

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**Report by Chief Officer - People and Technology****Corporate Services Committee: 16 August 2023**

Subject: Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Strategy 2023-28**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to set out the ICT Strategy which provides a framework for the design, sourcing, and delivery of ICT services to support new ways of working and enable service area digital transformation.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:

2.1.1 Approve the proposed ICT Strategy 2023-28 (attached as Appendix 1).

3. Background

- 3.1 The previous ICT Strategy was approved at Corporate Services Committee in April 2016 and covered the period 2016–22 and, in line with the associated project plans, significant technology improvements have been delivered during that period.
- 3.2 Consultation on the ICT Strategy has been undertaken with all Chief Officers and other key stakeholders. The Strategy will be reviewed periodically to ensure it is aligned to corporate and chief officer area delivery plans.

Drivers

- 3.3 There are five principal areas that continue to drive changes in the way ICT is used and delivered, namely:
- Increased demand for technology to support digital transformation;
 - New 'Smart' ways of working;
 - The continued rapid pace of significant technological change;
 - The increased global threat to organisations from Cyber Security attacks; and
 - Increasing financial challenges with wholesale under-funding resulting in reductions in capital and revenue budgets.

Investment

- 3.4** There has been sustained investment in ICT during the period 2016- 22, building a solid foundation for the future and enabling delivery of services in new and innovative ways. The main components of investment were:
- Microsoft 365 cloud technology to strengthen resilience, enable service areas to digitally transform and collaborate effectively, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Network Infrastructure including improved performance and increased bandwidth in schools and libraries enabling the use of 12,000 Chromebooks across the education estate.
 - Wireless LAN – upgrade of Wi-Fi access with state-of-the-art technology in council locations, and;
 - Modern Cyber Security technologies and tools to improve our cyber defence and protection against potential security threats.
 - The Council's planned capital and revenue spend on ICT for 2023/24 was approved by Corporate Services Committee in February 2023. ICT spend and plans are centrally governed by ICT Steering Board.

4. Main Issues

- 4.1** There continues to be significant demand pressures and increasing reliance on technology. The strategy provides direction and the priorities that will shape the Council technology environment whilst providing a stable and resilient infrastructure facilitating the most efficient use of resources. Priorities for future investment include:
- Modern technologies that support digital workplaces and sustain smart working from anywhere;
 - Improving and securing the ICT infrastructure to support and innovate service delivery;
 - New service delivery models for ICT services and technologies focusing on cloud appropriate services for increased scalability, resilience, and flexibility; and
 - Delivery of an improving, dependable, and efficient ICT service to enhance employee experiences, drive innovation and improve operational efficiency.

Next Steps

- 4.2** The Council's core infrastructure requires sustained investment in modern technologies in order to deliver future ready architecture. Managing and supporting Smart working environments involves continuous review, and redesign of services around the needs of a digitally enabled and agile workforce.
- 4.3** Investment to deliver fit for purpose network bandwidth and capacity requirements at council locations is essential to support a digital workforce, secure and update council devices with minimal disruption, and to enhance education and learning using technology.
- 4.4** Continue investment in Microsoft 365 technology to design safe, secure, and useful ways of collaborating and to enable services to share the right data securely and appropriately.
- 4.5** Prioritise compliance with data protection regulations, establishing secure data management practices, and protecting data the council store and use.
- 4.6** Cyber Security will continue to be a critical area for investment, research, development, resourcing, and training during the strategy period. As the volume and frequency of cyber-attacks increase, and dependency on systems and data grows, technologies must be secure, and the workforce cyber aware.
- 4.7** In addition to plans for infrastructure and system projects and spend, the ICT Strategy recognises that as the council changes, the demand for ICT support services continues to increase, the service delivery model will be realigned accordingly to ensure employee needs can be met.

5. People Implications

- 5.1** Existing ICT employees will be allocated to the various projects outlined in this report depending on the skills and level of resource required and available. Where a shortfall is identified, or specific technical expertise not held internally is required, ICT will follow the appropriate procurement and governance processes to procure those skills as part of the Capital programme. External support is often required with the introduction of a new technology where supplier support is procured for their expertise.
- 5.2** ICT will consider funding temporary ICT resources for capital projects where a requirement is identified. This approach has been successful for completed projects as it was more cost effective to employ temporary resources, than to engage external suppliers.
- 5.3** Any changes to the current ICT service delivery model, e.g., hosted/cloud services could have an impact on the current ICT resource. These options would be subject to specific and separate business case/option appraisal and submitted for committee consideration at the relevant time.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications

- 6.1** Revenue budget provision exists for all license and maintenance support spend and there is a robust process to ensure that chief officers/nominated senior manager consult with ICT when introducing new systems and services. This ensures systems are appropriately supported by the relevant 3rd party supplier, security requirements are met and ensures visibility in order that related savings and spend can be identified.
- 6.2** The cost estimates for capital spend are based on high level research and may vary due to factors such as inflation and exchange rates but will remain within the existing capital plan approved by Corporate Services Committee in February 2023 as projects can be scaled up or down.
- 6.3** Further funding may be needed to deliver the ICT Strategy and any such bid would be the subject of specific reports for consideration by committee or the Section 95 officer as appropriate.
- 6.4** ICT capital spend will be via framework agreements and processes are in place to evaluate best value for the council. Spend on infrastructure and systems will involve competitive tendering processes, in line with procurement guidance as part of the annual review of ICT planned spend.

7. Risk Analysis

- 7.1** There is a risk that the actual capital project costs may exceed the capital project estimates. This risk can be mitigated by a range of procurement strategy options being explored as well as building scalability into the tender, for example, reducing the number of devices being replaced or specification of the device.
- 7.2** There is a risk that the Council is unable to resource the delivery of the ICT Strategy. This will be mitigated by undertaking a periodic review of the strategy and ensure alignment to corporate and service priorities. Where additional funding is required, separate business case(s) will be made.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 8.1** A screening has been conducted and there is no impact on any specific group. The ICT Strategy is technology based to support all relevant council employees in their service delivery.
- 8.2** In the event that a service delivery change is being considered, this will be submitted as a separate report where required in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation and an equalities screening will be undertaken.

8.3 Our approach to supporting change and improvements, will proactively take consider accessibility and usability of systems and their interaction for users. This is especially important for disabled people.

8.4 In relation to Artificial Intelligence (AI), our approach will be in line with the [Equality and Human Rights Commissions guidance](#) in use of AI in the public sector, and proactively considering equality implications.

9. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

9.1 In accordance with contract strategy development and the Scottish Government Sustainability toolkit, the council will explore sustainability opportunities in all tenders.

10. Consultation

10.1 The appropriate Legal and Finance officers have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

11. Strategic Assessment

11.1 High quality ICT equipment and services contribute to the Council's strategic priority of best use of technology to support service delivery and the everyday lives of residents, and ensuring employees are provided with the technology needed to do their jobs effectively.

Victoria Rogers
Chief Officer - People and Technology
3 July 2023

Person to Contact: James Gallacher, Manager of ICT

Appendices: ICT Strategy 2023-28
EIA – ICT Strategy 2023-28

Background Papers: 8 February 2023 Council – P&T Revenue and Capital Spend

Wards Affected: None