badged 'Worksmart' by this Council) and concluded this was feasible given the research and analysis carried out. However, given the progress already made with Herefordshire Connects and its longer-term programme of work, it was recommended that Worksmart be incorporated into Herefordshire Connects.

BT found quite a number of services eager and willing to take on Worksmart as they saw huge benefits in embracing that mode of working. BT recommended that these should be picked up as possible quick wins and introduced as appropriate within the Herefordshire Connects programme. Longer term it should look at a wider rollout of Worksmart.

Obviously these recommendations need to be underpinned to enable suitable technology consistent with the Herefordshire Connects programme and resourced.

- (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.**

Executive's Response – March 2007

The principle on non-compliance will require any proposals to purchase outside of agreed guidelines to be thrown back and to be the subject of action within the directorates. Since being appointed the Strategic Procurement and Efficiency Review Manager has already set about reviewing the council's procurement policies including that for ICT.

Progress Update – September 2007

The ICT procurement policies and procedures are being examined and reviewed to ensure consistency and compliance with the council's procurement strategy.

Non-compliance will be reduced through on line ordering on a council wide basis with preferred suppliers loaded on to the system. These will be the only suppliers that can be bought from.

- (f) Consideration is given to dedicated public relations support to the Head of ICT and the means by which this might be delivered.**

Executive's Response – March 2007

The Council has a corporate communications team, which increasingly offers support for specific directorates on the basis of an agreed communication strategy. This has already been implemented successfully within the Children and Young Peoples Directorate and a similar package is being deployed to ICT Services. There is also work to be done internally in improving communication from ICT to other customers, for example schools and members, and there are a number of mechanisms already in hand, for example ICT liaison meetings with schools and the review of ICT support to members which can assist this development.

Progress Update – September 2007

Recommendation No. (f) - Public Relations support

- (f) A draft ICT Communication Strategy has been progressed by the Corporate Communications team and staff in ICT Services and is currently out to consultation with staff in ICT. It is not intended to provide dedicated ICT Communications Support, as the new structure includes sufficient capacity to respond to communication issues or through Corporate Communications.**

- (g) As part of the corporate review of SLAs the ICT Service ensures that the ICT SLAs are clearly worded, and describe clearly the range of services to be provided, charges and any relevant financial arrangements and are communicated to all relevant officers and issued no later than the start of each financial year moving forward.**

Executive's Response – March 2007

CMB has commissioned a working group of SMT members to conduct a review of all SLA's within the authority. The interim report is expected in May and comprises representatives of not just the providers of support services through SLA's, but also the services that receive them.

Progress Update – September 2007

Recommendation No. (g) - SLA's

- (g) SLAs have represented a challenge across the council. A pilot for a corporate approach has been agreed by CMB for October and November 2007, and following evaluation implementation will take place in April 2008. ICT services are covered by this arrangement. However, draft standards for the ICT element will be available to Directors and Heads of Service in the Council in October 2007, and much of the relationship building necessary to support effective implementation is ongoing.

- (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.**

Executive's Response – March 2007

Identification of ICT training needs will be derived from a number of sources. In part there is expectation of the authority on officers to use the equipment they are provided with effectively and to set out clear levels that might be achieved. It is recommended that the induction programme for all new staff includes a compulsory module on ICT, as it does for Diversity. It will also be a requirement to set out specific training programmes to accompany the introduction of new hardware and software systems. This again will form a significant element in the implementation of Herefordshire Connects. It will also be necessary to review the training needs that arise as a result of SRD interviews and capture these across the Council so that appropriate remedial actions can be taken. ICT Services needs to work with the HR training and development function to identify and then provide a suitable response to the requirements.

Progress Update – September 2007

The ICT Training Team within ICT Services proactively manages corporate ICT training. The capacity on European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) workshops had been increased 3 fold, reducing frustration for officers by offering more spaces and greatly increasing examination completion rate.

Having the Corporate ICT training budget reduced by 19% for 2007/2008 has meant that less funded ICT training courses can now be offered to officers, despite ICT Training being one of the top training requests during SRD reviews.

Specific training programmes have been created for new hardware and software. These include SAP - CRM training (Used in the Info shops), Outlook Calendar Training, Blackberry Devices and the Members ICT Induction. All of these courses have received very positive feedback and

have been added to the range of services coordinated and delivered by the ICT Training Team. The ICT Training team also support and oversee the training activities of the other ICT departments providing support and examples of best practice.

The ICT Training team fully support the formulisation of an ICT Induction for all new staff. Benefits of an ICT Induction would include: Better communication between staff and departments e.g. email, sharing calendars and meeting requests, more efficient use of staff time, less calls to helpdesk, better understanding of security policies and best practice.

ICT Training Resources - ICT Services have a fully equipped training facility able to cater for up to 24 learners at any one time. One full time ICT Training Officer and one full time ICT Training Coordinator are also in place. It has been agreed that ICT will form part of Corporate Induction.

- (i) **The options for offering a variety of income generating services to local partners not covered under existing SLAs are explored.**

Executive's Response – March 2007

The executive supports the view that in the future there may well be opportunities for income generation but this stage recommends attention be focussed on getting the 'ship in order' first.

Progress Update – September 2007

Recommendation No. (i) - Offering of services to local partners - To be reviewed in 2008,

- (i) However work is being progressed on identifying linkages with the PCT which will be necessary for the PST and enhanced partnership working with Health consistent with legislation.

- (j) **Improvement to the implementation of project management throughout the authority continues and the interface between Corporate Programmes and project delivery within Directorates is strengthened.**

Executive's Response – March 2007

Since the ICT Review commenced the Council has implemented a set of governance arrangements for its transformation programme. This includes project boards to oversee key developments in accommodation, adult services, children and young people services, customer services, workforce

strategy and Herefordshire Connects. All of these are allocated project managers and are being quality assured to make sure they meet principles of Prince2 project management. In addition CMB has endorsed the necessity for other projects to ensure adequate project management arrangements and this will form part of the project approval process. There is an issue of how this resource is financed in the future and consideration should be given to it being clearly identified as a cost in the project approval process.

Progress Update – September 2007

The Corporate Programmes service has been repositioned in the Council in June 2007, transferring from the Information, Technology & Customer Services service to the Director of Corporate & Customer Services. This to ensure that there is closer alignment with Herefordshire Connects and other projects and programmes in the Council. It reflects the continued and growing importance of business change and project management for the council and to ensure that the service is positioned as a 'corporate' resource. The aim is to be a 'Centre of Excellence/Competence' on Programme & Project Management for the Council – developing and applying good practice, project management expertise, appropriate tool sets and supporting methods. The service will be restructured over the latter part of 2007/08 to match provision to the authority's needs and to allow a development approach based 'grow your own'.

A Project Assurance manager has also been appointed, with two key responsibilities; firstly, for ensuring that the Council's Programme and Projects portfolio is monitored and reported in accordance with recognised quality standards, procedures and policies. Secondly, to develop and implement best practice in the methods, processes and procedures used by the Corporate Programmes Service.

The business case approval process for projects includes consideration and inclusion of project management requirements.

(k) That the feedback from schools be analysed and an improvement plan prepared to address the many concerns identified, with a view to ICT Services becoming the preferred provider of services to schools funded and maintained by the Local Authority.

Executive's Response – March 2007

The Council has now implemented a series of ICT liaison meetings between representatives of the high schools and primary schools, Corporate and Customer Services (ICT Services) and the Children and Young Peoples Directorate. An independent satisfaction survey was commissioned through HEDRA and feedback provided to the high schools in early December. Feedback has recently been given to the primary schools. ICT Services had already implemented some of the recommendations including, for example,

regular report back on incident reporting and set out a clear timetable for discussion of 07/08 SLA's with schools.

The other main focus of this activity to date has been on piloting a remote access solution required by the DFES by 2008, in a high school and a primary school. That is due to report back on the 20th March. There has been continued involvement from both pilot schools in that activity. In addition, the remainder of schools have been kept up to date directly with progress on the project.

The recommendations contained in chapter seven of the ICT review report has been shared with schools and a request made to work with the authority in building the improvement plan. This was agreed at the last meeting. Nonetheless it is important to recognise that the relationship with schools will never be a straightforward and easy one to pursue and that the Council will need to work hard to ensure that any communications to schools is effectively disseminated to all.

Progress Update – September 2007

A draft SLA was issued to two high schools on time as agreed, though no representatives from the primary schools came forward. Comments were taken on board and the 2007/08 schools SLA issued with agreed time scales. The majority of schools returned the signed SLA's by the agreed date the current number of schools taking support from ICT Services is for SIMS support 94 schools, plus and additional 4 taking FMS support only. The number of schools taking technical support is 29.

Following an independent report the decision was taken to separate the corporate and schools networks using VRF-Lite (virtual routing and forwarding) so that the schools can implement their own remote access (RAS) solution. The project is on schedule with the piloting of the VRF-Lite infrastructure at John Kyrle and Luston Primary w/c 3rd Sept 2008. The solution does however pass on the risk for managing the security to the schools who will need to support the systems themselves. This will be monitored carefully by Children & Young Peoples services to ensure that the primary schools can cope with those requirements.

At the most recent liaison meeting schools raised the issue of 'chat room type' facilities and the implications of eg Face Book, Bebo.

- (I) 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.**

Executive's Response – March 2007

This principle is already accepted and some websites have migrated. The executive accepts that this process needs to be speeded up and will request a timetable for completion of the exercise.

Progress Update – September 2007

Progress is being made on this recommendation - the following steps have been taken:

3 supporting policy documents have been approved by IPG.

- Herefordshire Council corporate web templating requirements policy
- Corporate design standards for digital content
- Copyright of resources placed on the e-Gateway

A list of external websites known to ICT Services has been compiled as a precursor to an audit of all directorate sponsored websites that are used for Council services delivery

Business cases are being developed in conjunction with Client Account Managers (CAMs) for the migration of:

- Historic Herefordshire Online
- Education website
- Libraries website

Where only content is involved work has already begun to move this across to the Council website.

The process will be speeded up if agreement is reached that the functionality migration work is undertaken by Web and Information Management Services as non-rechargeable as part of the service level if agreement with ICT Services.

The online forms tool used for the intranet is being enabled for the external website to begin to support interactive online forms for services.

Work is progressing on the web search tool and application of metadata to create a full directory of Council service web pages on the Council website. A piece of work to ensure the inclusion of standard contact information on these pages will support this recommendation. The migration of all services onto the Council website will enable the service list to be completed and maintained automatically. This would also be used to automate provision of the services list to LocalDirectGov.

Work will commence shortly on reviewing the relationship between the technical infrastructure and the quality and degree of content. It is proposed to work more closely with corporate communications on content management. Whilst technically the web site scores strongly (top 10) in the monthly Site Morse updating content remains the responsibility of individual services.

- (m) 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.

Executive's Response – March 2007

The review team was right to highlight the difficulty in recruiting to some posts in this area and the challenges faced in keeping staff once they have undertaken training and possess highly marketable and sometimes scarce skills. This is not unique to Herefordshire. Work is already underway between HR and ICT Services on developing a recruitment and retention strategy for ICT Services. This was highlighted in the workforce strategy priorities for 07/08.

Progress Update – September 2007

The use of "golden handcuffs" is currently under review by the HR team - if this does become Council policy it would obviously have to be driven right across all directorates and departments.

A recruitment and retention strategy for ICT has been developed with the initial focus being on the recruitment of some critical roles - we have successfully recruited 3 network engineers, 1 senior network engineer and an information security monitoring officer. It has been agreed by the Acting Head of ICT that recruitment of a further information security monitoring officer can proceed.

Turnover figures for ICT for the period 1st Jan 07 to date are reported at 7 leavers (7.42%).

(There are two people yet to start therefore this figure will reduce). This figure is in line with the authority's annual turnover figure of 7.02% for the period July 06 to June 07. The reported figure for Corporate and Customer Services for the same period was 10.75%.

Both Technical Services Manager and Operations Manager posts were filled by contractors - this position has now changed with an existing employee having been given the opportunity to take on the role as Technical Services Manager for an interim period. Other ICT employees have also been given the opportunity to progress. The Information Security Manager has taken on Data Centre Manager responsibilities and Web & Knowledge Management posts have also been joined. The Operations Manager post has not been filled. It is anticipated that the ability to move within the organisation will provide further motivation for staff and their teams to use skills gained within the council on a continuing basis for the council.

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6th September 2007