

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

15 APRIL 2010

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

GOVERNMENT ICT STRATEGY: SMARTER, CHEAPER, GREENER

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report informs Cabinet of the recently published Government ICT strategy for the public sector and how it may impact upon the provision of information technology services to the Council in future.

2 SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STRATEGY

- 2.1 HM Government Cabinet Office recently issued the Government ICT Strategy which can be accessed on <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/cio/ict.aspx> . The scope of the strategy is clearly stated in its introduction; “The strategy applies to all of the UK public sector, whether central government, local government, wider public sector or devolved administrations”.
- 2.2 The objective of the strategy is to achieve across the public sector (at the end of a ten year period) an annual saving of £3.2 billion on the current annual expenditure of £16 billion by delivering common infrastructure, common standards and common capabilities across the public sector.
- 2.3 A key change is that “organisations will be able to take advantage of a cross public sector software licence that is assigned to the Crown and transferable across the public sector adopting a ‘pay as you go’ model paying only for consumption or use of services”.
- 2.4 When the strategy has been delivered it is envisaged that local authorities will purchase IT services from the Government “cloud” (G-Cloud) of suppliers.
- 2.5 The G-Cloud is a name for a Government organised shared service for delivering technology to the public sector which will provide benefits such as economies of scale, reduced procurement requirements, pay as you go or use instead of investment and spare capacity and enabling organisations to take a mix and match approach as circumstances allow.
- 2.6. The Government ICT Strategy forms part of the Operational Efficiency Programme which was reported to Cabinet on 9 December 2009.

3 DELIVERING THE STRATEGY

3.1 The Strategy identifies the following 14 strands of work to increase the ability to hold, access and exchange information across the public sector:-

- Public Sector Network
- The G-Cloud
- Data centres
- Applications Store (G-AS)
- Shared services
- Common desktop
- Architecture and standards
- Open Source, Open Standards and Re-Use
- Greening of ICT
- Information security and assurance
- Professionalism in ICT
- Reliable project delivery
- Supply management
- International alignment and co-ordination

3.2 There will clearly be a developing impact on the Council ICT Strategy. As information becomes available the table in the appendix will be updated and reported to the Information Strategy Group (ISG) and reflected in the Council ICT Strategy.

4 BENEFITS OF THE STRATEGY

4.1 Cost: through combined volumes and pay per use models service cost reductions should be achievable and investment and overcapacity reduced.

4.2 Change: acquisition times should be reduced through streamlined procurement and by enabling piecemeal acquisition of fragments of systems.

4.3 Quality: shared use of systems will shorten implementation times and improve quality.

4.4 Sustainability: shared data centres hosting shared processing and storage capacity will give degrees of resilience that individual local authorities would find difficult to afford.

5. OMISSIONS

5.1 The Strategy primarily focuses on the Government and references to Local Government are secondary and are to emphasise that the strategy should also apply to Local Government.

5.2 The strategy focuses on the provision of ICT and not the use of it to revise the delivery of services.

5.3 There is no reference to the Third Sector which is expected to develop a greater role in service delivery.

5.4 Issues related to data ownership, handling and assurance are not covered.

6 IMPACT ON THE ICT STRATEGY

6.1 In the long term the impact of the Government strategy should change the way in which local authorities provide ICT services.

6.2 The current model of provision is one in which, by and large, local authorities procure:

- wide area networks
- service applications
- desktop equipment
- servers and data storage hardware,

sited in sole user data centres and support those technology areas to a greater or lesser degree in-house although some services are out-sourced.

6.3 The timing of the impact will depend on the availability of the cloud services, the service life of the areas concerned and where the Council is in the lifecycle e.g.

Technology Area	Typical Lifecycle (years)	Replacement Cycle
Wide area network	Three to four	Currently tendered, implement 2010, future partnership opportunities under consideration
Desktop equipment	Four to six	Subject to review in support of SAR. New environment will extend lifecycle to seven to ten years
Corporate servers	Five	Currently tendered, replace 2010,
Storage area network	Five	Replaced 2009
Service applications	Ten plus	Various e.g. Revenues and Benefits 2006, HR/ Payroll replacement 2010
Data centre	Twenty	Under consideration, linked to SAR and partnership opportunities

7. G-CLOUD

- 7.1 The availability of services through the G-Cloud will over the long term dramatically change the way in which ICT services are procured and delivered and eventually result in considerable economies.
- 7.2 When decisions are required in particular technology areas they will have to be measured against the availability and maturity of services available from the G-Cloud and this will be reflected in the ICT Strategy.

8 FINANCIAL AND STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no financial or staffing implications for the Authority at this stage.
- 8.2. The Operational Efficiency Programme targeted a 20% reduction in Government ICT expenditure over the period from 2009 to 2014.

9 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

10 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

11 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

12 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

13 PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

14 LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1 There are no particular implications for any Members or wards arising out of this report.

15 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 15.1. The Government ICT Strategy – Cabinet Office - February 2010.

16 RECOMMENDATION

- 16.1 That the ICT Strategy be reviewed to incorporate the proposals in the Government ICT Strategy.

IAN COLEMAN
DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

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