ICT Strategy
2013 - 2016

April 2013

Cheshire East
Council

1. **Executive Summary**

The need for 'fit for purpose' ICT services has never been greater. With our ever growing reliance on ICT in our every day activities; developments such as the need for faster broadband speeds, the need for increased availability of wireless connectivity and the wide use of social and business tools available on the internet, are just some of the key strategic enablers that will impact on ICT across the organisation over the next 3 years.

This document outlines how ICT Strategy will support the Council's Three Year Plan, 2013-16 to provide:

- 'Fit for purpose' ICT services which enable and support effective and reliable service delivery
- A cost effective ICT infrastructure that reduces duplication, streamlines work flows and access to information, offers best value and delivers a return on investment
- A safe and secure ICT network that reduces risks, repels external threats and complies with relevant legislation
- A future-proof, proactive and innovative commissioning service for all ICT investment.

The future of the authority lies in a true partnership of public, private and voluntary bodies to deliver effective and appropriate public services for our citizens. Effective collaboration will widen our horizons and open up opportunities for innovation in service provision and administration.

Our 3 year strategy is made up of five key programmes:

- **Location Independent Workforce** – to develop ICT facilities and services that allow staff to work effectively from any location
- **Enabled Citizens, Managers and Staff** – to implement tools and technologies which put the citizen, business managers and staff in control of their information and communication to transform the way that services can be delivered
- **Superfast Broadband** - to secure public and private sector investment to enable the provision of superfast broadband infrastructure to over 90% of homes and businesses; and to promote take-up across Cheshire East
- **Core System Stability -** to sustain all the ICT systems and technologies which underpin the organisation, including the development of a new regional Public Service Network (PSN).
- **Core Financial Systems** (Oracle) - To develop our Oracle platform to provide back office efficiency, control and compliance, self service financial management information, improvements to usability and access for customers (both internally and externally) and multi-organisation working.

2. **Strategy Drivers**

Cheshire East Council is a complex and diverse organisation and we are experiencing a fundamental change in the way we operate internally and the way we relate externally to citizens, local businesses, other public services providers, partners and central government. We need to deliver better value by working in partnership with other service providers to allow more choice and improve achievement of our priority outcomes.

Regardless of our area of activity, effective service provision is becoming ever more dependent on how we, as individuals, teams and organisations embrace, manage, develop and apply ICT. We live in a world increasingly digitally enabled with greater reliance on faster broadband and wireless connectivity. Our aim is for the ICT strategy service to be a key enabler for the existing activities and aspirations of the Council and the various partnerships and groups that work with us to improve the wider "well being" of the area.

The key drivers influencing our strategy are illustrated in the diagram below:

Political Drivers
Government Agenda
Public Services Network
Sustainability

Economic Drivers
Austerity
Localism Agenda
Economic Growth

Community Drivers
Digital Divide
Social Inclusion
Personalisation

Technology Drivers
Mobile Working
Emerging Technology
National Standards

Stakeholder Drivers
Service Priorities
Partnership Working
Data Sharing

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2.1. Political Drivers

The government view transparency as a foundation stone of accountability and a powerful means of promoting efficiency. The taxpayer has a right to see how their money is being spent. In this tight fiscal climate it is important that we can manage our high volume and diverse information sources effectively so that we can publish data appropriately and in a timely manner.

In order to support multi-agency and collaborative working, the Government is driving forward the creation of a Public Service Network (PSN) infrastructure. We will to work proactively with public sector colleagues across the Cheshire sub-region to develop a PSN and to ensure that this network is cost sustainable, secure, compliant, resilient, scalable and future-proof.

The UK has an overarching target to reduce greenhouse gases by 26% or more by 2020 and by at least 60% by 2050. The Council has set targets to reduce carbon dioxide emissions with a view to ultimately achieving carbon neutrality. In order to reduce the overall carbon footprint of the authority, we will ensure that ICT provision embraces sustainability principles wherever possible.

2.2. Community and Social Drivers

Cheshire East is an area of contrasts, from remote sparsely populated areas, to major townships, with significant wealth and health inequalities. Many of these demographic and social issues have been exacerbated by both the recession and commercial imperatives, making it difficult for the needs of specific groups to be reflected in local, national and regional policies. With the implementation of digital communications and investment in superfast broadband, which can reach and empower local communities, we will be able to reflect local needs, drive costs down and remove the digital divide which exists between our urban and rural areas.

It is important that citizens are not disadvantaged by lack of access to the opportunities that ICT presents. We will continue to deliver technology that can enable the personalisation of services especially in social care and associated Telecare advances, support and enable social inclusion, and engage our staff and citizens so that whatever their background or circumstances they may have similar opportunities in life.

ICT can play a key role in the support of life long learning and it is important that our schools are well resourced with technology and our children and young people are equipped to make the most of the ICT tools available to them.

2.3. Economic Drivers

Reductions in public funding, to support national deficit reduction targets, mean that we have to become very skilful at achieving outcomes with reducing financial resources, continuously striving to maximise outputs and optimise processes. We will harness the power of technological developments to change the way our services are delivered, driving down costs while continuously striving to improve levels of service, optimise processes and broaden the options for accessing and delivering services.

The focus on efficiency also strengthens the need to consider Joint and Shared services. There are many opportunities to share services locally, regionally and nationally and we need to fully explore the potential benefits.

The Localism agenda and our local strategic partnerships allow organisations to work together effectively in true collaboration. ICT will enable these partnerships to communicate easily, collaborate electronically and access information and knowledge seamlessly.

Business growth is a key driver for economic recovery; through the investment of superfast broadband infrastructure we will support our businesses. Small and medium sized enterprises, in particular, will be able to maximise the take-up and exploitation of technology enabled by faster broadband connectivity e.g. high definition video conferencing, 'cloud computing', telecare, international trade and e-commerce.

2.4. Technology Drivers

The Council's office accommodation strategy is driving forward the optimisation of our valuable office space. Not all staff will be allocated dedicated desks and there is an overall target of 1 desk/workstation for every 1.3 staff. Staff will be encouraged to work in the most efficient and effective manner possible in whichever of the Council's network of main offices and locality bases is most appropriate for each particular activity. We will ensure the effective exploitation of ICT technology to ensure that staff have access to appropriate resources to undertake their work in a variety of locations.

With advances in computing power and capability, the widespread use of the internet and the growing affordability of many devices, it is now possible to take advantage of a wide variety of digital services. The marketplace moves quickly and it is important to actively investigate emerging tool sets to stay abreast of developments and the possibilities they present.

Over the past 5 years or so the growth in personal use of smart phones, laptops and tablet computing has overtaken the capability and perceptions of Council owned ICT. This is a key challenge and opportunity for us, to enable staff to work productively at home if they choose and even use their own devices at work where appropriate.

We will ensure that the provision and use of ICT within the authority is compliant where legislative requirements and government standards dictate. These include the Government Connect Code of Connection, Payment Card Industry Standards, and Data Protection Act 1998.

2.5. Stakeholder Drivers

Our service 'clients' rightly expect their ICT solutions to deliver information access, storage, processing and reporting facilities for practitioners and appropriate partners. Although complex data sharing requirements, legacy systems and differing partner technologies present significant challenges to provide efficient connections with partners and suppliers, we will strive to deliver fit for purpose and future-proof services.

ICT now plays an increasing role supporting the Council's front line services, in addition, these services now need to reduce costs without compromising service standards or reducing access or uptake particularly among more vulnerable or disadvantaged service users. We will continue to provide and develop new services for our citizens that are efficient, effective, equitable and empowering putting the customer at the heart of what we do.

3. **ICT – The Vision**

ICT will continue to support the major schemes and programmes of work across the Council as well as the day to day operations and so it will be vital to continue to invest in the development of a cost effective, well managed and secure ICT infrastructure that will:

- **Enable everyone (internally and externally) to collaborate and access information electronically when, where and how they need it**

- **Allow services to be delivered more efficiently and effectively, to enable better strategic commissioning and delivery of frontline services**

- **Help us to capture, process, store and retrieve information reliably and conveniently from multiple access points.**

Our vision will be underpinned by the following core principles across each of our key stakeholder groups:

Citizens & Businesses can become self-reliant and take personal responsibility, are able to:
- Find information about Council services and how to use them at any time of day and from any part of the borough and beyond
- Have quick and easy access to information from any device e.g. smartphone, laptop, tablet
- Access information through a variety of channels e.g. phone, internet, email, letter, Twitter, face-to-face
- Be confident that their personal details and information we retain are managed securely, processed and shared responsibly
- Express views and make decisions on services and plans

Elected Members can support their communities, are able to:
- Retrieve and use information at any time, from anywhere in order to:
  - inform decisions
  - monitor the effectiveness and efficiency of services
  - engage in effective scrutiny of Council strategies, policies and operations
  - to understand and respond to the needs of constituents

Managers and staff can deliver quality and best value, are able to:
- Access Council ICT systems and services from any location using a variety of devices e.g. Smartphone, tablet, laptop in line with business need
- Retrieve timely and accurate information at any time using self-service tools
- Contact and collaborate with colleagues and partners across the organisation using a variety of different channels e.g. phone, email, text, video
- Move and work easily between roles and departments as a result of standardised equipment and processes.

Partner organisations can work with the Council to ensure best outcomes, are able to:
- Exchange information with the Council safely, securely and appropriately
- Integrate and harmonise ICT processes to improve efficiency and deliver benefits to citizens and local businesses
- Ensure that individuals do not get 'lost' between agencies.

4. How is ICT Strategy Delivered?

The ICT Strategy Team identify, procure and commission ICT technologies and services in response to service 'clients' needs, and work proactively to identify opportunities and anticipate business needs. The Team will sustain, improve and enhance the effective delivery of front-line Council services to the wider community and partners. This is conducted with regard to costs, benefits, legislation, government standards, and emerging technologies.

ICT Finance Management Details

Revenue
The permanent revenue budget for ICT Strategy is approximately £3.4m with the following breakdown:

EXPENDITURE	%
Staffing costs	43
Non-staffing costs	57
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	**100**
FUNDED BY	
Staff recharges to capital	32
Other recharges to services	3
Base budget	65
TOTAL FUNDING	**100**

Staff recharges to capital

ICT Strategy does not have a permanent revenue budget to fund all the resources required to deliver the ICT Work Programme, so approximately 32% of the resource requirement is funded by recharges to the capital programme at an agreed average chargeable rate.

In most years in-house resources will not be sufficient to deliver the Council's work programme. When this happens, external contractors on short term premium rate contracts are used to provide additional resources. The cost of these contractors are "pooled" with the cost of internal development staff and charged to projects at an agreed average chargeable rate. An annual capital programme for these essential resources of approximately £1.125m is required to provide sufficient funding for all these staff.

Assumptions about the proportion of external contractors used are reviewed annually. This will affect the average rate charged to projects.

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Capital

The table below sets out a summary of the funding for the current ICT 3 year capital programme:

	Change programmes	2013-14 Forecast Spend	2014-15 Forecast Spend	2015-16 Forecast Spend
		£	£	£
7.4B	Location Independent Workforce	3,400,000	3,131,000	1,340,000
7.4C	Enable Citizens and Businesses	287,000	450,000	360,000
7.4A	Core System Stability	5,403,000	2,876,000	2,900,000
2.1	Superfast Broadband	20,583,000	20,583,000	400,000
7.4D	Core Financial Systems	924,000	326,742	
Totals		**30,597,000**	**27,366,742**	**5,000,000**

Implementing modern business architecture, including an ICT system which supports innovation and affordable frontline delivery is a Cheshire East major change programme (7.4). It is a portfolio of four programmes (with a total of 300+ projects):

A   Core System Stability (CSS)

B   Location Independent Working (LIW)

C   Enabled Citizen and Business (ECB)

D   Core Financial Systems (Oracle)

Full Project Initiation Documentation (PIDs) and Business Cases have been submitted in line with corporate procedures.

Departmental ICT provision

In addition to the central ICT budget, Services hold significant Revenue and Capital budgets covering application licences and associated maintenance contracts. Grant funded ICT provision is also held by some services.

**Purchase of computer equipment such as PC's, laptops and printers**

Cheshire East has an estate of around 6,000 desktop computers and laptops. The purchase of this type of equipment is made from a centralised contract using a corporate ICT Strategy held revenue budget. Replacement and growth expenditure on these items for Cheshire East is approximately £1.0m annually.

4.1 ICT Shared Services

The Council is committed to the concept of shared services and much of our ICT portfolio is commissioned from the ICT Shared Service which is jointly funded with Cheshire West and Chester Council. The ICT Shared Service is tasked to develop, operate and deliver a cost-effective, quality and efficient ICT service that reduces costs while enabling each authority to pursue their respective operational and strategic agendas. These will include:

- Provision, operation and maintenance of ICT infrastructure
  - Systems and servers
  - Desktops, laptops, printers etc
  - Networks (wide and local area networks)
  - Security defences and telephone infrastructure
- Operational running and maintenance of applications
- Provision of help-desk services to support end users
- Provision of system and application development services

The diagram below illustrates the current governance arrangements for ICT Shared Services:
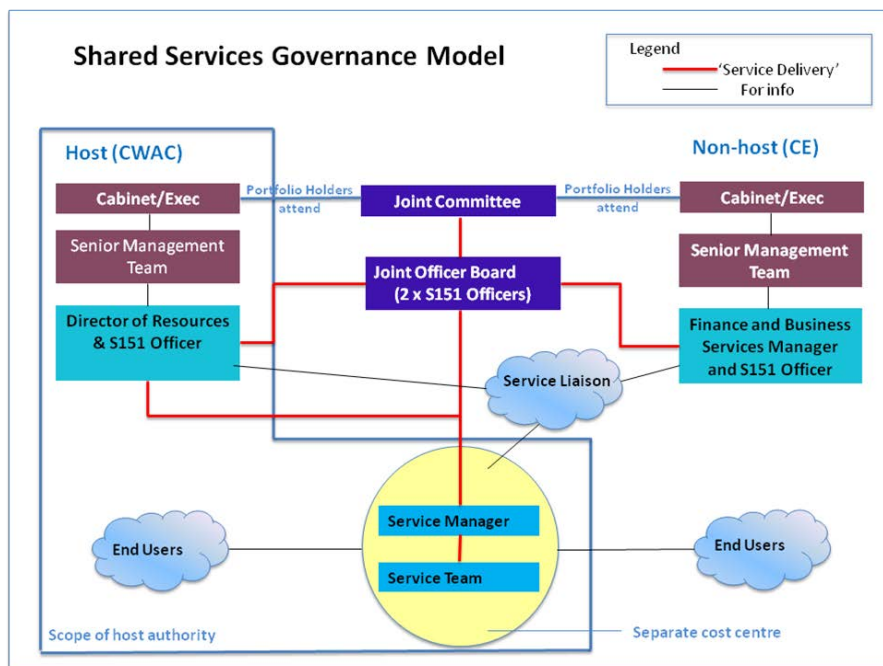
The two main bodies that formally govern ICT Shared Services are:

- **Joint Committee (JC)** - This is a formal governance body, consisting of members from each client, with constitutional powers delegated from each authority. It is effectively the ultimate power for these services and all shared services are accountable to the JC. This committee mirrors the role of shareholders in a business, i.e. they are investing the resources of the two Councils to get a return on their decision to share, through a more efficient and effective set of services

- **Joint Officer Board (JOB)** - ICT Shared Services is accountable to a formal JOB which is chaired jointly by the section 151 officers of both councils. The JOB's role mirrors that of a board of directors and oversees business strategy, planning, operational and financial performance, issue management and transformation.

5. Context

Across the Council we are responsible for over 400 legacy application systems currently in use, with in excess of 4000 desktop PCs and laptops (using various installed software), digital telephone systems; a multitude of telecommunication lines and contracts and several data centres (either wholly owned or shared with Cheshire West and Chester).

This mixed estate of applications, hardware, infrastructure and data centres presents a clear opportunity, and challenges, to reduce ongoing costs and to improve resilience through rationalisation and harmonisation, subject to consultation with services. However we are still addressing the impact of legacy systems and hardware resulting from the creation of Cheshire East in 2009, with many disparate, inefficient and incompatible elements within our ICT estate, some of which is beyond its useful life. Nevertheless, our proactive commitment to innovate and improve service delivery through the effective use of ICT systems and services will remain paramount.

The ICT Strategy Team will work with suppliers and service providers to identify opportunities for innovation with new and enhanced technologies. This enables the team to work with front-line services to specify commission and oversee the delivery of technical solutions, services and research to meet business requirements and service delivery priorities.

With a complex ICT environment it is important to ensure that information, systems and data are protected from inappropriate access, loss or malicious attack. Regular tests and audits of the defences are undertaken to ensure compliance with government standards and the delivery of effective, secure and safe services.

Our policies, procedures and standards have been developed to assist and guide both suppliers and users; these are regularly reviewed and updated in line with best practice guidelines and legislation. In developing and enhancing our ICT systems and their supporting infrastructure, we work in partnership with other organisations and agencies. These range from our immediate geographical neighbours such as Warrington Borough Council, Cheshire West and Chester Council; partners in service delivery such as the NHS, PCT's, Police, Fire and Rescue; through to partnerships with voluntary and private sector organisations. The ICT Strategy Team will continue to actively seek

partnerships to provide integrated information systems, safe sharing protocols and drive efficiency savings.

We also manage the procurement of mobile devices and hardware. Following a successful procurement process, the provision of Mobile Phones, Blackberry devices, and 3G data-sticks has now been drawn together in a contract with Orange under the AGMA framework. Standard sets of equipment including desktops, laptops, docking stations, Microsoft Office software, keyboards and mice are supplied through a centralised contract with A&O.

6. **How are we going to get there?**

Our 3 year strategy is made up of five key programmes:

- **Location Independent Workforce** – to develop ICT facilities and services that allow staff to work effectively from any location

- **Enabled Citizens, Managers and Staff** – to implement tools and technologies which put the citizen, business managers and staff in control of their information and communication to make it possible to transform the way that services can be delivered

- **Superfast Broadband** - to secure public and private sector investment to enable the provision of superfast broadband infrastructure to over 90% of homes and businesses; and to promote take-up across Cheshire East

- **Core System Stability** – to sustain all the ICT systems and technologies which underpin the organisation, including the development of a new regional Public Service Network (PSN).

- **Core Financial Systems** (Oracle) - To develop our Oracle platform to provide back office efficiency, control and compliance, self service financial management information, improvements to usability and access for customers (both internally and externally) and multi-organisation working.

In support of the corporate 3 year plan the ICT Strategy team will plan to deliver over 300+ projects across multiple programmes where our role will be to lead, enable and innovate.

Change programmes		2013-14 Forecast Spend	2014-15 Forecast Spend	2015-16 Forecast Spend
		£	£	£
7.4B	Location Independent Workforce	3,400,000	3,131,000	1,340,000
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Totals		**30,597,000**	**27,366,742**	**5,000,000**

7. Location Independent Workforce (LIW)

ICT will play a crucial role in creating an authority that is organised around the needs of customers and employees rather than the constraints of building design, fixed hours and geographic location. Staff mobility and service flexibility will allow the Council to work more effectively with the potential to reduce accommodation costs and our overall carbon footprint by making better use of the available space, reducing staff travelling expenses and improving delivery and access to public services.

No modern vision for Council service delivery will be feasible without multi-disciplinary and multi-agency working. Information sharing is vital and will require a transformation in our electronic communications, security and work processes. Information must be available in a variety

of formats and be accessible through a number of routes outside the originating office and its opening hours.

7.1. LIW – What have we achieved so far?

We have made significant progress in implementing ICT to facilitate flexible working arrangements, this includes:

- Home working solutions have been trialled and implemented using secure data networking equipment such as Devolo, with on average 350 users of our Click into Cheshire functionality per day, with 1,000 tokens issued to date facilitating full network access remotely
- Office phone technologies have been extended to direct calls through to mobile numbers - Extension to Cellular
- Microsoft Lync has been trialled and is currently being rolled out to facilitate improved collaboration and instant communications for staff in different locations
- Video Conferencing facilities have been extended and enhanced enabling staff to come together for key meetings; e.g the Oracle Strategic Board for 4 attendees the yearly saving has been over £2,000 in travel expenses, 1.3 tonnes of CO_2 and 160 hours of unproductive travel time.
- Corporate Wireless Communications have been installed in a number of buildings allowing staff to access the corporate network without the need for a cable connection
- The next generation of tablet devices have been trialled using management technologies that permit access to the corporate network with appropriate defences in place to limit the risks of data loss and intrusion
- A corporate-wide accommodation booking system has been implemented to enable staff to book meeting rooms at key corporate buildings
- A range of centranet information pages and e-learning materials have been published on a variety of ICT topics to enable staff to obtain key information.

7.2. LIW – What do we want to do next?

The plans for 2013-16 include:

Efficiency Projects:

- **Wi-Fi Access (public and corporate)** Enhancements to the Wi-Fi estate are required in order to provide standardised secure public and corporate network access at all major office hubs to keep pace with the increasing demands for online provision.

- **Social collaboration and networking** The social collaboration/networking aspects of SharePoint (in conjunction with Microsoft Lync) will help facilitate a location independent workforce.

- **Unified Communications** There is a business efficiency need for fully integrated communications, providing access to e-mail, voicemail, Instant Messaging, voice and directory services from a range of suitable devices such as desktops, laptops, smart-phones, tablets, handhelds, etc.

- **Flexible and Mobile Working (F&MW)** Technical solutions are required to enable staff to work productively from a wider variety of locations including all corporate offices, home, mobile and partner sites. This can include working outside of traditional working hours.

Transformational Projects:

- **Partnership Connectivity** Specialist solutions are needed to provide technical connectivity between disparate partnership agencies with differing technology platforms.

- **Identity and Access Management** In order to move forward with the data sharing agenda (data, services and technologies), managed access to systems and data is required to continue to balance the needs of enhanced security with wider access, so that the right people have access to the right resources at the right time for the right reasons.

Mandatory Project:

- **Information Security Advancement** Enhancement of the ICT security estate is required to improve protection against the ever evolving landscape of external cyber attack and security threats, or hardware theft. Currently around 40 million emails are received by the Council every year, however only around 5 million are legitimate and relevant to core business delivery, therefore it is essential that protection from such huge threats is maintained.

8. Enabled Citizens, Managers and Staff (ECMS)

The ICT tools will transform the way that our services can be delivered. The development of on-line citizen access solutions will permit services to maximise on-line transaction capability and reduce costs compared with face-to-face or telephone. They will also enhance customer choice and allow citizens to access services outside traditional office hours.

A web-based Customer Portal will provide a single point of access and guide to tiered levels of service information below. "Self Service" for citizens is a key requirement of the personalisation agenda and further development of assistive Telecare technology will reduce risk and increase choices available to our older, vulnerable and isolated citizens.

Internal Manager Dashboards will provide key information to enable effective decision making by allowing processes and services to be delivered more efficiently, helping to capture, process, store and retrieve information reliably and conveniently from multiple access points.

8.1. ECMS – What have we achieved so far?

- Document scanning and storage solutions implemented, used by Human Resources and Facilities Management using the core technologies of SharePoint and Kofax. These facilities are scalable and re-usable by other business user groups as processes evolve to embrace electronic document storage.
- National leads for:-
  - CHOICE (a citizen portal for Adults personalisation and health assessment)
  - SCPEA (demographics data integration with Health, successfully using the NHS number as the unique identifier)
  - National CAF Demonstrator programme
  Strategic involvement and shaping of national initiatives such as these, enables us to design our ICT infrastructure to maximise

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opportunities to share and collaborate within partner organisations. It also shares the risks associated with development activities.

- Implementation of electronic Health and Social Care Assessment of Needs (HaSCAN) format shared across Cheshire East with Health partners. Key benefit from this is improved efficiency through reduced data duplication.

- Enabled almost 500 staff to access to Microsoft's Home User Programme. As well as offering Office software to staff members at significantly reduced rates, this initiative reinforces staff understanding and competence within these key productivity tools at no cost to the council.

8.2. ECMS – What do we want to do next?

The plans for 2013-16 include:

Efficiency Projects:

- **Citizen Authentication** We will continue to improve our website and access to services online, particularly in relation to the 'tell us once' agenda. The Personalisation agenda is also a business requirement to develop a user-friendly corporate web offering that cuts across delivery silos and offers a truly joined-up service.

- **Enabled Manager - Self Service.** In order to provide managers with seamless data services, the integration of key systems with SharePoint, as part of the model office development, will provide profiled access to data and services such as staff expenses and financial reporting.

- **Business Intelligence and corporate data warehousing** This will provide the capability to support business objectives, more informed and faster decision making, reporting and performance management at all levels across the organisation. This includes the reduction of data duplication through the effective master data management, data integration and cleansing to create a single consistent view of data across the organisation.

Transformational Projects:

- **Location Independent citizen spatial data/mapping (GIS)** Enhancement and re-development of spatial mapping services to improve functionality, understanding and enable access for internal and external customers. These developments will provide a basis for specific projects such as the online publication of Local Plans (Spatial Planning).

- **Customer Web Portal** A customer portal solution will provide the ability to create a single and common interface (or Single Point of Access) to integrate and present disparate solutions and content. This will also allow users to deliver documents directly to both citizens and colleagues from their desktop.

9. Superfast Broadband (SfB)

We believe investment in SfB infrastructure is the single greatest strategic opportunity to drive economic growth and improve the quality of life for all our residents this decade. This project is being developed in partnership with Cheshire West and Chester, Warrington and Halton Councils under the Connecting Cheshire brand; with Cheshire East Council the accountable body and principal delivery agent. We will use public and private sector gap funding to invest in SfB infrastructure in areas of market failure, in particular our outlying rural areas.

Our vision is to reach over 90% SfB coverage by the end of 2015, subject to a European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) grant award, and to ensure businesses and residents can exploit the benefits of faster broadband and put the technology to best use.

A recent study estimated full coverage of SfB would generate a gross impact of £1.3bn in business benefits over the next 15 years across our sub-region. The Connecting Cheshire Partnership has vigorous support from our community, business, political representatives and local government organisations across the sub-region. Faster broadband will underpin future business growth, educational attainment, the delivery of health services, and the transformation of public services. It will make a range of everyday activities carried out by individuals, households and community organisations quicker and cheaper.

In contrast, the lack of SfB where hitherto not commercially viable, especially in our rural areas, is a constraint to unlocking the full potential of our sub-regional economy and enhanced social cohesion. There is a real danger that the 'digital divide' between towns or cities and our more remote and rural communities will become deeper.

9.1. SfB – What have we achieved so far?

- Established an effective partnership and collaborative project delivery team across the 4 councils and project website, see: www.connectingcheshire.org.uk, and developed strong engagement channels with MPs, MEPs, Local Enterprise Partnership and North West Business Leads promoting the virtues of SfB
- Led multiple community and business engagement events across the sub-region promoting better broadband
- Developed a successful Better Broadband for Cheshire media campaign to drive demand registrations to demonstrate strong evidence of need,
- Received £4m from Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) which ha s been matched by the 4 councils
- Submitted a £15m ERDF grant submission in July 2012 focused on the delivery of SfB connectivity to 88% of eligible Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) in known areas of market failure; and to provide a business support programme to maximise take-up and exploitation of technology enabled by SfB e.g. high definition video conferencing, 'cloud computing', telecare, international trade and e-commerce
- Secured EU State Aid approval via a national agreement brokered by BDUK, to permit investment of public money in SfB infrastructure.

9.2. SfB – What do we want to do next?

The plans for 2013-16 include:

Transformational SfB Work streams:

- **ERDF Funding** Confirm approval of £15m grant submission for SfB connectivity for SMEs in areas of market failure.

- **Telecommunications Partner** A key milestone of the project is to appoint a telecommunications provider from the BDUK delivery framework, to undertake the publicly funded rollout of SfB infrastructure across Cheshire, Halton & Warrington. Following publication of our Invitation to Tender (ITT) in December 2012 as part of the BDUK project 'pipeline', we are currently tenth in the queue of forty projects across the UK, we expect the appointment of our partner to be confirmed in spring 2013.

- **SfB Infrastructure** The implementation phase is expected to commence in summer 2013 (subject to procurement approval), with capital investment completed by during 2015. Current economic modelling indicates the project will increase the

availability of SfB services from 70% of homes and businesses to over 96%.

- **Engagement** Work with ERDF eligible businesses, residents and the public sector to stimulate demand and promote the benefits of SfB technologies and reduce digital exclusion.

10. Core System Stability (CSS)

The systems and technologies which underpin the organisation require a lifecycle approach to be maintained, refreshed and replaced to sustain currency, fit for purpose and compliant with mandatory standards. Continued investment in database and server technology is required to preserve the reliability and availability of our core ICT infrastructure in order to ensure that current service levels are maintained. Equipment and applications are only considered for replacement if there is justifiable concern over reliability, capacity to support service demands, fitness for purpose or if there is a strong business case for migration to newer technologies.

Key drivers for CSS methodology include ensuring the organisation can 'keep the lights on' and maintain our 'license to operate' from the government and compliance status, and maintaining software platforms within vendors' support timeframes.

10.1. CSS – What have we achieved so far?

- Completed the consolidation of our Consolidated Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and adoption of a standardised GIS software (ESRI / ArcGIS)
- A reduction in MapInfo Licensing costs across the authority of over £17k
- Implemented a mobile telephony and billing review which resulted in cross-departmental savings of almost £250k

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- Developed a new Financial Reporting Centre which collates and produces customised, consistent and simplified reports for 300 Budget Managers, on track to achieve £150k savings
- Developed a new online public Planning interface which has provided a much simpler and more reliable functionality for users to search and view planning applications and decisions
- Achieved our mandatory Government Connect Code of Connection for sharing of NHS and Department of Work & Pensions information
- Achieved NHS IGSOC accreditation August 2011
- Implemented Intrusion Detection Services to provide additional protection against the risks of cyber attack.

10.2. CSS – What do we want to do next?

The plans for 2013-16 include:

Ongoing Efficiency Projects:

- **Internet Based Services** These will undoubtedly become more common- place within the council as the technology matures, it will be important to assess fitness for purpose and undertake proof of concept activities in order to judge if such software is appropriate and secure.

- **Enterprise Content Management and Records Management** The ongoing creation, management, publication, archiving and disposal of our documents and information, both electronic and hard copy.

- **Service Continuity, Licences and Security Architecture** Continuity and security arrangements, licenses, contracts and technologies will be maintained, consolidated and refreshed to sustain currency, reduce risk and ensure compliance with mandatory standards.

- **Corporate Platforms including Email and Servers** We will sustain, replace and uplift vital core platforms including Exchange (E-Mail), SQL (Database), SharePoint (Collaboration), and replace servers to ensure that key platforms can continue to function. For example, our current storage of 90 million emails is increasing at a rate of over 10 million per year.

- **Retirement/Consolidation of Legacy Systems** Application consolidation will reduce our portfolio from over 400 applications to a more manageable number; this will include the retirement of legacy systems via archiving, application consolidation and/or switching off systems that no longer fulfil any statutory or business requirement.

- **Core System Re-platform** The existing Oracle platform is our key 'back office' system that runs many vital functions such as pay-roll and procurement, but is no longer supported by the supplier and will need moving to a more up to date infrastructure. Similarly, a replacement hardware and software platform is required for our Adult and Children's PARIS business system.

Transformational Projects:

- **Public Service Network** A regional Cheshire & Merseyside network carrying data traffic for the Police, Fire, Local Authorities, and Health Services will replace existing isolated infrastructures, providing an essential foundation for effective multi-agency working, facilitating service flexibility and significant cost savings.

- **Next Generation Desktop** The provision of a standardised ICT systems and services from a range of devices, locations and at varying times in the day; including the centralisation of ICT applications so that they can be delivered more flexibly and efficiently from a data centre rather than installed on each individual users' PC or laptop.

11. Core Financial Systems (Oracle)

The current core financials work programme includes around 50 development proposals aimed at improving and extending existing Oracle functionality.

The work programme includes a number of projects which are considered 'mandatory' in terms of addressing new statutory requirements e.g Pensions auto-enrolment, and national developments such as the transfer of Public Health responsibilities. New tax reporting requirements introduced by HMRC in respect of PAYE are also being tackled.

This programme includes the development of a number of SLE solutions to enable future organisational changes & changes to business delivery. The specific SLE solutions already approved to proceed i.e. Tatton Park Enterprises & Shared Services with potential for further solutions for Bereavement Services, Development Company, Leisure Trust, Catering & Care4CE.

The 2013/14 Oracle Programme will also fund the necessary changes to the HR structure following the management review.

Although there will certainly be a need for on-going investment in core financial systems, alternative options, including the purchase of a fully 'hosted' solution, are being considered. This would effectively shift the responsibility for on-going platform maintenance and development to an external provider, with the Council paying an annual revenue charge for the service, rather than investing its own capital directly. Further work is required however, to determine how such an arrangement would be funded and the potential impact on future revenue and capital requirements.

11.1 Core Financial Systems (Oracle) – What we have achieved so far?

Over the past two years investment in the Oracle system has delivered a significant range of cashable and non cashable savings. Upgrades to the system have provided additional functionality which have enabled savings of over £1m to be delivered across the Council. These include £750k of savings as a result of streamlining Business Management savings, £300k of savings in Finance from process improvements and greater deployment of self serve for budget managers as well as helping to facilitate procurement savings of £700k.

In 12-13 the focus of the investment programme will move away from delivering new functionality to re-orientating the system to meet the changing business requirements of the Council. The restructuring of the Council to a new commissioning model may require significant changes

to the set up of the system and where possible this work would be funded from this capital programme.

In addition, the Council is currently looking at a number of different delivery models (Council owned companies, Trusts etc) in various service areas. If the new companies or Separate Legal Entities continue to use Oracle financials to conduct their business then a major work programme is required to build new business groups which would enable the new companies to trade separately from the Council (e.g. record their own VAT transactions, run their own HMRC compliant payrolls with transactions hitting their own bank account etc). The Tatton Park catering company is already operating as a separate company on the Oracle system and the knowledge gained from this IT build will be applied to future company set ups.

11.2 Core Financial Systems (Oracle) – What we want to do next?

Approval has been given to set up the IT/HR/Finance Shared Services SLE and the financial system will shortly be commissioned and funded from this programme. If additional company set ups are approved then it is likely the majority of the budget will be used to fund the financial system set up costs. Work is ongoing on the business cases to underpin the proposed SLE's.

If resources permit then new Oracle functionality will be funded from the programme and this would deliver targeted process improvements in specific areas. One example of this is bank reconciliation where processes need to be improved so they are fully automated. This in turn should reduce the level of manual intervention required and help the Finance service deliver its existing budget savings for 13-14.

A range of business benefits are being targeted, including cashable and non-cashable savings related to improvements in :-
- back office efficiency
- control and compliance
- financial management information
- usability and access for customers (both internally and externally)
- multi-organisation working

Reduced Cost

- Significant resources are being devoted to the bank reconciliation process. Both Councils have savings targets for their Finance Service to achieve and a more efficient bank reconciliation process would enable the level of resources to be reduced and contribute towards the savings target.

Improve Effectiveness

- To have a fully automated bank reconciliation will reduce to an acceptable level the resources to produce the bank reconciliations

- Where bank accounts are not reconciled the amount of time to investigate issues will reduce

- Reduced level of unaccounted transactions

- Payables and Business Support teams to ensure unaccounted transactions (payments and invoices) are kept within acceptable tolerances

- Reduce the amount of journals produced as the existing system is not fully automated to deal with voided cheques, returned payments, unreconciling of payments etc

Customer Experience

- Reports that are cumbersome to use and therefore making the interpretation of transactions difficult, will be improved and lead to less issues/errors with the bank reconciliations and ultimately the treatment of transactions in the accounts

Business Initiative

- The Councils accounts will not have an potential audit points raised against them

12. **Summary**

ICT will have a critical and expanding role in enabling the Council's ambition, by providing effective methods for customers to access and use our services and to develop new working practices which will improve both our service quality and staff productivity whilst reducing overall costs.

As we move more towards more virtualised ICT provision and internet based services, we will align ourselves with the direction of travel for the industry. In turn this will correspond well with our aspirations of being a flexible and dynamic organisation, able to flex our resources in line with changing business needs.

However in order to maximise the potential of our ICT resources and skills, services will need to engage fully with us to realise the service improvements and cost efficiencies we all seek. As we move towards greater collaboration, shared accommodation and multi-disciplinary teams with our partners across the public sector, the expectations of how our ICT resources can become the key enabler will increase. Only by working with us to truly challenge assumptions, review service requirements from first principles and develop innovative solutions can we develop mutual trust and succeed in our objectives.

13. **Further Information**

A number of detailed technical strategies have been developed to complement this high level overview of the strategic direction of ICT.

These include:
- Desktop Strategy
- Data Centre Strategy
- Telephony Strategy
- Green ICT Strategy
- Flexible and Mobile Working Strategy
- Business Intelligence and Data Warehousing Strategy
- Enterprise Content Management Strategy
- Records Management Strategy
- ICT Sourcing Strategy

Copies of these documents can be found on our ICT Strategy pages on Centranet.

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