DENBIGHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

DIGITAL STRATEGY

2019-2025

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Business Improvement and Modernisation

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Content

Introduction

This document replaces and builds on the core strategic aims and objectives set out in the County Council's last ICT Strategy which ran from 2015-2019 many of the key principles of that strategy remain valid. An Interim Review of the 2015-2019 Strategy was carried out in March 2018 and is attached to this document as an addendum. During the time frame of the last strategy local government has seen unprecedented change with extensive cuts to council budgets and it is important to note that Denbighshire's ICT function has reduced its staffing and overall budget by 20%. It is vital that when adopting this new Digital Strategy, the Council recognises the constraints past and future cuts will have on delivery and the need to prioritise according to the principals set out in the Council's Corporate Plan which runs 2017-2022.

In addition to setting out the strategic direction for Denbighshire's ICT provision, this document will concentrate further on the Digital aspirations of the Council for the period 2019-2025.

The key areas of this Strategy are:

- Aligning systems and technology to deliver truly online council services
- A corporate approach to ICT procurement
- Reshaping how the council works though technology
- Addressing digital exclusion and supporting Denbighshire's digital economy
- Resilience and Business Continuity
- Flexible use of assets by always on connectivity
- Collaborative advantage
- Prioritisation and managing expectations

Aligning systems and technology to deliver truly online council services

Much of the work undertaken in delivering the last strategy was done to bring the Council's ICT assets up to date and to make the very best use of recent investments and the Council's enterprise agreement.

Notable large-scale system implementations such as Open Housing, the C360 Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and Tascomi in Planning and Public Protection have demonstrated that the centralised approach to IT acquisitions, implementation and support has proved successful as previous implementations of Open Housing and CRM had failed. The implementations of Open Housing and CRM were particularly difficult as both systems had been procured prior to centralisation and the scale of the work needed both by ICT and within services was largely underestimated and this has provided valuable experience for the future.

During the lifecycle of this new Digital Strategy the Council will re-procure more large-scale technological solutions notably:

- A new website to ensure Council information and services are accessible online will be commissioned towards the end of 2019 and funded from the Corporate Plan Budget at a cost of £300k
- Replacement core financial systems will be procured, potentially in collaboration with neighbouring local authorities, acquisition costs projected to be £200k funded from service reserves and annual costs similar to current commitments.
- A pan Wales solution for the provision for social care information management (WCCIS Wales Community Care Information System) to facilitate cross sector working. Implementation of WCCIS is likely to begin in 2020 with an uplift in cost of £250k across the lifetime of this strategy.

The central ICT Service has established itself as the Technological Leader for the Council but there are still some areas of the Council where more work is

needed to fully embrace this and the current Centralised Support Services Review (CSSR) will no doubt aid to addressing this.

The majority of systems in use across the Council are now considered fit for purpose but a more centralised strategic approach to their use is needed. This will lead to further back office efficiencies, better supplier management and easier implementation of the Council's digital ambitions as further consolidation will lead to less systems to implement, support and integrate. This is particularly important as the Council itself gets smaller and the need for fully online services is fulfilled.

The provision of a single online sign on for citizens utilising a single corporate CRM should be a core requirement of any public facing IT acquisitions here on.

Key message:

> *By taking a fully corporate and customer centric approach to aligning systems across the Council consolidating where possible the council will be more able to deliver online services to customers as well as delivering efficiencies in back office processes to of set the impacts of reducing the size of the Council. This will be achieved by working with services earlier and treating acquisitions previously seen as departmental as corporate. HR and Payroll are good examples of this and during the lifetime of this Strategy the Council will move to a single provider encompassing both.*

A corporate approach to ICT procurement

Considerable progress has been made in recent years whereby it is almost unheard of that a service would go out and procure a system in isolation. Changes to the Council's constitution requiring the Chief Digital Officers approval and stronger inter service relationships thought the ICT Business

Partners have certainly created a far better environment although there is still much work to be done in gaining a complete picture of all the Council's ICT expenditure and contracts.

Although the central ICT function is much more aware of ICT procurements it still does not have sight of ALL contracts particularly those which still reside in services and are renewed perhaps annually without hitting the thresholds for re-procurement. A large reason for this is that the budget for the vast majority of ICT systems remain in services and this is a blockage to delivering contract efficiencies, the population of the Council's corporate ICT contracts register and contract alignment to facilitate consolidation and standardisation of systems which was one of the goals of the outgoing strategy. There is a need to centralise ALL ICT expenditure including annual contract costs and associated budgets should be centralises to underpin and achieve this.

Key Message:

> *The Council needs to manage its total investment in ICT more robustly to ensure that best value is achieved and other parts of this strategy are fundamentally linked to a corporate approach to procurement. As such a review of all spend on ICT related expenditure will be undertaken during the first year of this Strategy with recommendations taken to CET and SLT highlighting areas where budgets should to be centralised.*

Reshaping how the Council works though technology
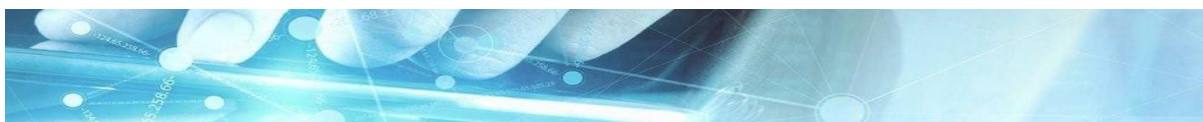
Council's cannot continue to deliver council services in the same way as they have done traditionally, to attempt to do so will risk their ability to provide core and statutory services. A fundamental shift to modern, device agnostic, integrated, technology led, efficient and consolidated solutions will help enable Denbighshire to maintain its provision of services against a backdrop

of uncertainty and the probable continuation of cuts to budget. Again, it is vitally important that the corporate centralised approach adopted in the past strategy is not only maintained but expanded to include systems, contracts and resources not yet realised.

Key Message:

> *During the first year of this strategy, work will be undertaken to capture the termination date of ALL ICT related contracts. This will enable a planned approach to re-procurement or contract extensions. Requirements will be mapped against existing provision thereby removing duplication and lesser the need for multiple venders, systems and integrations providing a more robust and efficient digital environment across the Council.*

Addressing Digital Exclusion and Supporting Denbighshire's Digital Economy

As the Council strives to deliver services online wherever possible, for example for transactions, applications for jobs, planning, social housing, licensing etc it is important that the Council does not lose sight of those citizens and business' who may require assistance in accessing services online or indeed have no alternative but to converse with the Council in a more traditional way. Often it will be the most vulnerable and most at need who require assistance and the council needs to be innovative in its approach, by investigating further the potential to introduce or certainly sign post people to appropriate partners or agencies to assist, as well perhaps having a digital presence in communities with assistance available or indeed supplying using AI to support assisted living.

In collaboration regional partners thorough the NWEAB the Council sees a regional approach as being the best option for ensuring that Denbighshire along with the rest of the North Wales region gets the best provision of high-speed fibre and mobile coverage working in partnership to secure funding

either directly from Welsh Government or Westminster. On a more local level where these interventions are unlikely due to lack of critical mass or lack of commercial viability the council will seek to assist communities in developing innovative community-based solutions, either directly where able to do so or by signposting to other information sources or to cooperatives with similar goals. £220k has been allocated in the Corporate Plan budget to facilitate this.

Key Message:

> *A regional approach providing digital infrastructure is best option for achieving mobile and high-speed fibre this will be achieve during the lifecycle of this strategy in collaboration through the NWEAB and LLFN which will upgrade fibre provision to public buildings as well as completing new fibre builds to strategy commercial premises.*

Resilience and Business Continuity

During the last strategies lifecycle, a more investment was made to improve Business Continuity and Resilience rather than to depend on Disaster Recovery (DR) arrangements when things go wrong. The rational being that good business continuity arrangements would allow the Council's ICT function to continue to operate without instigating DR arrangements. This has proved invaluable where increased capacity and resilience has allowed the Council's ICT provision to meet increased demand during snowfall allowing staff to work remotely, utilising increased provision for internet bandwidths and remote working. As the Council's systems continue to be consolidated and accessed from anywhere staff have a broadband or mobile data connection the requirement for physical office space will continue to fall and this in turn allows staff to work from where they need to be or indeed if they are unable to access their usual place of working.

Maintaining and ensuring existing infrastructure and systems is fundamental to resilience and business continuity and by taking a more corporate approach to the management of the Council's entire ICT spend and budget means that high cost technology refreshes can be planned and budgeted for in advance. The following notably commitments will need to be considered for investment during this strategy:

- EDRMS (Electronic Document Management System): although only recently considered as business as usual the technology has been in use for here for nearly 10 years and will need revisiting and any upgrade or replacement needs to include the ability to share live working documents collaboratively with external partners as well as internally. Experience dictates that he likely cost of replacement being in the region of £300k.

- ICT Core Infrastructure: Towards the end of this strategy a technology refresh of the Council's physical ICT infrastructure will need to be scoped. The ICT infrastructure strategy will need to be reviewed in 2022-23 potentially placing more emphasis on Cloud infrastructure and fully adopting wireless as the default access method for connectivity. Although annual capital funding is likely to cover any acquisition costs this is on the premise that current capital budgets remain and there may be a requirement for additional funding on a case by case basis dictated by business need.

Key Message:

More emphasis on Business Continuity rather than to depend on Disaster Recovery arrangements when things go wrong. An offshoot of which being increased availability to support 24/7 ICT operations.

Flexible use of assets by always on connectivity

The decision taken previously to provide staff with laptops as standard as opposed to desktop PCs allows staff to work flexibly across the council's portfolio of offices and from home. More recently the investment in improved wireless provision across our buildings means that hot desking is now far easier and with early adoption of GovRoam staff will have seamless access to Denbighshire's and its partners ICT functions from across multiple public sector locations such as Health and other Local Authorities buildings.

In addition to taking strategic interventions to ensure Denbighshire's citizens and visitors have access to broadband and mobile data in turn these interventions will enable Denbighshire's workforce to become truly mobile using cellular data services and mobile devices such as phones and tablets to access integrated back office systems seamlessly. The use of such technologies has been and will continue to be a huge enabler in the reduction and consolidation of office space and the modernisation of the council.

Key Message:

> *During the lifetime of this strategy there will be a further shift towards flexible working is highly likely and ICT services will be expected to be available to staff 24/7 as well as the ability to work from almost anywhere moving away from CAG to a certificate-based authentication method during 2019/2020 and the roll out of WebEx will further enhance this capability.*

Collaborative Advantage

The Council already has several ICT collaborations that include regional and national partnerships, (see addendum), and will continue to develop collaborations with partners be they hosted in Denbighshire, partner organisations, nationally or in the cloud. Collaborations should remain an option when procuring or re-procuring when it is advantageous to do so.

Key Message:

> *Collaborations should remain an option when procuring or re-procuring when its advantageous to do so.*

Prioritisation and Managing Expectations

At the beginning of this document reference was made to the unprecedented change and extensive cuts to Council budgets. Some of the impact of this can be offset by capital investment at the beginning of projects for installation and commissioning of new acquisitions but capacity for change will affect the pace at which we can deliver new initiatives, so the Council will need to prioritise.

ADDENDUM:

ICT Strategy Interim Review 2015-19

The purpose of this addendum is to review progress against the 'Business Transformation & ICT Strategy 2015-2019' that the Council approved and adopted in September 2015.

Strategic Principles

1. <u>Consolidation & Standardisation</u>
   A fundamental part of the Strategy is to make the very best use of the Council's Microsoft Enterprise Agreement, (EA), which licenses the Council's use of some core Microsoft products such as Microsoft Word, Excel, Outlook as well as desktop and servers operating systems. Moreover, the EA now provides for disk encryption and device management across the Council's IT assets replacing the previous incumbent solutions and providing cost savings.

   Significant progress has been made in replacing the old Lotus Notes corporate email system with Microsoft Exchange (Outlook), this brings the Council's email system up to date and allows it to integrate seamlessly with other applications and systems. One such system is the new corporate telephone system that includes Unified Communications and has been rolled out across the Council. The new system includes diary integration and presence awareness through Jabber as well as voice and video calls directly to officer's laptops regardless of their location, (including home working).

   Support for core Housing and Social Care systems has been centralised and staff transferred from departments along with the systems they supported, in so doing reducing single points of failure and amalgamating support across multiple staff and facilitating knowledge transfer.

2. Systems Acquisition
The process for all IT acquisitions has been consolidated centrally and the Council's Constitution updated to underpin and ensure that the Business Transformation & ICT Manager signs off IT acquisitions across the Council.

Business Transformation & ICT, (BT&ICT), have led the Council's re-engagement with Civica for the new CRM system acquisition. The ICT Business Partners have developed good relationships with services, which means that BT&ICT is proactively involved in potential ICT acquisitions much sooner that had been the case previously. Examples of this include CRM, Tascomi in Planning & Public Protection and current work includes Finance and HR, but there has been progress across all services.

3. Use of Data
Some progress has been made with developing a Business intelligence capability but there is more to do in this area. Current emphasis is on the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Retention issues. There is also need to review the Council's GIS provision to ascertain if the current software continues to meet the council's requirements and budget priorities.

Delivery Approach

1. Supplier Management
Progress has been made in amalgamating contracts and supplier information centrally by placing contract information onto Proactis. This will provide a clearer view of spend across the council as a whole and allow contracts to be negotiated centrally with suppliers who have previously had multiple contracts with a number of service areas. Coordinating contracts, spend and account management gives the Council more leverage when negotiating contracts. Although good progress made so far, more work is needed to align budgets and capture contract renewals as well as new procurements.

2. Working with partners
    There are well over a dozen examples of collaborative working that include regional and national partnerships. Examples include regional working for Parking Enforcement hosted by Denbighshire, Capita One hosted by Flintshire regionally and national collaborations on IT Security and hardware purchases.

3. Data Retention
    Work undertaken on GPDR and data retention. Out of date Id data has been removed as part of a pilot in Business Improvement & Modernisation. It is planned that this will be extended across the Council. Further work is required to embed the need to review continuously what data we retain, potentially by utilising further Electronic Document Records Management System (EDRMS) modules.

Technical Improvements

1. Scalable Infrastructure
    Work complete on second internet feed in the north to enhance business continuity and resilience and has been successfully tested in a corporate exercise and recent bad weather. Live servers now operate in both the north and the south of the County with failover.
    Remote access (CAG) is now available from both sites, with an increase from 250 to 750 concurrent remote users.

2. Server Environment
    Critical hardware for the PARIS Social Care system is now live and replacement hardware for legacy financial systems procured and on site in testing.
    Virtual Servers renewal is underway, funded though the ICT Development Plan and next year's planned spend brought forward into this financial year.

3. Networking Environment
   Firewalls in Ruthin replaced and cascaded to Rhyl.

   Wireless infrastructure replacement underway. This will also be

   cascaded to schools

4. Systems and database support
   Business Systems are changing the way in which we handle support
   calls. Instead of treating PARIS separately, we will be dealing with all
   requests in the same manner. We will also be implementing a new rota
   where all of our Business Support Officers share support between them.
   The aim is to standardise our support approach, to broaden
   knowledge of systems, to share learning and to share the PARIS support
   across the entire team, this is effective from April 2018, and support for
   Open Housing will follow the same approach.

What's changed?

1. External Environment
   Efficiencies may mean we cannot do everything in the strategy. With
   Local Government Reorganisation potentially on the horizon there may
   be less emphasis on consolidating systems internally and more focus on
   a collaborative approach to amalgamating systems across Councils or
   regionally.
   The growing expectations of customers and the need to keep up with

   the technology they use daily, such as social media, mobile apps and

   24/7 services.

   The advancements in Artificial Intelligence (AI) mean it is now

   something that we can use to help deliver services, particularly in areas

   such as social care helping people to live independently for longer.

2. Corporate Plan
   There is a greater emphasis on enabling and engaging citizens and
   most transactional services need to be available online.
   The trend for Flexible working is likely to continue. Technologies such as
   webex for video conferencing will perhaps become standard, not only
   for Council officers but also with partners and citizens.
   BT&ICT has a key innovation and technical role in the delivery of the

Digital Futures programme.

Priorities

1. <u>Growing expectations of customers</u>
   Support services to develop online transactional Services
   Enabling communities to be digitally connected.
   Improving Denbighshire's Digital Infrastructure

2. <u>Managing efficiencies</u>
   There are some of the things in the Strategy we may not be able to do so prioritising work is required – halting the work to replace Lotus databases is one such example - we need to have a flexible approach.
   Budget alignment across services will need to reflect the centralisation of systems and support.
   Budget pressures mean that BT&ICT capacity will need to be reviewed.

   Focusing on increasing self-help could mitigate the impact of budget pressures.

3. <u>Consolidation</u>
   Review of Payroll and iTrent needs to be completed.
   Revs & Bens (IT) contract needs to be reviewed.

4. <u>Next Steps in flexible working</u>
   Consider successor applications to current remote access (CAG) solution, in order to simplify sign on without compromising security.
   Promote the increased use of WebEx across the Council and with partners and citizens.