Implementation of IT control improvements and risks

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1.0   Summary

1.1   This report provides an update on work being undertaken to ensure that the ICT infrastructure is, and continues to be, fit for purpose; robust; PSN compliant; improving business continuity and mitigating risks. It is also to ensure that the direction of travel is aligned to both business and strategic objectives to provide the necessary assurance levels required.

2.0   Recommendations

2.1   It is recommended that the committee note the progress made in addressing assurance and risk around ICT infrastructure.

REPORT

3.0   Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

3.1   ICT operations and infrastructure remains central to supporting the Council in delivering its strategic objectives and business activities. Increasing reliance on ICT coupled with changes to organisational structures has meant that resourcing allocation and the requirements of external compliance frameworks, including PSN connectivity, have placed significant demands and requirements on the delivery of corporate ICT.

3.2   These demands are represented on the strategic risk register and regularly reviewed, as the risk to both business continuity and the delivery of the Council's strategic objectives from any disruption or loss to ICT provision carries the potential for significant consequences, operationally, financially and legally.

3.3   Work continues to take place around both addressing known risks and identifying new risks as they emerge. This activity is fed into existing work streams and also included in future work programmes and forward planning.

4.0 Financial Implications

4.1 ICT budgets remain under constant review and whilst operation savings have been identified as part of routine business rationalisation, additional resources have been allocated where necessary to address specific risks or matters that fall outside known or planned operational activity, including this year's changes to PSN compliance requirements that were mandated by Cabinet Office.

5.0 Background

5.1 Customer Involvement is responsible for ICT Services; Customer Services; Digital Services; BluPrint (Print and Mailroom services), the Local Support and Prevention Framework; Discretionary Housing Payments; and the commissioning of Communications from ip&e.

5.2 The development of a Customer Involvement Strategy is an important strand in providing a clear direction of travel and activity roadmap. The draft strategy includes a number of outcomes that support the implementation of IT control improvements and seek to address and/or mitigate risk. Work on PSN compliance for 2015 is progressing well – but remains challenging.

5.3 As part of the previous report to Audit Committee, reference was made to the development of a new ICT Governance Framework. This framework will ensure that there is sufficient control, robustness and risk management around the development and/or procurement of IT systems, whether centrally managed, or operated by individual service areas. It will also ensure that all developments are in line with the Council's strategic objectives and are standards compliant, including for PSN accreditation. It is likely that framework will be in place and operational by January 2015.

5.4 A key part of the strategy includes the driver to move infrastructure and line of business systems to a Cloud based environment and in doing so increase business continuity and mitigate the risks associated with loss of access to, or failure of, one of the Council's data centres.

5.5 Aside of the development of the ICT governance framework (as part of the Information Governance Group IGG), work is in progress to adopt ITIL (Information Technology Infrastructure Library) standards for IT Service Management. It is anticipated that work will be completed by January 2015.

5.6 The Information Governance Group, chaired by Head of Legal, Strategy & Democracy (the Council's Senior Information Risk Owner – SIRO), ensures that measures are in place to manage Council information to meet legal and external compliance requirements and in accordance with Council's Information Risk Policy. This includes ensuring that the Council has appropriate assurance and security controls in place for IT services.

5.7 Work in this area has already advanced and the migration to Office 365 (including Outlook email) and Lync telephony to the Cloud is now almost complete. Work is also underway to move other significant line of business

systems to the Cloud, including those used by Revenues and Benefits and Property Services. Other systems are at the early phase of the procurement process and progress on these can be reported on in due course.

5.8 Ten key IT systems have been identified and where these systems are not already Clouded, work is being undertaken on to assess their suitability for Cloud hosting. In meeting the Cabinet Office's 2015 PSN compliance standards we will also be required to upgrade parts of the Council's main server farm, therefore hosted solutions will be the preferred solution for this work wherever possible.

Key System	Function
Capita ONE	Education Management
CareFirst	Social Care (Adults and Children's)
Civica ICON	Income & provides other system interfaces
Confirm	Environmental Maintenance
DARWIN	CRM & provides other system interfaces
ESRI GIS	GIS mapping (many dependencies)
IDOX - Uniform	Planning, Dev Control, Trading Standards
Northgate iWorld	Revenues & Benefits
Northgate Resourcelink	HR& Payroll
SAMIS	Finance & provides other system interfaces

5.9 Work on the ICT systems register continues and is now available to be shared, at a high level, with the Audit Committee. The next phases of development include chronicling system inter-dependencies and subsidiary software – which is required to ensure that PSN compliance is maintained. The system register is also being aligned with the Emergency Plan and individual service area recovery plans.

5.10 Aside of the development of the ICT governance framework (as part of the Information Governance Group IGG), work is in progress to adopt ITIL (Information Technology Infrastructure Library) standards for IT Service Management. It is anticipated that work will be completed by January 2015.

5.11 Considerable work has been undertaken on the future plans for both disaster recovery and business continuity. Disaster recovery (DR) represents the ability of the organisation to recover data and/or restore systems in the event of a catastrophic failure of the primary datacenter and represents the Council's data 'backup' provision. All key systems have disaster recovery contingency in place, but processes and procedures are constantly under review.

5.12 Business Continuity relates to the ability of the organisation to operate a 'business as usual' service during an emergency that could include the loss of (or access to) the primary datacentre. As technology evolves, and reliance on ICT systems increases, the requirement to restore system quickly following interruption to service from disruption, for example from flood, power or internet loss becomes paramount.

5.13 Direction set out in the Customer Involvement Strategy, includes moving key systems to Cloud based provision which includes disaster recovery and business continuity as a precursor and work is already underway to Cloud a number of key line of business systems. The development of the ICT Governance Framework will also ensure that this ethos continues to be embedded in the development of all future ICT provision.

5.14 Business continuity requirements are though constantly evolving, as both technology and infrastructure change, and a paper is being prepared for Directors which will outline the options around a number of different approaches to enhancing and providing assurance around future provision. This is currently being aligned with the Customer Involvement Strategy and ICT architecture roadmap.

5.15 Subject to financial approval, and as part of this process, the programme includes the relocation of the secondary data centre by January 2015.

5.16 ICT, like all Customer Involvement Services, is subject to significant audit observation and all audit recommendations are accepted, addressed and factored into ongoing work programmes and are accounted for within the Customer Involvement strategy and relevant service plans.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)
Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder) Mike Owen
Local Member
Appendices