

**AUDIT COMMITTEE
28 SEPTEMBER 2022**

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 revised ICT Strategy focusses on three strategic priorities:
 - (a) ICT Governance and Service Development
 - (b) ICT Strategic Architecture
 - (c) 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 2022

Ian Miles – Extension 157012

S17 Crime and Disorder	There is no specific crime and disorder impact.
Health and Well Being	There is no specific health 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.
Council Plan	The ICT strategy supports the business of the Council in delivering the Council Plan
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 three strategic themes of the ICT Strategy is 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 Group Director of Operations) 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, updates on major ICT projects are also given to the Group Director of Operations and to the meetings of the Xentrall Executive Board on which she sits.
8. The ICT service was successfully audited by the British Standards Institute (BSI) in June and retained both Information Security Management and Quality Management System certifications for another year. In addition, all the inspections undertaken by the Council's Internal Audit team have been classified as "green" on a red/amber/green rating.
9. In terms of ICT service development and related to the two ISO certifications and internal audits, 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 significant architecture projects during the last six months, many of which take place behind the scenes. Notable projects have included:
 - (a) Procurement and implementation of an improved telephony reporting system, independent of the telephony infrastructure used.
 - (b) Further procurements and implementation of server and infrastructure management tools and systems to maintain and improve security, performance, availability and management of systems.
 - (c) Procurement and installation of a new backup device for the main Darlington data centre.
 - (d) Implementation of the replacement UPS (uninterruptable power supply) for the main Darlington data centre.
 - (e) Applied a new DDOS (Distributed Denial of Service) protection system on the Darlington Internet Link (replicating the Stockton backup link).
 - (f) Procured an extension to the existing Cisco telephony contract and researched a replacement Teams telephony system.

- (g) On-going retirement and removal of telephone handsets from offices.
- (h) Installation of Wi-Fi into Harewood House.
- (i) Replacement of PCs in the Vane House Resource Centre which are used by partially sighted members of the public. This included the installation of a braille printer.

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 (SIGG is described in paragraph 7 above). These ICT projects underpin many of the Council's business change activities. SIGG also reviews the Web Team Workplan and the Systems and Process Team Workplan and thereby has a whole view of ICT-related activities across the Council.
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 have included various system upgrades, plus:
 - a) Town Centre Wi-Fi - Supporting the specification and selection of a supplier to implement Wi-Fi throughout the town centre.
 - b) IDOX Oracle 19c Upgrade & Server Migration (Planning & Customer Service) - This involved major upgrades to all the technical layers which support this system and the migration of the database from a previous version.
 - c) DocuSign eSignature Solution for Tenancy Agreements – This replaced paper based tenancy agreements and face to face contacts with electronic documents which has reduced cost and the environmental impact of printing the tenancy packs.
13. As part of the Microsoft Office 365 roll-out and the features this brings, ICT have continued to work with a task group and different services across the Council to migrate their shared data to Teams. Services already migrated are able to work more collaboratively when developing and sharing documents.
14. Xentrall ICT have continued to support the Council in piloting and implementing the Blended Working programme, which has involved providing additional ICT equipment in the Town Hall as well as continuing to support the ICT equipment remote in officer's homes.

Outcome of Consultation

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