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*

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	(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. **To be actioned in conjunction with new recommendations (v) and (w).**	*See recommendation v and w*
b)	**That the need for a fit for purpose, sustainable, secure and resilient replacement Data Centre at Rotherwas be addressed as a priority.**	Recommendation accepted and in progress. Funding allocated within the capital programme. There is a project underway with the mandate to provide a fit for purpose data centre. 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. 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.
c)	**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.**	Recommendation accepted and in progress 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

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		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. 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. 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

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		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. 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. A meeting with BT has been arranged (October 09) to explore wider provision of networks across the county.

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d)	**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.**	Recommendation accepted. To be resourced from within existing budgets. If full certification across entire council required, additional funding would be required. 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. '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. 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.

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e)	**All Council owned laptops should be encrypted prior to commissioning.**	Recommendation accepted and in progress. Budgets in place to deliver. All new laptops that are commissioned have the encryption solution as standard. 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. The same solution is also being used across the NHS and a similar process of encryption is being undertaken.
f)	**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.**	Recommendation accepted and in progress Budgets in place to deliver. The Managing Media Devices Policy has been approved by JMT and the Information Management Group, and roll out is planned for early 2009 A new process for applying for and rolling out approved secure memory sticks is in operation following a pilot phase.
g)	**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.**	Recommendation accepted and in progress. No additional resource requirement 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

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		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. Within ICT services two exercises have recently been carried out to test these plans.
h)	**Use of the Community Network by the PCT should be strongly encouraged and supported.**	Recommendation accepted and in progress. 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. 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. 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.

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i)	**The web site must be improved making it transactional (i.e. the ability to complete and submit forms on-line.)**	Recommendation accepted and scoping work being planned. Implementation subject to available funding. In the latest (2009) 'Better Connected' audit of all local government websites, our website was rated as 'Transactional'. This is an improvement on last year where it was rated as 'Content Plus'. Although a number of forms have been introduced to the Council website such as Jobs Online and the wheelie bin selection form, the current web forms architecture is not robust enough to deploy widespread interactive forms at this point. Development of this capacity is required to support this recommendation and Service/Directorate objectives such as the Better Connected audit and Equality Impact Assessment action plan indicators. In addition this capacity is required to support the Connects public facing forms provision and Children's services common application process for the 14 – 19 prospectus objectives in 2010 (a pilot is being run in early 2009). This requirement has been included in the ICT and Directorate plans and work has been done to design the topology.
	The customer interface should be AA compliant.	Recommendation accepted and in progress. ICT (Web Services) will use the Connects 'Technology & Integrations Group' as a mechanism to maintain the AA compliance standard in the delivery of Connects. All non-connects systems have to pass through a rigorous business case process to obtain approval. Web Services

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		involvement in product evaluation is essential to sign-off any web interface compliance issues.
j)	**Wherever practical and reasonable web-based software applications should be AA compliant. If not practical an action plan to improve accessibility should be agreed.**	Recommendation accepted and planning in progress, Implementation subject to available funding. New technology procurement: 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. 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. 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.
k)	**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.**	Recommendation accepted and planning in progress. Implementation subject to available funding. 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

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		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). 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.
l)	**Education and school web sites should be consolidated.**	Recommendation accepted and planning in progress Implementation subject to available funding. A work package to move core content to the council website is in progress – being led jointly by Communications and ICT. 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.

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		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 can justify continuation of role.
		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.
		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.
		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.
		Initial results have been obtained and further work is being done to put these results in context.

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m)	**Corporate ICT capacity should be increased, on an 'Invest to Save' basis, to allow for development work e.g. web site, intranet.**	Recommendation accepted Implementation subject to available funding. Implementation of any new system (web or otherwise) needs to pass strict business case guidelines to ensure stated benefits are obtained. Within ICT services, an 'invest to save budget' has been set aside from normal operational budgets, to optimise future revenue expenditure.
n)	**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.**	Recommendation accepted and in progress. Funding not required. 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. For those solutions that were put in place prior to the current arrangements being applied, a process of applying 'retrospective business cases' has commenced.

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o)	**The importance of Information Security and the consequences of non-compliance should be highlighted to all schools.**	Recommendation accepted and in progress Funding not required. 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. June 2009 - A member of the information security team now sits on the schools e-safety board. 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. Initial results have been obtained and further work is being done to put these results in context.
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.**	Recommendation accepted and in progress. Resources in place. June 2009 - The project to link to Ja.Net is complete
q)	**It should be communicated to schools that there is an imminent major upgrade to Broadband provision explaining the advantages that this will give them.**	Recommendation accepted; action completed. Resources not required Communication went out to schools 18th Nov via Children's Services

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		Completed
r)	**That a further review be undertaken of the current web site filtering process in place in schools.**	Recommendation accepted and in progress. Funding not required. June 2009 - Work on this is underway in conjunction with Children's Services staff. July 2009 – Schools have established an e safety board which determines which sites should be filtered.
s)	**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).**	Recommendation accepted and in progress. Funding not required. 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.
t)	**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.**	Recommendation accepted and in progress. Resourcing implications being worked through. Aligned SLA's formats between schools and CYPD / ICT and clarified the 'as is' ICT CYPD responsibility split regarding the web server. Schools representatives review ICT SLA's and the changes each year prior to them being issued.

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		100% of schools SLAs have been returned for this year. The numbers of schools taking ICT support are: SIMS (schools management system): 100 Broadband provision: 101 Technical Support: 20
u)	**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.**	Recommendation accepted and being progressed Funding not required. Members have access to ICT training, approx. two drop-in sessions per month (at Brockington), arranged and funded through member services. All new starters are now given basic Information security awareness training. Basic Skills IT training currently available through the technical college, this training has also been offered to Members.

v)	**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.**	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. 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.) The integration with the NHS ICT services has strengthened both teams' capabilities. The current employment market situation is also attracting a broad range and greater number of job seekers.
w)	**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.**	Recommendation accepted. HR is currently drafting a policy on study support and this recommendation will be addressed in that policy.
x)	**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.**	Recommendation accepted and in progress. Additional funding not required. Completed. From April 2009, ICT Services has operated from a base budget.
y)	**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**	Recommendation accepted. Funding not required.

	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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