

# ICT Strategy

Stakeholder Document



*Epping Forest District Council*



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## Introduction

As with all technology, changes develop rapidly, which has led to a review of our 2018-2023 ICT Strategy and a decision to replace this with a two-year strategy for 2020-22.

The intention of the 2018-2023 ICT Strategy was to improve corporate performance and customer service, improve ICT performance, enable the reduction in accommodation, and the changes in the use of that space and to enable users to work flexibly and more efficiently. All of those intentions remain the same.

The roll out of laptops to employees, as well as the roll out of O365 Teams were achieved by the current strategy and both support flexible and remote working.

This document is for Stakeholder use and sets out the overall aims and objectives of the revised ICT Strategy for 2020-22. By the end of this period there will be a new Corporate Plan, that will require a new ICT Strategy.

Alongside this document there will be a programme of works that captures actions, key milestones, risks and mitigation, interdependencies, a communications plan, programme governance, an issue log, budget V actual spends and other items.

Updates on key milestones will be presented at the Stronger Council Quarterly Performance meetings.

## Who are ICT Stakeholders?

Anybody with a vital interest in ICT, including all employees and Members.

## Aim

The aim of the revised ICT Strategy is to focus on improving the basics, by making better use of what we already have and investments that we have already made. This aim promotes an element of the Council's Customer Strategy; fixing the basics and an element of the MHCLG Local Digital Declaration; fixing our own plumbing.

Each theme of the ICT Strategy supports an area of the Council's Corporate Plan, with the aim to become Customer First and to be Digital by Default.

Technology alone cannot change the way we work; it should be an enabler to support and facilitate the organisation to have a digital focus.

The ICT Strategy promotes the **Business Services Principles** of

- providing excellent advice and service to our customers
- building resilience
- building flexibility and agility in terms of thinking, ways of working and service delivery, and
- driving continuous improvement

The ICT Strategy also reflects the **Councils drivers for change**

- Customers – Building services around the people we serve
- Efficiency – Making the very best of our people, time and money
- Effectiveness – An agile, flexible workforce achieving our ambitions and working together and in partnership

## Costs

A budget of £1.2m has been allocated through the budget process for 2020-2022 to support the delivery of the Strategy. There will be a resource cost associated with every theme.

## Key Themes overview

	Strategy Theme	FY 20/21	FY 21/22	Stronger Council	Stronger Communities	Stronger Place	Essential Maintenance	Corporate Compliance
1	People/restructure of ICT	✓		✓			✓	✓
2	Reimplementation of HOTH - Service Desk Software	✓		✓			✓	✓
3	Accommodation Programme	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4	Flexible and remote working	✓		✓	✓	✓		
5	Device, desktop and laptop strategy	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
6	Mobile Phone review	✓		✓	✓		✓	
7	Infrastructure review	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
8	Cyber Security review	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
9	Business Application Review	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
10	New Housing and Asset Management ICT Solution	✓	✓	✓			✓	
11	Supporting the Customer Strategy	✓	✓	✓	✓			
12	Members Digital Roadmap	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

## Key themes detail

What are we doing? What are the benefits?

### 1. People/restructure of ICT

The changes proposed are to reorganise the ICT Team at the Team Manager and Employee level. As part of the People Strategy most of the Council has been through this process, however, some Teams in Business Services were put on hold for various operational reasons and ICT was one of those teams.

Whilst the proposed restructure reduces FTE, we will be increasing the capability of the ICT Team and making improvements to the operating model, whilst adopting best practices and frameworks.

We will be assessing service provision throughout the delivery of the Strategy and may need to supplement resources at certain points, where additional interim capacity is required.

Benefits: The organisation should expect to see a reduction in operating costs and a structure designed to (a) ensure skills and capability in place to support overall strategy (b) continue to deliver our transformation programme and continuous service improvement, resulting in service improvements.

### 2. Reimplementation of HOTH (House on the Hill) - Service Desk Software

Most employees would have used HOTH as an internal customer to log service requests or faults and we often hear of frustrations regarding how complex it can be to use. ICT also use HOTH to receive and manage their workloads.

The current version has been heavily customised and is no longer fit for purpose, so we are currently working with the provider to reimplement a simpler version.

Benefits: The new version will be user friendly and will contain an ICT asset management module and a variety of management reports that we require to monitor and measure performance across ICT, which we can share with our Stakeholders.

### 3. Accommodation

The Accommodation Programme requires substantial ICT support to provide high quality ICT services and technology solutions to support the Council in delivering excellent services to residents, regardless of the office location. There is a separate milestone plan for this programme, which includes supporting decant, cabling, audio and visual provisions and testing and commissioning of workspaces.

Once we return to the building following the refurbishment works, we know that the space will be used in a different way, allowing collaboration, so we need audio and visual provisions that are fit for purpose.

Whilst building our audio and visual architecture, we will also review our telephony with the intention to reduce costs and move to a modern cloud hosted and managed

solution, whilst ensuring the solution is fit for working remotely and supporting the Customer Contact Centre as the largest user group.

Benefits: The ability to generate income via use of the meeting spaces available. An improved telephony user experience, also resulting in improved customer service.

#### **4. Flexible and remote working**

Where their role permits, all employees have been issued with an EFDC laptop to enable them to work flexibly and remotely.

We have also rolled out O365 Teams so that employees can communicate with their colleagues or teams without being in the same location. We are due to enable the external use of Teams, so that those we communicate with outside of the organisation can also use this method to connect with our employees; making collaboration easier.

As we move towards a 6/10 desk ratio and employees want to take advantage of the opportunity to work in a different way, we want to ensure that employees have the best possible working experience when working away from the office, with a well-maintained infrastructure, security provision and reliable connectivity using an EFDC laptop, a mobile device or their own computer equipment.

The wider Office 365 rollout will enable staff to access Office 365 tools on any device including a mobile phone and will reduce the costs of using other current technologies (Blackberry mobile).

EFDC have recently signed up to be a user of Gov Roam Wifi and are in the process of carrying out the necessary works to go live. The use of Gov Roam Wifi means that our employees will be able to connect to and work from any other site that is Gov Roam Wifi enabled, and EFDC will be able to host those employees who have had their devices enabled with Gov Roam Wifi; this allows collaboration and an opportunity to work in a different way and from various other sites.

Benefits: The ability to work flexibly and remotely, whilst collaborating with colleagues and partners and meeting the 6/10 desk ratio requirement.

#### **5. Device, desktop and laptop strategy**

We are currently in the process of ensuring that all ICT devices are on supported versions of operating systems and application software; reducing support issues.

We will standardise on fewer remote connection methods (VPN), which will drive small cost reductions over time.

Up until recently we did not have any policies in place around what was being installed on lap tops and the set-up of laptops; we now do.

The team that manage our Servers, Security and Network are currently separate to the team that manage and support desktops, laptops, iPads and mobile phones,

which can cause delays in finding resolutions for users. In the restructure, those areas of responsibility sit together in one team, providing a quicker turnaround time on resolutions.

Benefits: A reduction in ICT's effort in maintaining the ICT estate through use of automated tools, resulting in an improved user experience.

## **6. Mobile phone review**

As an organisation we currently have a contract for in place for 700 mobile phones, which would mean that every employee has at least one mobile phone, and in some cases, two.

The purpose of this review is to understand our assets by carrying out an audit of mobile phones not being used to reduce the volume in the current contract and then significantly reduce current costs by (a) encouraging and supporting BYOD (visibility of EFDC emails on a personal device) and (b) negotiating a contract with a supplier.

Once this review has been carried out we must ensure that there is a management process in place for requesting the purchase of a mobile phone.

Benefits: A reduction in the cost of our mobile phone contract.

## **7. Infrastructure review**

The Council currently has its own private network, which is set up and managed well, however, this comes with a dependency on the Civic Office and a limited Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery capability, resulting in business risks.

Focusing on Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery, ICT Consultants, Itica, have recently carried out an options appraisal which explores cloud hosting of our server infrastructure, resulting in an optimum BC/DR service.

As an interim measure, we are currently increasing the speed of our current network.

Benefits: Increases resilience across the network and users that work from satellite offices and from home will notice an increase in the speed of their technology.

## **8. Cyber Security Review**

We recognise that users often become frustrated by our heightened ICT security, as it can be a barrier to operating as a modern business and this also generates lots of contact to the Service Desk regarding blockers.

Due to the security methods that we use, we are fortunate to have never had any major security issues or breaches with ICT and we must continue to remain PSN and Coco Compliant, whilst ensuring the right balance between threat protection and delivering a modern ICT service.

Decisions on a balance of risk acceptance and usability will be made by the Leadership Team, rather than the responsibility being with our Security Officer(s),

whilst also carrying out an independent reviewing and seeking advice from other Councils.

Benefits: Improved user experience in modern ways of working and a reduction of contact to the Service Desk.

## **9. Business Application Review**

There are currently 90 plus applications used across the organisation. We are in the process of building a portfolio of all of these applications, including user groups, costs, and contract renewal information; amongst many other things. We will need the support of the organisation to identify any 'grey', unsupported applications that we may not be aware of.

By working with the business, we want to ensure that the Council is getting optimum value for money from its business applications, whilst reviewing if they are fit for purpose and for the future by reviewing the compatibility of the application with mobile devices, our CRM tool and integration with online web services, as well as the suppliers plans to move towards a web based or cloud hosted service.

This review will also identify duplication, reduce unnecessary use of spreadsheets and associated risks and ensure that business applications can support Council's strategic objectives (we will devise a plan for those that cannot, including options appraisal/soft market testing).

We will work with the organisation to prioritise which order we review applications in.

We will create a blueprint for assessing all potential new applications.

As the restructure introduces Business Partner roles, they will be responsible for monitoring and managing supplier performance and with the reimplementation of HOTH our data regarding faults and issues will drastically improve.

Benefits: Applications that are value for money and fit for purpose. Improved supplier performance. A reduction in duplication across applications, resulting in a reduction in processing time. An increase in online self-service options for customers; resulting in a reduction of direct contact to the Customer Contact Centre. A reduction in the total cost of Business Applications.

## **10. New Housing and Asset Management ICT Solution**

ICT Consultants, Itica, are currently supporting EFDC to procure a Housing and Asset Management ICT solution, to replace the current of the end-of-life application; starting with a Housing Repairs module.

Benefits: A reduction in the use of spreadsheets and associated risks, increase in staff performance through automation of tasks, digital service delivery, mobile service delivery, increased tenancy sustainability, improved revenue collection and debt prevention.



## 11. Supporting the Customer Strategy

Proposed structure introduces a Business Partner and Assistant Business Partner roles focusing on Digital Focus, with a considerable amount of their capacity being focused on supporting our Customer function. Their focus will remain on automation of tasks and processes.

Benefits: An increase in online self-service options for customers; resulting in a reduction of direct contact to the Customer Contact Centre and a reduction in back office time of processing requests.

## 12. Members Digital Road Map

Cabinet have drafted a digital road map for Members, which in the main features across the key themes listed above. Members will be treated as a business unit in their own right throughout the delivery of the ICT Strategy.

Benefits: Improved user experience and an uptake in the use of technology solutions.

## High level timeline

Key Theme	FY 2020/21				FY 2021/22			
	FQ1	FQ2	FQ3	FQ4	FQ1	FQ2	FQ3	FQ4
People/restructure of ICT								
Reimplementation of HOTH - Service Desk Software								
Accommodation Programme								
Flexible and remote working								
Device, desktop and laptop strategy								
Mobile Phone review								
Infrastructure review								
Cyber Security review								
Business Application Review								
New Housing and Asset Management ICT Solution								
Support of the Customer Strategy								
Members Digital Roadmap								