

ICT PROGRAMME OF WORKS

Head of Service:	Judith Doney, Head of Digital and Service Transformation
Wards affected:	(All Wards);
Urgent Decision?(yes/no)	No
If yes, reason urgent decision required:	
Appendices (attached):	Appendix 1 – 2022-23 ICT Roadmap Appendix 2 – 2020-24 ICT Roadmap

Summary

This report provides details of the strategic plans for a rolling programme of ICT works in line with the Four Year Corporate Plan and the funding details for the 2022/23 financial year.

Recommendation (s)

The Committee is asked to:

- (1) Agree funding of £250,000 from the capital programme for the ICT programme of works for the 2022/23 financial year**

1 Reason for Recommendation

- 1.1 Capital Member Group recommended in Autumn 2021 that the 2022/23 capital funding bid for the ICT Programme of Works be submitted to Strategy and Resources Committee. This was to enable funding to be considered as part of a four year rolling for the ICT Plan. This will ensure the IT systems are properly invested in to deliver the ongoing ICT programme of work.
- 1.2 On 27 January 2022 Strategy & Resources Committee agreed additional funding of £20,000 for an additional resource to assist with developing our current ICT strategy to incorporate the Council's changing priorities and evolving working practices post-Covid.
- 1.3 The table at 2.10 of this report provides the details of IT works that will need to be completed during 2022/23 in order for system security to be maintained, continuation of projects providing new ways of working and replacement end of life or unsupported applications. This work will be required in 2022/23 regardless of any change to the Council's ICT strategy during the financial year.

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2 Background

- 2.1 Historically, each year ICT have made a Capital Programme bid to Capital Member Group to enable the IT systems to be improved in line with the agreed strategic direction and to replace obsolete systems/hardware. Some flexibility is required with the ICT capital budget as unforeseen expenditure can arise that could not possibly be predicted when the budget submission is made. An example of this is the replacement of the Town Hall Uninterruptable Power Supply (UPS) in 2021/22 when the unit failed before its predicted end of life.
- 2.2 Spend against the IT Programme of Works has been supported with a business case and agreed by the IT and New Ways of Working Group, whose membership was the Chief Operating Officer, Chief Finance Officer, Head of Digital and Service Transformation, Head of Corporate Governance, Head of HR and the ICT Manager. All spend follows EEBC procurement rules. Following the change in structure in 2021, spend is now approved by the Strategic Management Team.
- 2.3 The four year ICT roadmap (Appendix 2) supports the Four Year Corporate Plan with recent spend including implementing improved wifi and digital connectivity from the Council's main public buildings and moving the Council to energy efficient cloud solutions. Recent example of work undertaken includes the introduction of Microsoft 365 which has enabled the Council to operate more efficiently whilst working with staff in the office and at home.
- 2.4 A recurring theme on the ICT roadmap is to improve the cyber security posture through investing in initiatives to protect the systems used. An example of expenditure in 2021/22 includes installing an additional cloud hosted backup solution. This further protects the high priority systems from a ransomware attack and should one be successful, there would be a reduction in the system unavailability time.
- 2.5 A key piece of work on the ICT roadmap is the CRM Replacement Project, with the objective of moving Council service information and transactions online. The current CRM is out of support and contains a number of workarounds resulting in the system being inefficient for officers and residents to use. The Replacement of CRM and Datawarehouse project funding is being used to move the existing CRM services into the My Council Services Platform. This will enable residents to raise and track their transactions online. This project, alongside capital funding in 2022/23, to upgrade the website which becomes obsolete in November 2022 will greatly improve the experience of residents with their digital interactions.

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- 2.6 The ICT roadmap also supports the Climate Change Action Plan with recent spend on technology reducing the need to travel to meetings through introducing Teams and updated conferencing facilities and improvement in the Town Hall WiFi, rolling out thin client technology that use less power and utilising technology to reduce the reliance on paper through implementing digital initiatives.
- 2.7 The current agreed strategic direction for the four year plan is:

Table 1

Motivate all residents to perform secure digital transactions using high speed connectivity
Reduce carbon footprint through running appropriately sized hardware with efficient energy consumption rating
Enable Officers and Members to perform digital work efficiently from a variety of locations
Reduce risk through using proven resilient technologies with no unacceptable vulnerabilities
Where appropriate, move infrastructure to the Cloud
Where appropriate, move high priority applications to the Cloud
Use established providers with a proven track record of delivering services
Simplify the IT estate through moving legacy applications into strategic applications and reducing unnecessary infrastructure complexity
Solutions will be of an appropriate scale for a small Local Authority
Where possible the implementation, development and support will be performed by the in house ICT Team

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- 2.8 The 4 year ICT roadmap is shown in Appendix 2. In line with our strategic direction this includes work to move key applications into the cloud through moving telephony to Teams calling and moving key Citrix components to a more resilient solution. We are looking to improve the cyber position through updating firewalls and improving the backup solution further. We run a very large number of applications and work is required to simplify the IT estate through moving legacy applications into the strategic 'My Council Services' application. To ensure we work efficiently we request funding to refresh member devices to a solution which works better with Microsoft 365 and is easier to manage by ICT.
- 2.9 Continuing the work outlined in the 4 year ICT roadmap is estimated to cost £250k in 2022/23. Appendix 1 shows the projects we will undertake in addition to the ongoing CRM and Datawarehouse Project to complete the initial two phases of the My Council Services, the priority for 2022/23 is to continue to increase our security, increase our resilience by moving applications to the cloud and finding suitable alternatives for end of life applications/infrastructure/devices
- 2.10 The capital budget required for 2022/23 is split as follows

Table 2

Project Name	Reason	Estimated Cost £
Applications to Cloud	Business Continuity Cloud – Citrix	50,000
Website	Business Continuity Obsolescence – Drupal 7	40,000
Revenues & Benefits Document Management System	Business Continuity Obsolescence /Cloud	50,000
Security information and event management (SIEM)– Managed Security Operations Centre	Business Continuity Deferred from 2021/22	35,000
Sharepoint (part 2)	Business Continuity Cloud	25,000
Networking – switch refresh	Business Continuity	25,000

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	Obsolescence	
Members Devices	Business Continuity	25,000
	Obsolescence	
	Total	250,000

2.11 It is estimated that to continue the work outlined in the four year roadmap will require a continual investment of an estimated £250k per year, subject to annual approval by Strategy & Resources Committee. There are scenarios where this funding may not cover everything that is required on the IT systems. Where this is the case a further detailed report will be presented to Strategy & Resources Committee for consideration and approval.

3 Practical implementation

- 3.1 A four year ICT Roadmap will be created in line with the Four Year Corporate Plan. This will include agreement of the strategic direction by the Strategic Management Team on the most appropriate path to follow for the period. The program of work will be challenging but realistic. This has already been created and agreed for the period up to 2024.
- 3.2 Each year a detailed ICT roadmap for the coming year will be created and agreed by Strategic Management Team. The work items will require up to an estimated £250k of funding each year. Work items from the previous year may roll over from the previous year where circumstances have affected the delivery.
- 3.3 All work items being performed will be supported by a business case to be agreed by Strategic Management Team and be procured using the agreed contract standing orders.
- 3.4 A report will be submitted each year to Strategy and Resources committee to provide a progress report on the ICT roadmap for the previous financial year and a proposed budget for the next financial year.

4 Risk Assessment

- 4.1 Legal or other duties
- Procurement of IT works will follow the Council's Contract Standing Orders.
- 4.2 Crime & Disorder
- None for the purposes of this report

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- 4.3 Safeguarding
None for the purposes of this report
- 4.4 Dependencies
None for the purposes of this report
- 4.5 Other
None for the purposes of this report

5 Financial Implications

- 5.1 There is an annual need to fund IT projects from the Capital Programme to ensure the continued efficiency of services provided by the Council and to maintain the security of systems and data held. Revenues costs will be funded within the existing budget.
- 5.2 The IT projects will provide benefits to the Council beyond one year and are considered essential for business continuity. The projects therefore meet the agreed capital criteria for inclusion in the capital programme.
- 5.3 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** The Council's revenue budget includes a provision of up to £400,000 to support capital projects. £250,000 of this provision could be allocated to fund the ICT projects for 2022/23, which would reduce the revenue provision available for other capital projects to £150,000. Beyond 2022/23, the budget for subsequent years should be considered and agreed annually through the progress report to Strategy & Resources Committee.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 None for the purposes of this report
- 6.2 **Legal Officer's comments:** none arising from the content of this report

7 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

- 7.1 **Council's Key Priorities:** The following Key Priorities are engaged:

Effective Council - Improve access to services through technology

Smart and Connected - Increase digital connectivity for all

- 7.2 **Service Plans:**

The ICT roadmap is included within the current Service Delivery Plan.

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7.3 Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:

Climate Change Action Plan Theme 6 - Use of technology & information systems. Will be able to utilise electronic systems and change the working practices further.

7.4. Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:

None for the purposes of this report

7.5. Partnerships:

None for the purposes of this report

8. Background papers

The documents referred to in compiling this report are as follows:

Previous reports: Financial Policy Panel 30 November 2021

Other papers: None