AUDIT COMMITTEE
21 APRIL 2021

ITEM NO. ....

ICT STRATEGY – IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS REPORT

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. The Chief Officer's Board (COB) is required to report six-monthly to the Audit Committee on progress in relation to the implementation of the ICT Strategy.

Summary

2. The current ICT Strategy focusses on three strategic priorities:

   - ICT Governance and Service Development
   - ICT Strategic Architecture
   - Council Service Development and Transformation

3. This report summarises progress on the main activities within each of these priorities.

Recommendation

4. It is recommended that progress on the implementation of the ICT Strategy be noted.

Reasons

5. The recommendation is supported to provide the Audit Committee with evidence to reflect on progress in delivery of the Council's ICT Strategy.

Ian Miles
Assistant Director – Xentrall Shared Services

Background Papers

Darlington ICT Strategy 2017

Ian Miles – Extension 157012

S17 Crime and Disorder	There is no specific crime and disorder impact.
Health and Well Being	There is no specific heath and well being impact.
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	Some of the initiatives contained within ICT Strategy will help contribute towards the carbon reduction commitments.
Diversity	There is no specific diversity impact.
Wards Affected	All wards are affected equally.
Groups Affected	All groups are affected equally.
Budget and Policy Framework	Financial implications will be considered in the Medium-Term Financial Plan. This report does not affect the policy framework.
Key Decision	This is not a key decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	The ICT strategy supports the business of the Council in delivering ODPP
Efficiency	There will be efficiency savings generated as a result of implementing the ICT Strategy. The introduction of new technology is key to providing efficiency savings within Council services.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

MAIN REPORT

6. Progress on the themes of this revised ICT Strategy are described below.

ICT Governance and ICT Service Development

7. The Systems and Information Governance Group (which is the Chief Officers Board of Assistant Directors but chaired by the Managing Director for this purpose) undertakes an ICT Strategy monitoring role as well as overseeing and approving the ICT Work Plan, which covers all service based and corporate ICT projects. As well as this forum, regular updates on major ICT projects are also given to the Managing Director and the Xentrall Executive Board on which he sits.

8. Since the last update to Members last October, ICT Services have continued to pass PCI DSS quarterly tests. These are the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standards. ICT have also just been audited and re-certified to be part of the Government's Public Services Network (PSN). This allows Council services to communicate and transfer information to and from Government departments securely.

9. In terms of ICT service development and related to the two ISO certifications ICT hold for Information Security and Quality Management Systems, all ICT service improvement activities are identified in the ICT Service Improvement Programme and this continues to be managed and monitored by the ICT Management Team, supported by the ICT Security & Process Excellence Officer. This group reviews the progress and priorities of this extensive and continual programme which is resourced through a combination of business as usual activities and planned projects within ICT. The majority of these activities relate to internal ICT procedures and standards which ultimately deliver improvements to the services ICT users receive.

ICT Strategic Architecture

10. Progress has been made on a number of architecture projects during the last year, many of which take place behind the scenes. Notable projects have included:

    (a) Further upgrades to the Council's firewall and perimeter defence infrastructure to maintain high levels of security and protection.

    (b) Increased the capacity of the virtual server platform to ensure continued high performance.

    (c) Complete renewal of the enterprise security authentication certificates to help maintain security on servers, PCs and remote laptops.

    (d) Renewed contract for the high-speed connections between the main Darlington and backup Stockton data centres.

    (e) Continued developments surrounding the migration and deployment of the Microsoft Office 365 suite of systems and associated platform across the Council.

Council Service Development and Transformation

11. The service-based Information & Systems Strategies inform the ICT Work Plan, and this drives customer projects within the ICT service. As well as the management and monitoring of individual projects, the overall ICT Work Plan is monitored on a monthly cycle at the Systems and Information Governance Group (as described in paragraph 7 above). These ICT projects underpin many of the Council's business change activities.

12. As well as some of the central ICT architecture projects listed above, a further nine service specific projects have been completed since the last progress report to this committee. These included an in-house developed replacement for the employee protection register, as there was nothing in the market that was suitable. This was developed to a joint specification with Stockton Council.

13. As part of the Microsoft Office 365 roll-out and the features this brings, ICT have also been working with the Council's Information Governance Manager to review existing record management practices and the identification of improved methods through the exploitation of features within Office 365. Microsoft Teams sites have been trialled in the Council and the migration of user files and folders to OneDrive is underway as steps in this overall programme.

14. Since the UK Coronavirus restrictions came into place Xentrall ICT have continued to provide a full range of services and underpin the vital functions of the Councils, whilst in addition, stepping up and providing additional services specifically in response to the pandemic situation. As well as supporting the original emergency planning aspects of the pandemic, Xentrall ICT are also integral in any recovery planning and activities taking place. ICT Services will continue to also help both Councils retain the benefits that have been gained through mass home working and to help exploit the technology enabled opportunities and innovation that have also arisen across services.

Outcome of Consultation

15. There has been no formal consultation in the preparation of this report.