

CABINET

13 June 2012

WCC INFORMATION MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

REPORT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND HEAD OF IMT

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RECENT REFERENCES:

None.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report seeks approval to an overarching Strategy for the City Council's management of information (IM). The Strategy is not a technical document, but sets the guiding principles for our procurement and development of information management hardware and software to ensure that it supports our organisational development.

The City Council has worked in partnership with Test Valley Borough Council since December 2010 to develop a joint IT Delivery partnership. That Partnership has reached a stage where it is helpful to codify some basic principles which can guide its ongoing development, and this report also seeks approval of recommended principles.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Cabinet:

- 1 agree the draft IM Strategy at Appendix 1; and
- 2 agree the principles to guide the further development of the WCC/TVBC joint IT Delivery Partnership.

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### WCC INFORMATION MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

#### REPORT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE & HEAD OF IMT

#### DETAIL:

#### 1 An IM Strategy for the Council

1.1 Information Management (IM) is a fundamental tool helping the City Council, determine how we work and how we seek to deliver services efficiently and effectively. Its role ranges from that of a cost effective way of communicating with local communities through to an enabler for new methods of working and service provision. Developed and deployed correctly, IM can play a vital role in making us an efficient and effective Council.

1.2 However, it is essential that our IM is not developed by the piecemeal acquisition of new hardware or software, or in isolation from our broader change programme. Both the procurement and development of that hardware and software must be guided by a clear understanding of the Council's wider aspirations for our organisational development.

1.3 Under our "Transforming Winchester" programme the City Council has set out six clear principles we have adopted as a guide to our day-to-day working:

- a) Providing excellent customer service;
- b) Being efficient and offering value for money;
- c) Valuing staff;
- d) Acting sustainably;
- e) Being open and demonstrating integrity and honest; and
- f) Showing respect to one another.

1.4 These principles make a very clear statement about the sort of organisation we want to be, and we measure everything we do against them. Our organisational development – be that our working practices, the competencies of our staff or the design of services – is shaped by these principles. To turn these principles into practice, we plan to achieve five organisational "outcomes", and each of these will guide equipment procurement and management by our IT Team:

Outcome 1 – being an employer of choice

Outcome 2 - providing customer service we're proud of

Outcome 3 – providing services which are flexible and offer value for money

Outcome 4 – occupying buildings fit for people and fit for purpose

Outcome 5 – being fit for the future

- 1.5 Taken together our principles and the organisational outcomes we have identified help define our requirements of IM. The first part of the draft Strategy at Appendix 1 seeks to guide our approach to the procurement and development of IM equipment in a way which supports our broader corporate objectives.
- 1.6 The role of the Strategy is to provide a framework which assists in more detailed planning and delivery of IM services. It does not seek to define or constrain the technical solutions we adopt, nor does it provide detailed rules for procurement. Technology continues to develop at a very fast pace, with the processing power of hardware, data storage capacity and network connection speeds achieving unprecedented levels. A failure to respond swiftly and appropriately to changing IM needs can quickly disadvantage organisations seeking to drive business change and transform business process. The Strategy offers provides a frame of reference against which our IT Team can judge whether any technical solution or proposed development will assist in our organisational development.
- 1.7 The Strategy will be underpinned by two documents:
- a) An IT Technical Strategy, which outlines the Council's approach to investment in hardware and software necessary to meet the Council's IM requirements. . The Technical Strategy will, *inter alia*, ensure that Council resources are aligned to meet the current business needs and also have the ability to adapt to the change. It is proposed that a draft Technical Strategy be brought forward under a Portfolio Holder Decision Notice shortly.
  - b) An IT Technical Specification & Plan, which sets out in detail the planned actions necessary to implement the Technical Strategy.
- 1.8 Taken together, these documents provide a basis for the planning of investment in information management hardware and software, and so will inform the Council's corporate financial planning.

## 2 Joint IT Delivery Partnership

- 2.1 In December 2010 the City Council entered into a joint IT Delivery Partnership with Test Valley Borough Council. As a first step, the two Councils agreed to appoint a joint Head of Service and integrate their Help Desks. Since then further sharing of support resources have taken place, along with joint provision of telephony infrastructure and a shared website platform.
- 2.2 The Delivery Partnership aims to secure efficiency in the operation of the service for both partners through shared staffing and infrastructure (software and hardware) where there is a business case for doing so. Both partners see it as a partnership of equals, and are committed to exploring opportunities for further integration. Both Councils wish to maintain robust and efficient IM

systems and infrastructure, and a shared service can unlock cost effective solutions through the sharing of Infrastructure, licensing, staff and support can allow partners to maintain affordable systems and support.

- 2.3 However, the Delivery Partnership must be sustainable and not contest the sovereignty or autonomy of either party, and sufficiently flexible to meet the ambitions of the each partner. The partners will consider consolidating and where possible rationalising infrastructure, staff and support agreements to share risks, cost and benefits equitably. By aligning the technical strategies of both our Council and Test Valley Borough Council significant savings can be achieved and a wider range of business options can be considered. The design of the technical strategy should also ensure that all its elements will allow for a move back to a 'stand-alone' infrastructure should the partners ever wish to do so.
- 2.4 To assist the ongoing development of the Partnership it is now timely to set out and agree some key principles which will guide our two Councils. As with Winchester's own Strategy, these principles should be simple and provide overarching guidance to officers, rather than detailed prescription. The second part of the draft Strategy sets out four key principles for members to agree.

#### OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

#### 3 SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY AND CHANGE PLANS (RELEVANCE TO):

- 3.1 The IM Strategy should support our aspiration to be an efficient and effective council and support the development of new methods of working and delivery of services which assist in realising that aspiration.

#### 4 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 4.1 There are no direct resource implications of this report or the IM Strategy. The Strategy will, however, guide detailed procurement and other expenditure decisions, each of which will require consideration of resource implications.

#### 5 RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 5.1 If we do not have a clear, coherent framework for procurement and development of IM in a way which supports wider organisational development then we risk acquiring a mix of unconnected systems and solutions which can hamper organisational effectiveness and reduce scope for achieving service improvement and financial efficiency.
- 5.2 Without a clear set of principles to guide the further development of our IT Delivery Partnership with Test Valley Borough Council we may fail to gain maximum shared benefit from the relationship.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 - Winchester City Council: Draft IM Strategy

## **Winchester City Council: Draft Information Management Strategy**

June 2012

### Introduction

The need to manage information underpins every City Council service, whether by facilitating communication with Members, staff and the public or allowing us to process service request from customers quickly and efficiently. There is no doubt it can make us efficient, flexible and responsive – all characteristics of the organisation we want to be.

As a Council we need to ensure that we are clear how the technology we purchase and operate to manage information can support our organisational “model” – in other words our management of information (IM) supports our ambitions without dictating or constraining them. This Strategy sets out a framework which explains how that model guides the detailed development of our information technology, both hardware and software.

The Strategy also sets a framework for the ongoing development of our shared Information Technology Partnership with Test Valley Borough Council. Each Council will have separate objectives and work in different ways, and we each acknowledge those differences, but share a commitment to working in partnership to develop an efficient and effective joint service which meets both our needs.

This Strategy provides a framework within which IM at Winchester will develop, as part of our partnership with Test Valley. It is underpinned by more detailed technical and operational plans, notably:

- An IT Technical Strategy
- An IT Technical Specification and Plan

### IM to support Winchester’s organisational development

Under our ‘Transforming Winchester’ programme the City Council has set out the principles we have adopted:

- Excellent customer service
- Efficiency and value for money
- Valuing staff
- Sustainability
- Openness, integrity and honesty
- Respect

These principles make a very clear statement about the sort of organisation we want to be, and we measure everything we do against them. Our organisational

development – our working practices, the competencies of our staff or the design of services – is shaped by these principles.

To turn these principles into practices, we plan to achieve five organisational outcomes, and each of these will guide the procurement and management of our IM services:

**Outcome 1 - Being an employer of choice** - requires IM which...

- supports flexible working patterns
- allows staff to master a range of applications

**Outcome 2 – Providing customer service we're proud of** - requires IM which...

- allows ready access to customer information
- offers a range of access channels to customers

**Outcome 3 – Providing services which are flexible and offer value for money** - requires IM which...

- maximises opportunities for operational efficiency
- is sufficiently flexible to allow us to respond quickly to changing priorities and new opportunities

**Outcome 4 – Buildings fit for people and fit for purpose** - requires IM which...

- allows us to use our buildings flexibly

**Outcome 5 – Being fit for the future** – requires IM which...

- allows us to work as one team by facilitating integrated solutions

To assist in achieving these outcomes, our approach to equipment procurement and management will:

- avoid a plethora of different and incompatible systems and applications, and aim instead to facilitate integration of systems, allowing effective working across teams and permitting staff to be trained to utilise a range of systems and applications;
- be sufficiently flexible to accommodate changes in priorities across service areas, and to allow the Council to take advantage of new opportunities quickly;
- allow us to operate efficiently, thus saving money and improving service levels, by enabling the simplification and integration of business processes;
- permit easy access to information across systems and applications, for both officers and customers, through all appropriate access channels; and
- facilitate flexible working in all its forms.

### Working in Partnership to deliver IM services

In December 2010 the City Council entered into a joint IT Delivery Partnership with Test Valley Borough Council. As a first step, the two Councils agreed to appoint a joint Head of Service and integrate their Help Desks. Since then further integration of teams has taken place, along with some joint provision of infrastructure.

The Delivery Partnership aims to secure efficiency in the operation of the service for both partners through shared staffing and infrastructure (software and hardware) where there is a business case for doing so. Both partners see it as a partnership of equals, rather than one authority providing services to the other on the basis of a recharge. There are four key principles which underpin the Partnership:

1. The joint IT Team will advise each Council on the IM solutions which best suit their corporate objectives and ambitions;
2. Subject to (1) above, the Shared Head of IT will advise on opportunities for closer integration of infrastructure or staffing where that can improve operational effectiveness and offer opportunities for resource savings and/or infrastructure improvement;
3. Wherever possible the costs and benefits of any shared initiative will be shared equally, where that balance is not struck, that will usually be a consequence of differential need or different starting points;
4. Opportunities for closer integration will be planned and delivered in such a way as to ensure that neither Council is at a disadvantage and/or both partners understand the associated risks and cost with regard the possibility of the partnership ending.