

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Subject: TECHNOLOGY STRATEGY
Meeting: EXECUTIVE
Date: 18 March 2014
Author: DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents to Members the proposed Technology Strategy for approval. This cover report also outlines the general feedback from Services on the draft strategy and some of the work Officers have been undertaking since the strategy was first drafted in summer 2013.

2. REFLECTIONS ON THE STRATEGY

- 2.1 The strategy was circulated to services in August 2013 with meetings organised with all services to discuss the background thinking behind the strategy, the three priorities and also the tactical response to those i.e. the things we need to do to deliver the strategy. At the same time as this engagement was taking place, Policy, Technology and Improvement was also in the process of ensuring a compliant application for PSN / GSX. This has led to a delay in finalising the strategy and indeed has meant that some aspects of the strategy have changed fundamentally – specifically issues of Bring Your Own Device.
- 2.2 In addition to meeting with all management teams, some services provided very valuable and detailed comments. Some of these related directly to the strategy document and others reflects questions or views in relation to how ultimately the delivery of the strategy and its component parts might impact on specific services or aspects of service. Given the nature of the document i.e. a high level corporate strategy, it is not possible to reflect all these specific comments in the document but these were touched on a covered at service meetings.
- 2.3 The first meeting was held in August / September with the last meeting in late November. It was important though to take the time to engage with all services as this strategy is while being led by Corporate and Neighbourhood Services it is a strategy for the whole Council and all services to deliver.
- 2.4 On the whole the feedback from services was very positive. It appeared that the strategy was understood and relevant. As noted above there were specific comments about how it impacted on specific aspects of service. A lot of discussion was focused not on the content of the strategy but how it could be delivered and in particular about how the Improvement Governance Board will work and ultimately oversee the delivery of the strategy.

- 2.5 The core priorities of customer access, flexible and collaborative working and well managed information were considered by all services to be valid and sensible. They also reflected the needs of services in moving forward and will help ensure that technology is aligned to corporate and service priorities.
- 2.6 Specific services wanted to see their needs reflected more within the strategy e.g. the need to deliver the curriculum through technology, the need for security and also how we can meet the needs of and protect the most vulnerable within our communities through the use of technology.
- 2.7 There were issues raised by nearly all services of the need to focus on their own areas of services delivery and not to be hindered or impeded in doing so by the corporate requirements of the Council. There was a general acceptance that services need to have a common infrastructure and platform by which they could then deliver their specialist services rather than have a fragmented and unmanaged system.
- 2.8 As mentioned above the delivery of a secure and managed network etc. was being taken forward at the same time as we were consulting services on the strategy. It was ironically helpful that all services area became acutely aware of the need for the management and control of technology as the planning for PSN / GSX accreditation moved on. It was also helpful that some of the solutions to issues raised by PSN compliance had already been considered as part of the strategy e.g. mobile device management, enterprise subscription etc.
- 2.9 One of the reasons we embarked on the development of the strategy was our recognition that technology is fundamental and at the heart of our delivery of key services. Our approach to deploying technology to date has been reactive, flexible and individual service needs led. However given how we now rely on technology we needed a more measured planned and controlled approach – with importantly investment not just in individual service applications but in our core technology infrastructure i.e. the basis by which we do the whole Council does its core business, communicate with each other, store and share information and indeed the thing that allows us to deliver services. This strategy gives us that platform.

3. PROGRESS ON THE STRATEGY DELIVERY

- 3.1 Since the strategy was circulated in August and with the heightened need to deliver on some of its key aspects due to PSN compliance, we have been taking forward some specific key developments. This allows us not only to meet our current commitments with regards PSN compliance but also meet the needs of services who are increasingly seeing technology as a core means of delivering services.
- 3.2 The following sections note progress made on the enterprise subscription agreement and mobile device management.

Enterprise Subscription Agreement

- 3.3 Officers have been looking at the benefits, costs and implications of procuring an enterprise subscription agreement for some core systems. This allows us to manage our software more effectively and moves everyone onto a similar version of core software. Following a successful tender exercise, we are now in the process of finalising our

purchase of this. Since we originally looked at the benefits of this ESA, under the terms of our PSN compliance we now need to move on this to standardise all our licencing and conform to agreed standards.

Mobile and Remote Working

- 3.4 Members will be aware of the extensive work recently undertaken to achieve PSN compliance. Key issues highlighted during the process were the need to address security for all potential mobile working solutions (e.g. tablets, phones etc) and all key elements of these, the development of a replacement homeworking application and a framework which offers complete flexibility in how services are delivered to customers. With this in mind, we have over the last number of months researched and tested a number of solutions which can help us to achieve the above objectives.
- 3.5 One system provided by a major supplier meets our requirements with a solution which is scalable i.e. allows our procurement of the system to grow as our mobile and flexible needs grow. This system also allows us to start with a proof of concept i.e. try before we buy, in order to ensure the system works within our network, meets all our needs and can deliver the expectations of services and of course Members.
- 3.6 Costs for the system are comparable across all systems considered. Estimated costs are as follows. A nominal figure of 2,500 users has been determined for estimate purposes:
- Mobile solution: approx. £145k
 - Homeworking solution: approx. £176k
 - Annual maintenance cost for the above are approx. £65k
 - The estimated cost of a proof of concept for approx. 100 users would be circa £30k. This would be subtracted from the final cost when purchased.
- 3.7 In addition to the above solution, changes to our current desktop pcs which allow the pc to be “virtualised” have also been considered i.e. users not limited to a desktop box for the PC they use and thus allowing a more flexible workforce in terms of location. Exact costs for the replacement pcs are still to be determined but are estimated to be a similar cost to the procurement of pcs (approx. £200k per annum for 2,500 pcs). The benefits of replacing the pcs however are considerable, including a BCP solution which addresses many of our corporate requirements and potentially starts the move away for location specific workforce. The cost of moving to virtualisation would be built into the cost of replacement PCs and thus would be phased in as PCs are replaced.
- 3.8 The solution considered offers a major leap forward in the Council’s drive towards achieving a more flexible and mobile workforce. This approach is critical in terms of looking at the replacement plans for the Council’s HQ.
- 3.9 Members will be aware that we have consolidate the capital budget with regards ICT spend and will be looking to utilise that as well as current underspends to ensure we achieve our requirements with regards this area of work.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 We hope that the strategy reflects the aspirations of services and will support the whole Council going forward. We do appreciate that the strategy requires significant resources to deliver but without that investment we will not be able to keep pace with the needs of our customers, ensure our systems and network are secure and also in the medium term be able to provide continuity of service.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members approve:

- 5.1 **The strategy attached at appendix one;**
- 5.2 **Note way forward with regards the proof of concept for our mobile and remote working solution in order to comply with PSN accreditation and in line with the approval of the Executive in January 2014;**
- 5.3 **An update report is provided to Members later in the year with regards progress on this strategy and its component parts.**

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DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

Date: 6 February 2014
Ref: IBF0214FC – ICT strategy
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LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. NIL

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers listed above should telephone Falkirk 01324 506004 and ask for Fiona Campbell.