

Scrutiny Standing Panel Agenda



Customer Services and ICT Scrutiny Standing Panel Wednesday, 7th February, 2007

Place: Committee Room 1, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping

Time: 7.30 pm

Democratic Services Officer: S G Hill - Senior Democratic Services Officer
Tel: 01992 564249 Email: shill@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Members:

Councillors Mrs M McEwen (Chairman), Mrs P K Rush (Vice-Chairman), Mrs D Borton, R Church, M Cohen, P McMillan, Mrs C Pond, Mrs P Richardson, Mrs P Smith, Mrs L Wagland and J M Whitehouse

PLEASE NOTE THE DATE OF THE MEETING

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. NOTES OF THE LAST PANEL MEETING (Pages 5 - 10)

To consider and approve the notes of the last meeting of the Panel held on 27 November 2007 (attached)

3. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)

(Head of Research and Democratic Services) To report the appointment of any substitute members for the meeting.

4. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

(Head of Research and Democratic Services). To declare interests in any items on the agenda.

In considering whether to declare a personal or a prejudicial interest under the Code of Conduct, Overview & Scrutiny members are asked pay particular attention to paragraph 11 of the Code in addition to the more familiar requirements.

This requires the declaration of a personal and prejudicial interest in any matter before an OS Committee which relates to a decision of or action by another Committee or

Sub Committee of the Council, a Joint Committee or Joint Sub Committee in which the Council is involved and of which the Councillor is also a member.

Paragraph 11 does not refer to Cabinet decisions or attendance at an OS meeting purely for the purpose of answering questions or providing information on such a matter.

5. **TERMS OF REFERENCE / WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 11 - 14)**

(Chairman/Lead Officer) The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has agreed the Terms of Reference of this Panel and associated Work Programme. This is attached. The Panel are asked at each meeting to review both documents.

6. **MAJOR PROJECTS - PROGRESS REPORT**

(Head of Information, Communication and Technology) To receive an oral report on the progress with major ICT related projects.

7. **DESKTOP STRATEGY (Pages 15 - 32)**

(Head of ICT) To consider the attached report and proposed strategy.

8. **REPORTS TO BE MADE TO THE NEXT MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

To consider which reports are ready to be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its next meeting.

9. **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

Exclusion: To consider whether, under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press should be excluded from the meeting for the items of business set out below on grounds that they will involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the following paragraph(s) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act (as amended) or are confidential under Section 100(A)(2):

Agenda Item No	Subject	Reason Confidential
10	Microsoft Enterprise Agreement	The item is confidential as provided for by Regulation 21(1)(A) of the Local Authority (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2000

The Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, which came into effect on 1 March 2006, requires the Council to consider whether maintaining the exemption listed above outweighs the potential public interest in disclosing the information. Any member who considers that this test should be applied to any currently exempted matter on this agenda should contact the proper officer at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.

Confidential Items Commencement: Paragraph 9 of the Council Procedure Rules contained in the Constitution require:

- (1) All business of the Council requiring to be transacted in the presence of the press and public to be completed by 10.00 p.m. at the latest.
- (2) At the time appointed under (1) above, the Chairman shall permit the completion of debate on any item still under consideration, and at his or her discretion, any other remaining business whereupon the Council shall proceed to exclude the public and press.
- (3) Any public business remaining to be dealt with shall be deferred until after the completion of the private part of the meeting, including items submitted for report rather than decision.

Background Papers: Paragraph 8 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules of the Constitution define background papers as being documents relating to the subject matter of the report which in the Proper Officer's opinion:

- (a) disclose any facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the report is based; and
- (b) have been relied on to a material extent in preparing the report and does not include published works or those which disclose exempt or confidential information (as defined in Rule 10) and in respect of executive reports, the advice of any political advisor.

Inspection of background papers may be arranged by contacting the officer responsible for the item.

10. MICROSOFT ENTERPRISE AGREEMENT (Pages 33 - 36)

(Head of ICT) To consider the attached restricted report.

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EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
NOTES OF A MEETING OF CUSTOMER SERVICES AND ICT SCRUTINY STANDING
PANEL
HELD ON MONDAY, 27 NOVEMBER 2006
IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2, CIVIC OFFICES, HIGH STREET, EPPING
AT 7.30 - 8.50 PM

Members Present:	Mrs M McEwen (Chairman), , Mrs D Borton, R Church, P McMillan, Mrs C Pond, Mrs P Smith and J M Whitehouse
Other members present:	S Metcalfe and Mrs D Collins
Apologies for Absence:	Mrs P K Rush and Mrs P Richardson
Officers Present	A Scott (Head of Information, Communications and Technology), S G Hill (Senior Democratic Services Officer), V Evans (Customer Services Manager, ICT) and Z Folley (Democratic Services Assistant)

Also in attendance:

11. NOTES OF THE LAST PANEL MEETING

The notes of the meeting held on 21 November 2005 were agreed.

12. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)

No substitutes had been appointed.

13. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were made.

14. TERMS OF REFERENCE / WORK PROGRAMME

The Panel considered their new terms of reference.

In relation to item (1) it was noted the Portfolio Holder had agreed to temporality suspend the Customer Services and Transformation Programme (CSTP) in order for the Council to give the necessary resource priority to the waste management project. As an interim measure the Panel would consider feedback from the Customer Services Working Group on current customer service activities across the Council.

The Panel asked if the recent discussions on the Single Non - Emergency Number Programme would affect the CSTP? The Head of ICT clarified that despite the decision to abandon the project due to the financial costs of the Essex wide bid, the Council still intended to go ahead with its plans for a local scheme.

The new Terms of Reference was endorsed and referred to the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny on 9 November 2006 for consideration.

15. WEBCASTING PILOT

The Senior Democratic Services Officer presented a progress report on the web – casting project. The report asked the Panel to consider the proposal to extend the existing pilot contract period until 31 March 2008 and subject to this receive a full evaluation of the pilot in the new municipal year. The Panel were also asked to consider whether the Portfolio Holder should be asked to seek the inclusion of a bid for the Chamber Speech Reinforcement system in the final capital programme and express views on potential new uses of the system.

It was reported that on 4 September 2006, the Council had commenced a one year webcasting pilot with an end date of 3 August 2007 with funding provision from the Government IEG Budgets. The contract had been due to commence in July 2006 but this had been put back to August 2006 due to negotiations about its content particularly the end date and action to ensure installation of equipment in the Council Chamber was of the highest quality during installation.

It was reported that the introduction of the system had gone very smoothly with public and member acceptance. No problems had been experienced with the technical elements of the webcasting except with Members forgetting to switch their microphones on before speaking. A bid for a replacement microphone system had been included in the draft Civic Office planned maintenance budget for 2007/08 which would very much determine the success of continued webcasting. The Panel requested the inclusion of the bid in the final Cabinet Programme for next year.

The system was leased from a company called Public – i which ‘hosted’ the system minimizing the impact the system had on the Council’s IT system. At each meeting monitoring was undertaken by the staff at the company which ensured that the continued streaming of the webcast.

Officers currently had been able to webcast at least one meeting a week and envisaged continuing this until contract expiry. Operational duties had been split between Committee Officers and Public Relations who were enthusiastic about the project and currently engaged in operational training. The intention was to train as many officers as possible.

The Panel noted an analysis of visits to live and archived meetings showing that the levels of web - cast viewing was equal to that of a number of London Boroughs, and greater than neighbouring Districts using webcasting. To date 1500 visits had been received averaging about 500 a month. Only 7% of this was from internal officer viewing. The Senior Democratic Services Officer gave a short presentation showing the main pages on the site including the section for feedback.

The scheme had been publicised by press releases, the Forester and through a page on the website. Local coverage in the press had been broadly positive. Extracts of which were before Members.

In terms of future projects it was noted that there was a number of types of webcasts that officers wished to trial including:

- (a) Using the webcast equipment outside of the Chamber; (i.e. In the Committee Rooms for Panel meetings)
- (b) Using the webcast equipment off site – plans included Area Planning

Subcommittee A in December 2006; potential use during the May elections; and Civic Events;

(c) Use for other than our meetings: Ideas included the potential for direct member communication with the public e.g. Leader broadcasts, Overview and Scrutiny evidence, work with schools (link with the recent appointment of a new young persons officer and the national curriculum on Citizenship) including an idea for a webcast live debate; and member webcasts.

In response to the presentation, a member asked whether the internet homepage provided a direct link to the webcasting page? It was reported that this initially had been provided however the space available on the homepage for direct links was limited. It was clarified that the page however still provided links to webcasts as the issues featured offered links to any relevant webcasts.

Members felt that the system had worked well and should be continued. The only issue was the need to follow the prescribed seating arrangements for the project. It was reported that so far this had been determined by officers however Members were welcomed to express a preference regarding their own place in the seating plans.

A Member referred to a recent broadcast of a planning committee where there had been problems with matching the name captions with the pictures and capturing fully the discussions and voting. She stressed that this be addressed. It was reported officers were still learning how to use the system and their skills would improve with practice which should resolve any problems currently being experienced.

The Portfolio Holder expressed support for the continuation of the project. In terms of publicity, he stressed that focus and resources should be placed on covering issues of public interest such as the recent presentation to OSC on Whipps Cross and discussions about the budget setting process. Items could be included in the Forester to publicise forthcoming web – casts. Archived broadcasts could also be used to show representatives from external bodies and the public the process for meetings. It was questioned whether there were any plans to web – cast Licensing Sub – Committee meetings? The system could be used as a means of providing information and raising awareness of issues such as recycling.

The Leader of the Council suggested measures to identify the value of the system for local residents. It was questioned whether this could be measured by looking at public attendance levels at meetings to see whether any changes had occurred which might be attributable to web – casting? It was reported that the website included a polls and survey page for public feedback. Qualitative data had been gathered for the first period of the pilot and further qualitative information would be obtained to identify the impact of the system including the implications for public awareness and understanding of the Council services. The Portfolio Holder stressed that consideration be given to this data as part of the full evaluation process to take place next year.

It was reported that the costs of filming any off site broadcast would be met by the existing and proposed funding provision for the project, however this did not cover the officer operational support at meetings for which officers claimed a committee attendance allowance. The costs of removing the equipment should the system not be pursued would be covered by the current funding for the pilot.

The Panel considered the proposal to extend the pilot and agreed that the present pilot expiry date of August 2007 would not allow officers time to undertake a full evaluation of the system and carry out any tender evaluation process felt necessary should an external provider be sourced. The Senior Democratic Services Officer advised that the exercise could take about 6-9 months.

In view of these concerns, the Panel agreed that the current scheme should be extended to 31 March 2008 to give officers time to provide a fuller evaluation in the new municipal year and any preparatory work for the continuation of the contract. This would bring any renewal in line with the Council's financial year and other IT project renewal dates. It was reported that funding made available from the provision in the revenue budget for ongoing revenue requirements for systems paid for by IEG grant could fund the extension. The proposed solution would also avoid the need for a growth bid at this stage and mean, no additional monies would have to be set aside in the budget and ultimately not called on should the pilot not be extended.

AGREED:

- (1) That the report of the initial webcasting pilot period be noted and endorsed;
- (2) That the existing pilot contract period be extended to 31 March 2008 funded by IEG revenue budgets as an interim measure;
- (3) That the Panel receive a full evaluation of the pilot at their first meeting in the 2007/08 municipal year to include:
 - (a) Qualitative and quantitative data for the initial period September 2006 – June 2007;
 - (b) Options for the future of the scheme post March 2008;
 - (c) Results of consultation undertaken; and
 - (d) Examination of alternative providers and other authorities experience;
- (4) That the portfolio holder be asked to seek the inclusion of the bid for a replacement of the Chamber Speech Reinforcement System (microphone system) in the final Capital Programme for 2007/08; and
- (5) That the following potential uses of the system be considered further:
 - (a) Using the webcast equipment outside of the Chamber; (i.e. In the Committee Rooms for Panel meetings)
 - (b) Using the webcast equipment off site – plans TO include Area Planning Subcommittee A in December 2006; potentially use during the May elections; and Civic Events;
 - (c) Use for other than our meetings: Ideas include the potential for direct member communication with the public e.g. Leader broadcasts, Overview and Scrutiny evidence, work with schools (link with the recent appointment of a new young persons officer and the national curriculum on Citizenship) including an idea for a webcast live debate; and member webcasts

16. CORPORATE CONTACT CENTRE - PROGRESS REPORT

Councillor Metcalfe reported on progress with the Customer Contact Centre which was a key element of the Customer Services Transformation Programme. At present the programme had been put on hold until the uncertainties about the Councils overall budget position had been addressed. Despite this, steps were still being undertaken to take forward the customer service elements of the programme through proposals to establish a Customer Service Working Group. These proposals were still at an early stage but the discussions would focus on the involvement of all services in improving customer service.

It was clarified that one of the main aims of the working group was to ensure that there was EFDC representation on the Pan Essex Regional Group on customer service issues. The group would be funded through existing resources and would report progress to this Panel.

It was reported that the next meeting of the Regional Group to be held this week was to consider the future of cash halls. It was important that the District views were fed into this discussion given Members had opposed the move to close local cash hall which the group supported.

17. REPORTS TO BE MADE TO THE NEXT MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

- (i) E-Government returns – Progress; and
- (ii) Customer Contact Centre – Progress.

18. FUTURE MEETINGS

Noted that the next scheduled meeting was on 7 February 2007.

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Agenda Item 5

Terms of Reference – Standing Panel

Title: Customer Services and ICT		
Status: Standing Panel		
Terms of Reference:		
<p>(1) *To consider the introduction of a Customer Services Transformation Programme (CSTP) on behalf of the Customer Services, Media, Communications and ICT Portfolio Holder and to make any resulting recommendations to the Portfolio Holder or Cabinet as appropriate.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">a) To consider the specific ICT role within the CSTP and agree which elements of this project should be monitored and reviewed by other O&S panels/committee.</p> <p>*The Portfolio Holder has agreed to temporarily suspend the CSTP in order for the Council to give resource priority to other projects in light of the Council's current financial position. Therefore the panel, as an interim measure, will consider feedback from the **Customers Services Working Group to ensure that the panel is kept up to date on current customer service activities across all service areas.</p> <p>(2) To consider the business case and technical proposals for all major ICT systems on behalf of the Customer Services, Media, Communications and ICT Portfolio Holder prior to consideration by Cabinet.</p> <p>(3) To monitor and review progress on the implementation of all major ICT systems.</p> <p>(4) To report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Council and the Cabinet with recommendations on matters allocated to the Panel.</p> <p>** This is a new Officer group that is due to be established during December 2006</p>		
Work Programme 2006/7		
Item	Priority	Report Deadline
1. Review of the Web-casting system	High	November 2006
2. To consider the Revenues and Benefits ICT system.	High	November 2006
3. To consider the Microsoft Enterprise software arrangements.	Medium	February 2007
4. To consider the desktop software deployment strategy	Medium	February 2007
5. To consider feedback from the officer based Customer Services Working Group	Medium	April 2007
Chairman: Councillor Maggie McEwen		

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Extract from Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme – 2006/07
As at January 2007

Item	Report Deadline/Priority	Progress/Comments	Programme of Future Meetings
<i>Customer Services and ICT Standing Panel</i>			
(1) Customer Contact Centre	Ongoing see (7) below	Proposed Progress reports on Customer Services Transformation Programme to every meeting	7 February, 19 April 2007.
(2) Review of Council's IEG Strategy	August 2006	Completed on 14 August 2006	
(3) Webcasting Project	July 2007	Further evaluation to be presented at July 2007 mtg. Project agreed to continue pending evaluation	
(4) Microsoft Enterprise Agreement Referral	February 2007	To be considered at February 2007 mtg	
(5) Desktop Strategy	February 2007	February 2007 meeting – Standardisation and Security arrangements	
(6) New Revenue and Benefits System		Cabinet report to be submitted to February 2007 mtg	
(7) Customer Services Working Group feedback	April 2007	New	

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Customer Services and ICT Scrutiny Standing Panel



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Date of meeting:

**Portfolio: Customer Services, Media, Communications and ICT
Cllr S Metcalfe**

Subject: Corporate ICT Desktop Strategy

Officer contact for further information: Adrian Scott – Head of ICT

Committee Secretary:

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

To consider the ICT Desktop Strategy 2007-2009 attached as appendix 1.

Report

1. In December 2005 the Council agreed a 3-year Corporate ICT Strategy. One of the key objectives set out in the strategy was for the recently established ICT service to take responsibility for all IT equipment and office systems that are in use across all Council services.
2. This objective was to be achieved by the implementation of a Corporate Desktop Strategy that would standardise the IT equipment, software and security controls throughout the Council. The implementation would ensure that all staff have access to the appropriate and adequate level of IT to carry out their job function.
3. To ensure the Council obtains 'value for money' from its investment in IT, the desktop strategy has a formal approach to the procurement of both the IT equipment and software.
4. The actual projects that result from the agreement of this strategy will be detailed in the ICT annual Business Plan. Each project will be listed in the Action Plan along with its priority, resource allocation, timescale and relevance to this Strategy.
5. This Strategy is a key enabler of the Council's e-Government and efficiency initiatives and underpins the vision and objectives set out by central government's 'transformation' agenda by providing a stable and secure ICT environment for 'joined up' service delivery. It will also contribute to the Council's cross cutting efficiency agenda by driving down the total cost of ownership (TCO) of the desktop environment through maximizing the use of corporate IT resources.
6. The attached report covers the 6 part Corporate ICT Desktop Strategy. The programme of works that will result from adopting this strategy will be funded from the combination of existing corporate ICT CSB funding and the Council's ICT Capital programme.
7. Due to the mainly technical nature of the Strategy the consultation process was limited to the ICT service, the Council's ICT suppliers and partners, Essex Online Partnership, Essex IT Managers and Joint Chief Executive (Resources).

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INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

ICT Desktop Strategy – 2007 - 2009

Version History

Version No	Release Date	Authorised By	Updated By	Approved By	Changes
1	January 2007	Adrian Scott			



Introduction

1. The ICT desktop is locally defined as a personal computing device (Personal Computer, terminal, portable computer) that is connected to the corporate network and has access to a range of business applications (software) and relevant peripherals (printer, scanner etc). A successful ICT Desktop Strategy is one that creates an environment with these tools in which information can, with relevant controls, be created, updated, processed and exchanged in a seamless manner that is technically transparent to the end user. The Strategy must also ensure that the constant pressure from the IT Industry to upgrade and change the desktop hardware and software is balanced with, and does not override, the Council's aim to provide 'value for money' in the delivery of public services.
2. Above all, the strategy must be kept corporate and its technology content mainstream.
3. The Strategy is divided into 6 key headings that cover desktop standards, hardware devices and their operating systems, desktop security & management tools, desktop application software and the overall desktop environment.
4. The desktop environment section specifically covers the way that desktop devices and their software are configured and used, with regard to what changes are allowed by staff and what options and features are enabled, disabled or controlled. It is this area of environment control that will bring about the most change to current setup for the end users of ICT systems. These new measures are now absolutely vital if the Council is to retain a secure corporate ICT environment.
5. The Desktop Strategy does not cover devices such as centralised server hardware, centralised security & management tools, telephony equipment or networking & communications equipment. These areas are still addressed specifically by the overarching ICT Strategy.

Procurement

6. The ICT service provides and supports technology that enables direct and corporate services to provide efficient and effective business delivery processes. Today nearly all of the Council's services depend on at least 1 IT system in managing the interaction between their customers and the Council.
7. This increasing use of technology does however come with a significant cost both in terms of ongoing investment and ongoing support in both the technology itself and the highly skilled IT support workforce. Therefore the Council must ensure that the methods used to procure this critical business resource are gaining access to, and exploiting the most cost effective solutions available to the Government sector.
8. The Council has over the last 12 months placed a far greater emphasis on procurement. As a result the Council has, through its partnership with the Essex Online Partnership (EOLP) and the Procurement Agency for Essex (PAE), undertaken specific IT procurement exercises that have resulted in a 41% reduction of desktop computer equipment. The resultant hardware contracts have now been agreed and the Council is now able to procure all of its desktop hardware at a much reduced cost.
9. In parallel to the smarter procurement of desktop hardware the Council has also been working with the Office of Government Commerce (OGC) to secure a very advantageous discount arrangement with Microsoft Limited. This new arrangement will allow the Council to deploy all the relevant office software required for the new desktop environment without requiring any additional funding.

ICT Desktop Strategy – 2007 - 2009

Standards

Overview

10. Standards within an ICT service are designed to reflect levels of attainment and achieve a common approach over a long period of time. It is therefore advisable to formalise these standards in a written document. Standards addressing key activities within the ICT function are needed to ensure consistency of usage and compliance with rules designed to protect the integrity of the ICT service and related functions.

Main Aim

11. To introduce codes of practice or formalised standards and policy that covers the whole ICT desktop & portable computing environment. It is extremely important that new standards and policies are created as new technologies and working practices are adopted.

Objectives

12. The new corporate desktop environment will be controlled from the centre using Microsoft's Active Directory product. This product allows all users to be profiled so they only have access to an ICT environment that is appropriate to their job function. The "Active Directory" solution was implemented as part of a previous review. The strategy will also introduce a new standard hardware operating system and office productivity application model. The specific technical details of this model are outlined in the relevant sections of this strategy. The model will assist the Council in developing a return on investment (ROI) approach by ensuring that the desktop is only replaced when the desktop functionality is no longer adequate to complete the tasks required by the relevant member of staff. The initial period will be set at 48 months. Although in this period a request for a desktop enhancement may be made these would need to be supported by a full business case and subject to both Head of ICT and Portfolio Holder approval. The Council needs to ensure that the desktop environment (including portables) is securely controlled and perceived only as being a tool for the job and not an extension of an individual's home PC. There is a real danger that the Council will fail to realise any ROI if its corporate ICT strategy is influenced by the "entertainment" factor of the Home PC market.

Strategy

13. Implement the Corporate Desktop strategy that creates a single point of management and control of all peripheral ICT resources. The technical details of this are listed under the Hardware, Operating System, Application, Endpoint Security & Management and Desktop Environment sections of this document.

Hardware

Overview

14. Hardware is the machinery and equipment used to deliver the ICT service to the user. The Council's definition of desktop hardware consists of business desktop computers (PCs), portable computers (notebooks), thin client computers (terminals), handheld computers (PDAs), printers, document scanners, digital cameras and other devices (peripherals) purchased by the Council for use both on and off the Council's premises. Legacy equipment (older models and items from other manufacturers) is still in use in some areas and will be replaced through a combination of planned upgrades and natural attrition.
15. The procurement of hardware will be governed by the best value contracts that result from the desktop hardware review undertaken by the Council's procurement partner the PAE at 6 monthly intervals. This will ensure best value is maintained over the long term with only a minor impact being incurred by ICT by the potential change in manufacturer at the review point. The hardware listed below represents the products available through the current PAE contract, but these are subject to the above review and should therefore only be considered as a guideline.

Main Aim

16. To ensure that the Council maintains a fully supported, cost effective and standards based hardware and software profile across all levels throughout the Council.

Objectives

17. ICT will implement a new standard desktop, thin client and hand held hardware model based around Hewlett Packard products. The portable computer hardware model will be based on Fujitsu Siemens and Dell technology. These products will be procured through the Essex Marketplace e-procurement system and the HP Business To Business (B2B) web portal.
18. ICT will work to reduce the variety of equipment in use, which will help to reduce the costs of procurement, deployment, training and support. Requests for equipment that are not covered by the standard items explicitly included within the strategy will only be supplied by ICT after a formal business case is presented and accepted by the Head of ICT.

Strategy

Computer Monitors

19. Monitors (also referred to as screens or displays) are either internal or external. Internal monitors are built in on notebook and handheld computers and cannot normally be upgraded. External monitors are required for all desktop computers and thin clients, optional for notebook computers and not compatible with handheld computers.
20. The Council considers the quality of internal monitors as an important criterion when selecting notebook and handheld computers. For external monitors, the Council is rapidly replacing older CRT style monitors with LCD monitors that take up less desk space, use less power and generate less heat.
21. The Council's standard for external monitors is the HP L1940T Flat Panel Monitor. This model features a 19" LCD screen with a height-adjustable tilt & swivel stand and is pivotable through 90° to allow the display of both portrait and landscape shaped images. This model currently has a 25 ms response rate, and a 1280 x 1024 resolution.

Desktop Computers

22. The Council uses desktop computers wherever a portable or handheld computer is not justified and where a thin client device is not suitable. This might be the case if a member of staff requires the use of application software that cannot be run in a Microsoft Windows Terminal Server or Citrix MetaFrame environment.
23. The Council's minimum desktop computer specification for new purchases includes an Intel or AMD x86 compatible processor running at 2GHz or better with 1024MB of RAM, a hard disc drive of 40GB or better, no diskette drive and no CD or DVD writer (optical drive). Where units are supplied with optical drives, their use will be limited or disabled.
24. The Council's standard model for new desktop computers is the HP Compaq dc5750 Small Form Business Desktop PC. When additional space for internal upgrades is required, the HP Compaq dc5750 Microtower Business Desktop PC can also be considered.
25. Desktop computers are shipped with standard basic UK layout keyboards and optical 2-button scroll mice. ICT will supply the Council's standard external computer monitor if there is no existing monitor available for use.
26. Existing desktop computers with processors running at less than 1.3GHz are unable to meet the performance requirements for the new desktop standard and will therefore be replaced. Computers with insufficient RAM or hard disc space will be considered for upgrade or replacement.

Portable computers

27. The Council supplies portable computers where it can be demonstrated that there is a genuine need for the computer to be used away from the user's own office. This will usually be for attending meetings, conducting training or for working at home.
28. Portable computers can be categorised into three main types:
 - Laptop computers are computers with most or all of the functionality of standard desktop computers but in a portable form.
 - Notebook computers are similar to laptop computers but offer a more compact design, greater runtime and portability albeit with a lower specification.
 - Tablet computers are designed to be used when being carried and so normally have lower specifications than other notebook computers but are smaller and lighter and do not require the use of a keyboard or mouse.
29. The Council's standard for laptop computers is the Fujitsu Siemens Amilo Pro V8210 laptop PC.
30. The Council's standard for notebook computers is the Dell Latitude D510 Notebook PC.
31. The Council's standard for tablet computers is the HP Compaq tc4400 Tablet PC.
32. Portable computers will be supplied with a standard external keyboard, mouse, monitor and a port replicator if it is to be used as an alternative for a desktop computer.
33. Existing notebook computers with processors running at less than 1.3GHz are unable to meet the performance requirements for the new desktop standard and will therefore be replaced. Computers with insufficient RAM or hard disc space will be considered for upgrade or replacement.

Thin client computers

34. The Council uses servers running Microsoft Windows Terminal Server and Citrix MetaFrame to provide centrally managed access to commonly used application software. Thin client computers are currently the most efficient and cost effective type of device for accessing the Citrix MetaFrame environment.
35. HP thin client computers are smaller and cheaper than desktop or notebook PCs, generate less heat and consume less electricity. Thin clients are easier to install and are more resistant to unauthorised changes.
36. The policy of the Council is to deploy thin clients unless ICT in discussion with the relevant Head of Service determine the user requires a desktop, notebook or handheld PC.
37. The Council's standard for thin client computers is the HP Compaq t5520 Thin Client.
38. Newly purchased thin client computers will be supplied with the Council's standard external keyboard, mouse and monitor.
39. Existing thin client computers that are not from the HP Compaq t5000 range are not supported by the Council's thin client management & deployment tools and will be replaced.

Handheld computers

40. The Council's relatively few deployed handheld computers and PDAs were purchased over an extended period of time and no standardisation of model was previously possible due to the rapid evolution of product ranges in this area. As the market matures and more applications become available for the platform, it is reasonable to expect that demand for handheld computers will increase. Therefore it is appropriate that a standard be adopted for future purchases, which will be suitable for the majority of business use expected.
41. The models of handheld computers being offered by HP and other manufacturers vary considerably in their feature sets. A trend towards integration of functions previously only available on separate products (e.g. satellite navigation, portable entertainment and mobile telephony) is leading to models that are suited more to the business traveller and personal user than to roles that might be expected in a local government organisation.
42. The Council's standard for handheld computers is the HP iPAQ hx2790 Pocket PC. This model has built-in security features, including a fingerprint scanner, to prevent unauthorised use. This model does not include satellite navigation or mobile phone functions.
43. Alternative models will be considered if they are specified by application vendors and will only be supplied by ICT after a formal business case is presented and accepted by the Head of ICT. Alternative items will be from the current Hewlett Packard products range wherever possible.

Printers

44. Historically, the Council has used many different manufacturers and models of computer printer to produce hard copy. This has resulted in a widely varied set of features, difficulties in calculating printing costs and increased risk from printer driver software causing compatibility problems with other hardware & software.
45. The use of HP print server appliances for sharing printers, together with the increased use of thin clients, dictates that all printers purchased can be connected to the Council's network and are compatible with the Windows Terminal Server & Citrix MetaFrame environments.
46. The Council recognises that there cannot be a single standard of printer model which meets the demands of all staff. The manufacturers also replace printer models regularly, which makes standardisation more difficult. The models shown below cover the majority of

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team sizes and the need for black & white or colour output, large paper size support and scan/copy/fax functions. Requests for equipment that are not covered by the standard items will only be supplied by ICT after a formal business case is presented and accepted by the Head of ICT. Alternative items will be from the current Hewlett Packard products range wherever possible.

Personal & small office (1-4 users or computers) black & white printer

HP LaserJet P2015dn

Personal & small office colour printer

HP Colour LaserJet 2700

Personal & small office multi-function (printer/scanner/copier/fax) device

HP Officejet 7210 All-in-One

Workgroup (5-9 users) black & white printer

HP LaserJet P3005n

Workgroup colour printer

HP Colour LaserJet 3800n

Workgroup multi-function device

HP LaserJet M3027x MFP

Departmental (10+ users or high-speed) black & white printer

HP LaserJet 4350dtn

Departmental colour printer

HP Colour LaserJet 4700dtn

Large-format (A3+ size paper) colour printer

HP Officejet Pro K850dn

Digital cameras

47. Digital cameras are being used to replace traditional film cameras. The market is saturated with rapidly changing camera models that use a variety of media (memory cards), connection devices and software packages. ICT will recommend a camera model after analysis of the requirements and consultation with any involved third parties. Selections will be made from Hewlett Packard's current range of cameras wherever practicable.

Scanners

48. Scanners are devices that capture an electronic image of paper documents for storage or reuse. Where scanning cannot be achieved through the use of an existing multi-function printer device (see previous section on Printers), ICT will recommend a model after analysis of the requirements and consultation with any involved third parties. Selections will be made from Hewlett Packard's current range of scanners wherever practicable.

Operating Systems

Overview

49. The operating system is the means whereby the applications communicate with the hardware and is also the mechanism for managing hardware resources (disk space, memory, etc) and enforcing security measures.

Main Aim

50. To standardise and maintain the Council's desktop and portable computers to the (current) Microsoft Windows operating system.

Objectives

51. The main area to be addressed under this theme is the implementation of the new desktop environment. The Council is fully committed to Microsoft's family of Windows operating systems (OS) as agreed by Members in 1998. Although it would be possible to consider a review of the Council's OS provider, with the current commitment to both the underlying hardware and overarching applications there is not really any practical alternative.

52. There are a number of Microsoft Windows desktop operating system versions and revision levels currently deployed. These versions can present significantly different interfaces to computer users, offer different features and performance, support different hardware devices and often require different versions of application software. The need to standardise on a single OS version is driven by the desire to reduce the costs of procurement, support and training.

53. The procurement of a corporate Microsoft OS enterprise (site) licence to support this work will be achieved through a Central Government contract. The terms of the site licence (Enterprise Agreement) allow for upgrades to the operating systems on desktop, notebook and tablet computers without additional costs for the duration of the agreement. Microsoft has recently released a new version of their OS named 'Windows Vista', and this would be available to the Council under the site licence agreement.

Strategy

54. To implement the current version of Microsoft's Windows operating system on all existing desktop, notebook and tablet computer models.

55. To replace all thin client computers with outdated OS versions (these cannot be upgraded).

56. To only purchase thin client & handheld computers that contain those operating systems specified.

57. The versions of the Windows operating systems that will be used are listed below against the relevant hardware model:

- Desktop, notebook & tablet computers – Microsoft Windows XP Service Pack 2
- Thin client computers (terminals) – Microsoft Windows CE .Net 5.0
- Handheld computers (PDAs) – Microsoft Windows Mobile 5.0 for Pocket PC, Premium Edition

Applications

Overview

58. The application is the system that delivers the service to the user via the terminal, PC or handheld device and is normally the only method that staff can access any data or information. It is critical to the success of the overall ICT Strategy that all new applications apply the strategies set out in each of the other key areas. The application is normally the only element visible to the end user of ICT services and therefore is the only real indicator that both staff and managers have to measure the overall success of the Strategy.

Main Aim

59. To ensure that the Council maintains an up to date and relevant set of applications that allow the delivery of all Council services in a staff efficient, cost effective and customer focused manner. The application layer of the Strategy is critical to the overall success of all Council services. Managers throughout the Council will in the future be directly measured on the success of their business applications and the way these applications integrate and connect with the Council's service delivery partners and most importantly our customers.

Objectives

60. A major requirement of the application layer of the strategy is to provide appropriate Office System tools. These are typically a word processor, desktop publishing, business diagramming, spreadsheet, web browser and email applications. As part of the new Desktop strategy the tools currently in use will need upgrading. The current standard is based on Microsoft's Office 2000 Standard application suite that was purchased as part of the first ICT Strategy (1998). This product has been through three major releases and the version currently in use is now becoming unable to cope with the requirements of the core business systems. The providers of these core business systems have mainly brought this about by incorporating new features within its system that rely on later versions of the various Microsoft products. Again as with the Microsoft Operating System (OS) it would be possible to consider alternative solutions, however, for the same reasons for retaining Microsoft as the Council's provider of OS the Council has no real alternative to retaining Microsoft Office for its main Office System tools. There are however other tools within the Council's office tools standard that are not provided by Microsoft and at least these offer some degree of fair competition against Microsoft.

61. The actual level of access that any individual will have to the new office tool set is determined by the requirements of their job function. In addition to this control the Council has recently implemented a software asset management tool that will monitor the usage of all desktop software to ensure the Council is only using licensed products. This will also assist the Council in the efficient procurement of licences as previously there have been instances of licensed software being installed on PCs and remaining unused.

62. The procurement of a new corporate Microsoft Office site licence to support this work will be achieved through a Central Government contract. Microsoft is due to release a new version of their Office suite in early 2007. The terms of the site licence will allow the Council to upgrade to this version at no additional licence cost. The products used for this update are covered in detail under the strategy heading.

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Strategy

63. Implement the corporate standard office productivity tools and clients which are common to all users:

- Microsoft Office Standard 2007 – suite of word processing, spreadsheet, e-mail and presentation tools (optional database tool)
- Microsoft Internet Explorer 7.0 – tool for browsing Internet web sites and for accessing corporate applications or databases published as web sites
- Fineprint PDF Factory Pro 3.0 – portable document creation tool
- Adobe Reader 8.0 – portable document file (PDF) viewer
- Citrix MetaFrame Presentation Server Client – tool for accessing corporate applications published from Citrix Presentation Server (MetaFrame)

64. Implement the corporate standard business tools of the Desktop Strategy by using the following products on desktops where used as standard in the job function of the user:

- TEN Performance Management System
- Business Objects – reporting tool (generally for financial reporting)
- Bespoke business system tools (Application specific)

65. Implement the optional corporate office tools element of the Desktop Strategy by using the following products on desktops where supported by a business case

- Microsoft Access – database access client
- Microsoft Visio – business diagramming tool
- Adobe InDesign – desktop publishing tool

Endpoint Security & Management

Overview

66. The Council employs tools and methods to help make the installation, use and disposal of its IT equipment as safe, reliable and efficient as possible.
67. Endpoint security tools are software applications and settings that help prevent unauthorised use of or connections to computers or other devices, or limit access to information stored on those devices. In the home and small business environment, these typically include anti-virus, anti-spyware, anti-spam, firewall and data erasure applications as well as user passwords. Larger organisations routinely install systems that perform these and other related functions centrally on their public and private computer networks. Increasingly, desktop and portable computers in these organisations are also being equipped with these types of tools, offering a second layer or defence against intrusions and data theft.
68. Management tools are software and settings that allow computers to be monitored, configured and updated centrally. These tools are used to prevent or warn of accidental or malicious damage, reduce the time taken to install & repair computers and to help ensure the best use is made of the software and hardware deployed.

Main Aims

69. To centrally track and maintain all desktop and portable computers and software to ensure there is minimal waste of resources.
70. To prevent any installation or use of hardware or software which is not supplied by ICT and sanctioned by the Council.
71. To reduce the opportunities for accidental or deliberate theft of Council property, including electronic files.

Objectives

72. A key objective of the desktop strategy is the ability to centrally manage all hardware and software. ICT intend to be proactive in the security, maintenance and upgrading of equipment, leading to potential reductions in costs and downtime. This will also help to prevent the risks associated with unauthorised devices or software being installed, accidentally or deliberately.
73. The Council is committed to achieving software licence compliance. This means being able to demonstrate that sufficient licences are held to cover the software in use and that the terms of the licences are being met. In order to meet this commitment, ICT is implementing the FAST (Federation Against Software Theft) FSSC-1:2004 standard for software compliance and has achieved Bronze accreditation with the intention of achieving Silver accreditation in 2007.

Strategy

Physical device security

74. All hardware and software purchased and installed by ICT is recorded on an inventory system and, wherever practicable, items are asset tagged and security marked. All computers and networked printers are password protected at a basic 'firmware' level and an owner name is added for display during startup if this function is supported. Additional physical security measures, such as cables and locks, may also be used in publicly

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accessible areas or other environments that are deemed to suffer a higher risk of theft or damage.

Operating system security

75. The Council implemented Microsoft's Active Directory in 2004 to manage its network security permissions. Active Directory provides a way to grant or prevent access by staff to applications, data files and printers in a structured manner. Staff are unable to connect to any networked resources without having a set of user account credentials (commonly a username and password) issued by ICT.
76. Microsoft's Windows XP desktop operating system integrates with Active Directory to control access to the resources held on computers in the desktop environment. As with network resources, a set of user account credentials is required before the computer can be used.
77. The Council uses Group Policy, a feature of Active Directory and Windows XP, to implement policies that control how Windows behaves on groups of machines and/or for groups of users. Details of the controls offered by Group Policy are beyond the scope of this document, but a list of enforced settings appears below under the heading of Desktop environment.
78. Thin client devices are configured to prevent access to any operating system functions by the device's user. Once a connection has been chosen by the user, the device offers no "local" functionality and is therefore the most secure and reliable device to use for access to the Council's systems.
79. Operating systems on handheld computers have traditionally offered very little in the way of built-in security features, however the preferred Hewlett Packard iPAQ hx2790 is equipped with a fingerprint scanner to help prevent unauthorised access. Other security systems installed on desktop computers and the Council's network also limit the risk of security breaches using handheld computers and similar devices.

Malicious Protection

80. Provides protection against malware and intrusions. Includes antivirus, antispymware, firewall and intrusion prevention functions.
81. Malware is "malicious software"; a generic term covering a range of software programs and types of programs designed to attack, degrade or prevent the intended use of ICT or network equipment. Types of malware can include viruses, worms, trojans, malicious active content and denial of service attacks. In the case of invasion of privacy for the purposes of fraud or the theft of identity or business information, software that passively observes the use of a computer is also malware ("spyware").
82. Intrusion prevention is the monitoring for and blocking of activities designed to exploit system vulnerabilities, including refusing unwanted connections to and from the computer to remotely control it, run software or access files for malicious or illegal purposes.
83. Implement the corporate standard malicious protection tools of the Desktop Strategy by using the following products on desktops:
 - Malware, antivirus and intrusion protection – Symantec Client Security
 - Symantec Mobile Antivirus for Windows Mobile

84. Implement the corporate standard Management tools of the Desktop Strategy by using the following products on desktops. These are described in detail in 85 through 89:
- Desktop & notebook hardware management – Altiris HP Client Manager
 - Operating system and application deployment – Altiris Deployment Solution
 - Windows patch management client - Shavlik HFNetChkPro
 - Portable storage device management - DeviceWall by Centennial Software
 - Software asset management – Express Software Manager
85. HP Client Manager is a Web-based client management system that provides centralised tools for HP desktop and notebook computers, including BIOS and driver management, diagnostics, health monitoring, and client information data reports.
86. Altiris Deployment Solution software offers operating system and application deployment, remote configuration and migration of files & settings between computers.
87. HFNetChkPro automates the installation of “patches” issued by Microsoft for their Windows operating system and some related products. Patches are published by Microsoft to fix faults and vulnerabilities identified within Windows that could cause errors to occur or allow malicious software to infect the computer.
88. DeviceWall prevents the transfer of files to or from unauthorised devices such as flash drives, MP3 players and mobile phones, automatically encrypts data copied to approved devices and provides complete audit trails of device and file accesses. Access to devices is granted to staff only where a business requirement is agreed by ICT.
89. ESM provides an automated hardware & software inventory for networked desktop and portable computers. ESM also stores the details of software licences and tracks the use of software. This allows limits to be placed on how many copies of software can be used and by whom, enabling the Council to enforce and demonstrate compliance with the terms of use granted by suppliers.

Desktop Environment

Overview

90. The desktop environment is the way that the operating system presents applications and data to the user of the computer. This environment is influenced by many factors such as software versions that are not easily controlled by the user, as well as many that can be changed to reflect the user's personal preferences. The environment can vary so greatly between machines with identical hardware that it affects the performance of staff and the applications they use.

Main Aims

91. To deliver a consistent interface which all staff are familiar and comfortable with.
92. To deliver consistent and predictable performance from similar hardware and software configurations.
93. To prevent accidental or malicious tampering with the environment which impacts on the ability of staff to complete their work.

Objectives

94. The Council will deploy all new computers and update all existing computers with configurations that are suited to the hardware and the roles of the staff that use them, but the configurations will be centrally defined and controlled to be more consistent and less complex than has historically been the case.
95. The choice of colour schemes, wallpaper, screensaver and other similar settings have traditionally been left to the user. Although the Council has a stated policy not to allow the use of "unofficial" wallpaper and screensaver files, it has not been possible to enforce until recently. As part of the standardisation of the desktop environment, these settings will be defined and deployed centrally and will not be customisable by the user.
96. Applications will be removed, upgraded or replaced to meet the new desktop strategy standard. Where possible, applications will be published through a web browser or a Citrix published application interface. This will give centralised control of availability & visibility and updates can be performed globally with minimum impact to staff and equipment.

Strategy

97. Using Microsoft's Active Directory Group Policy system, "lockdown" Windows on desktop and notebook computers to prevent unauthorised changes being made. The following areas of control will be implemented:
98. Display a message warning that only authorised users are allowed to logon to the computer
99. Lock the computer's desktop after a period of inactivity to prevent "snooping" on unattended machines

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100. Prevent users from installing new hardware or software, or from removing existing items
101. Set a standard wallpaper and screensaver for all users and prevent users from changing some display settings which affect performance or make the computer difficult to use
102. Prevent configuration changes to Internet Explorer and other Windows components which impact on security, performance and reliability
103. Prevent the “sharing” of computer resources across the network by users
104. Prevent the “browsing” of network computer resources by users
105. Prevent files from being saved to local computer storage & redirect the “My Documents” area to secure network storage (special provisions are made for portable computer users)
106. Enable “Remote Assistance” on computers which support it to allow ICT staff to view and/or control user’s computers remotely for fixing faults or training
107. Publish applications to desktop users from Citrix MetaFrame servers wherever performance and compatibility allow. This reduces the complexity of the installation and allows applications to be better secured against unauthorised use and to be more efficiently deployed and upgraded.

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