

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL
FINANCE, INNOVATION and PROPERTY ADVISORY BOARD

21 June 2017

Report of the Director of Finance and Transformation

Part 1- Public

Matters for Information

1 IT STRATEGY AND PROJECT UPDATE

This report updates Member on the progress, challenges and achievements of the current IT Strategy 2014 to 2017 and ‘sets’ the scene for the preparation of the new IT Strategy.

It also provides an update on progress with the project to replace the Audio/Visual equipment in the Chamber.

1.1 IT Strategy - Background

1.1.1 The current IT Strategy was agreed by FIPAB on 24th September 2014. The Strategy covered the period from 2014 to 2017.

1.1.2 This report sets out the achievements of the current Strategy and highlights the draft themes and topics for the new Strategy covering the period of 2018 to 2022.

1.1.3 The current strategy had four themes;

- Service Modernisation
- Communications
- Website
- Self-Service

1.1.4 Service Modernisation

1.1.5 The ICT infrastructure at Tonbridge and Malling needed an overhaul in order to bring it up to the standard to support further business improvement.

1.1.6 Prior to the strategy coming into effect we had just undergone a programme to eliminate Windows XP from the estate before its retirement from support in July 2014.

1.1.7 Following the adoption of the strategy we delivered;

- New Storage Area Network
- New Virtual Server environment
- Elimination and replacement of legacy Windows Server 2003 installations
- Elimination of legacy Novell software
- Upgrade the wireless infrastructure to make use of tablets more reliable
- Introduce PSN Roam \ Gov Roam to make wifi more useful when visiting other authorities
- Digital training trial ahead of wider rollout to 2nd tier
- Mobile and Flexible working – research and investigations into VDI have resulted in a viable project being introduced ready for the next IT Strategy
- Replaced IDOX DMS with Information@Work for Revs and Bens
- CRM system for Waste Management
- Complaints system
- IDOX Doc Loader for DC
- Parking Samsung phone rollout
- Forward Planning Consultation processing system
- Strategic Housing database for Forward Planning
- PVP register

1.1.8 Areas that we had problems with were;

- Elimination of Windows Server 2003 installations – user departments were not always able to test or implement new systems in a timely manner to assist removing these from the network
- Agile project management – whilst IT staff had been trained a shortfall was that user departments did not understand the process and timescales that have to be met to make the project successful. As a result projects have been run at times convenient for user departments which have made scheduling other projects difficult and led to delays
- Training providers for digital competencies have been hard to find

1.1.9 **Communications**

1.1.10 We delivered;

- New telephone system – Skype for Business
- New contact centre platform – Contact Expert
- New email system – Outlook and Exchange
- New email archiving system – Net Mail

1.1.11 Areas that we had problems with were;

- Transition between old and new telephone system. Very difficult to achieve without significant downtime and inconvenience to users. The linking of old and new systems was complex, had reliability issues, was difficult to manage, and gave a false impression of the reliability of the new system.
- Training on the new phone system. We provided class room training, hand out notes, one to one sessions, and repeat training for anyone that needed it. However, there have still been issues with incorrect use of the system due to users not grasping the concepts of the new system. This has also given a false impression of the new system.
- Transition between old and new email systems. . Same as with telephony, difficult to achieve without significant downtime and inconvenience to users. The linking of old and new systems was complex, had reliability issues, was difficult to manage, and gave a false impression of the reliability of the new system.

1.1.12 **Website**

1.1.13 We delivered;

- New website design which is mobile first and meets accessibility requirements
- Content review with service areas
- Introduced “web chat” to help customers
- Implemented the Social Sign In system and provided training
- Dynamic election results between modern.gov and website

1.1.14 Areas we had problems with were;

- Engagement with users for website testing and content review. There is a perception that this work is low priority and has to be fitted in around other commitments
- Losing the customer champion

1.1.15 **Self Service**

1.1.16 We delivered;

- My Account improvements – auto form population for address details
- Linked My Account to the LLPG for authoritative address data
- Introduced e-billing for Revs and Bens
- Integrated card payments into the website
- Saturday Bulky Freighter scheduling on the website
- Pre-planning advice form with associated payment
- Bulky waste booking online
- Abandoned vehicles reporting (location based form)

1.1.17 Areas we had problems with were;

- Loss of key IT staff at critical times during the project
- Changing specifications for users during development
- Data quality issues in back end databases
- User acceptance testing taking longer than hoped

1.2 **Draft themes for the new IT Strategy 2018 to 2022**

1.2.1 Building upon the IT infrastructure improvements delivered during the life of the previous strategy, the new strategy will look to improve staff efficiency, provide the foundations for effective business transformation and improve customer service.

- 1.2.2 The IT Strategy will provide focus and direction for the transformation and customer service improvement strategies, projects and work streams which are council-wide.
- 1.2.3 Projects arising from the IT Strategy will fall into two categories;
- Corporate – projects for the benefit of everyone (e.g. The adoption of Virtual Desktop Infrastructure)
 - Service Specific – projects assisting the delivery of a particular business outcome (e.g. The Revenues and Benefits Shared Service)
- 1.2.4 During the research phase we are consulting with service areas on their expectations of IT Service Delivery, what they would like to see, what projects they are going to undertake (or would like to undertake) in the next eighteen months and beyond to aid their transformation.
- 1.2.5 The research is also taking into account best practices that other authorities and the wider public and private sector are building into their strategies.
- 1.2.6 Current topics considered for inclusion in the new IT Strategy are;
- Provision of a faster more appropriate computing platform for staff, enabling them to work securely and efficiently whether that be on a desktop PC, laptop, or mobile tablet device.
 - Enable flexible working by providing access to business information and resources from any location at any time.
 - Continued development of the Council website as the most efficient and easiest place to conduct business with the Council.
 - Explore automation and machine learning as a method to improve service improvement and increase customer satisfaction.
 - Improve the quality of data sets in use by the Council so they are consistent, fit for purpose, and provide accurate information to customers on the website assisting with digital transformation of services.
 - Enable the data sets owned by the council to be joined up and used for Data Analytics so we are able to best use the assets we already have.
 - Use Business Intelligence so more informed decisions and evidence backed policies can be used by the Council.
- 1.2.7 It is anticipated that a draft of the new IT Strategy will be presented to this Board in the Autumn.

1.3 COUNCIL CHAMBER AUDIO / VISUAL UPDATE

- 1.3.1 The audio visual equipment in the Council Chamber and Committee Room has been in place for a number of years but is starting to show signs of age and wear-and-tear.
- 1.3.2 The audio conferencing system is no longer supported by the manufacturer making spare parts increasingly hard to find when any components need replacing.
- 1.3.3 The visual system is analogue based and does not provide the modern digital connections in use by current equipment that visitors may wish to connect or that IT are providing.
- 1.3.4 A capital plan evaluation was completed and agreed by Members to provide adequate funding for the replacement of the audio visual equipment.
- 1.3.5 IT and Property Services have commissioned the production of a high level design of audio visual requirements that can be used in a procurement exercise.
- 1.3.6 Property Services have identified a procurement framework that can be used to source supply and installation of equipment.
- 1.3.7 The high level design is in the final stages of review before the procurement exercise commences.
- 1.3.8 The preferred time for installation of the new system is during the summer holiday period when the Council Chamber availability is higher.

1.4 Legal Implications

- 1.4.1 Procurement policy should be followed for all projects arising from the IT Strategy and Council Chamber Audio Visual supply and installation.

1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.5.1 The Capital Plan includes a budget allocation of £95,000 in 2017/18 for the replacement of the Conference system.
- 1.5.2 It also includes a budget allocation of £200,000 in 2017/18 for the Virtual Desktop Infrastructure project which is featured in the IT Strategy.

1.6 Risk Assessment

- 1.6.1 Availability of internal staff resources continues to be a concern although the recent appointment of a new Senior Technical Support Officer will help mitigate this.
- 1.6.2 Corporate strategies, goals and priorities need to align and support each other. The IT Strategy will support the activities and goals set by the Council.

1.7 Policy Considerations

1.7.1 Business Continuity/Resilience

1.7.2 Communications

1.7.3 Customer Contact

1.7.4 Procurement

Background papers:

contact: Darren Everden

Nil

Sharon Shelton
Director of Finance & Transformation