Dudley
Metropolitan Borough Council

INTERIM ICT STRATEGY 2006-2007

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INTRODUCTION

This document forms part of the corporate ICT strategy for Dudley Council for the period 2006 to 2007. The interim strategy sets out the direction of the development of the use of ICT within Dudley MBC to enable the council to continue to transform the services it provides to Citizens and businesses of the borough. This is an interim strategy because of the present lack of clarity in the Governments Transformational Strategy which will potentially have a significant impact on future Council Strategic Direction. It is expected that this strategy will be replaced in time by a full strategy as further Government and Council guidance on the form Transformation is clarified during the later part of 2006, early 2007.

The strategy is part of a continuous series of corporate ICT strategies going back over 20 years which have steered the many successes Dudley has been able to achieve in this area. As this is an interim Strategy it only deals in detail with issues in the short-term. The main thrust of the 2005 – 2009 strategy was the achievement of the Government's Priority Outcomes, and the achievement of the 100% target for e'enablement. Both of these projects have now been brought to a successful conclusion, and this interim strategy builds on this work to prepare the ground for further transformation of services.

The strategy has been drawn up in consultation with e-champions, via e-dudley, other ICT Customers through the ICT Customer forum the Assistant Directors Group

Aim of Strategy

Our longer term strategic aims are still valid and will remain as the aims of this Interim strategy.   :-

> ***To support the Council in delivering its key objectives and to transform the methods of interaction between the citizens and businesses of Dudley and their public service providers.***

They will be achieved by:

- transforming the delivery of services to suit the needs of citizens and improve efficiency by offering an increasing range of self service opportunities;

- developing, improving and modernising business and professional systems;

- exploiting the existing investment in ICT Solutions, in particular the work in Delivering Priority outcomes and E'enabling our services

- ensuring that ICT infrastructure is developed to support the Council's objectives and to be responsive to new opportunities;

- meeting national and local targets and priorities;

Service Imperatives

In developing this Interim strategy a number of high level 'service imperatives' have been incorporated which will apply generally to the overall strategy. These are the need to be able to:

- Offer our citizens and businesses the opportunity to self-serve wherever it is appropriate, whilst supporting other forms of access for those who prefer a mediated access channel;

- Ensure continuous development of standards and codes of practice;

- Communicate effectively and in a timely manner within and across the organisation;

- Exploit new technologies to achieve Gershon efficiencies and continuous improvement;

- Increase systems integration to provide Front line staff and citizens with better quality information.

- Improve the Council's Management of Information and reduce paper storage by indexing, storing and archiving information electronically,

- Ensure that staff across the council are properly trained to use and exploit the systems and information available;

- Ensure that staff across the council are prepared for the challenges of Transformation

- Maintain good stewardship by ensuring the information held in the Council's systems is used for proper purposes, is secure from loss and inappropriate access and is managed to ensure maximum benefit.

In order to deliver overcome these challenges it will be necessary to ensure that the council's has in place a structure to deliver change, adequate resources to procure appropriate technical solutions, an ICT infrastructure that is robust and flexible and an appropriate ICT Service Delivery function.

OVERVIEW AND ENVIRONMENT

Background

The Council has had a number of Corporate ICT Strategies since the first one was produced in 1986. Since that time the emphasis has changed from a focus purely on technology, through a process of using the technology to improve the business systems operated by the council, to the current strategy which will, over time, transform the way the council delivers its services and interfaces with its citizens.

The Council is now totally reliant on ICT systems and services to deliver many of its essential front line services. Effective and successful direction and management of the ICT Services provision, and the continued achievement of key performance indicators and targets is therefore extremely important. The reliance on ICT also mean that Risk Management, Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity must also play a major part in the ICT Strategy.

The Council is well placed to meet future challenges:

- The Regeneration, Culture & Adult Education Select Committee will continue to annually challenge and scrutinise the Strategy and its delivery

- the e-Dudley steering group provides the necessary steering mechanisms and responsibilities to deliver the e-government targets, and is looking to re-establish it role in the Transformation agenda

- strategic investment in ICT has resulted in systems which are capable of providing integrated solutions

- investment in the data communications network allows electronic service delivery to almost every location used by the Council

- mobile computing has been developed to enable remote/outreach and home working

- the office system strategy enables staff to communicate electronically with each other, partners and suppliers and citizens

- the extensive internet site www.dudley.gov.uk uses modern content management features to allow easy, devolved maintenance and a wide range of Self service facilities;

Sources of Information

This interim strategy has been developedawaiting the governments transformational strategy, It has drawn from a number of sources including:

- Previous ICT strategies containing local targets for achieving the Government's Electronic Service Delivery targets and Best Value performance indicator BVPI 157

- The Council's six Implementing Electronic Government (IEG) Statements which have been approved by Central Government

- Updated Directorate 5 year Strategies where available

- Involvement with Dudley Council Plus (DCP) in support customer access, and with the Customer Access To Services (CATS) team in re-engineering services to support the DCP model.

- The 'Transformational Government – enabled by technology" paper published by the Chief Information Officer Council, and the subsequent "transformational Local Government" discussion paper. The Council Plan, which sets out 15 improvement priority areas.

TRANSFORMATIONAL GOVERNMENT

Introduction

This interim ICT strategy indicates how ICT will influence and shape the transformation of public services in Dudley .

Aims

> *To positively transform the delivery of services to citizens and businesses to offer greater choice and efficiency*

The final detail of the government's strategy is, as yet, unclear, but three key transformations are consistently raised. These are

(1) Services enabled by IT must be **designed around the citizen or business**, not the provider,.

(2) Government must move to a **shared services culture**

(3) There must be broadening and deepening of government's **professionalism** in terms of the planning, delivery, management, skills and governance of IT enabled change.

The discussion paper on Local Government Transformation builds on these challenges and places them in the context of local government, under three main headings:

(1) Engaging with citizens and communities

(2) Reshaping service delivery

(3) Changing organisations

The Vision of a Transformed Authority

Interacting with the Citizen

The vision for ICT support for a Transformed Dudley is based around the principles outlined above. In designing services to the citizen we will ensure that more services are readily available for self-service via the web site. We will continue to promote and develop Web based access to services to allow citizens access to services at their convenience and the use of additional channels, particularly those that support self service, such as SMS and video will undoubtedly increase.

Dudley Council Plus will continue to develop with more contact centres spread in the borough, together with a telephone Call centre and increasingly integrated, electronically enabled, facilities to support those citizens who choose to communicate electronically. Whatever method the citizen chooses to use to contact the council, , details of their requests will need to be stored on a single system, and the citizen could chose to use whatever channel was most appropriate for them. Citizens would

therefore be able to choose where to make their first point of contact for any request, and follow up via the same or different channels, whilst still retaining a continuous contact record. In addition to recognised Contact Centres every site where the council has contact with citizens should be provided either with a self-service facility or a Service Agent who could help the citizen use web based access to services.

The process outlined above would also be replicated for business contacts.

Using Self service Channels to improve efficiency

The use of Self service channels to access services will not only benefit citizens, by providing 24 X 7 accessibility it will also reduce queuing, either in person or on the Telephone and improve accessibility for citizens with mobility problems. Self-service channels also increase the efficiency of the Council by reducing the staff time necessary to support a transaction. The council will therefore continue to develop and promote the use of Self-service channels. These will include the web site; telephone based services such as Callpay; kiosks; SMS text message numbers and, potentially, voice recognition software.

It will remain vitally important to integrate self-service channels with other communication channels so that the citizen can use whichever channel they feel is appropriate to them at that time.

Identifying the citizen

A key component of the Transformational Government agenda, particularly for Self Service is the need to authenticate that the citizen requesting the service is who they say they are. Central Government is working on this problem through a project called Government Connects, which aims to allow Local authorities to authenticate citizens with whom they communicate. Once a citizen has registered and authenticated themselves, all subsequent transactions will use this authentication, which means that citizens will no longer be asked for the same information again and again as they use different services from different providers. The aim of this project is to make this available for all Local Authorities by the end of the 2007 calendar year, and providing it makes satisfactory progress should be incorporated into the next Corporate ICT Strategy.

Managing the Council's Information

The Council currently is data rich, but Information poor. Within the Council all employees would have the ability to access a corporately defined Information Resource, which would allow timely access to relevant information and to share information securely through seamless communication channels. This would streamline business processes, improve productivity, support increased collaboration across boundaries and allow staff to deliver improved service and increase customer satisfaction. It would also simplify and automate the production of performance management statistics. The resource would store and catalogue all information generated by the council, for either internal or external use together with all documents received by the Council.

The Council would maintain a single consolidated view of each citizen, with details of interactions, case history, service requests etc., integrated with appropriate back office systems, so that processes to deliver services can be carried out seamlessly, eliminating duplicate entry of information.

Supporting the Council's Employees

Improved technology may enable the Council to offer more flexible working arrangements for many of its staff. Where working patterns support this it would no longer be necessary for staff to travel into work each day, they could either work from home, or travel directly to client or site, have downloaded appropriate details first. They would then be able to capture the results of their visit directly into the system reducing double entry, and improving the timeliness of information. Such an initiative will require careful planning and management.

Council's employees would also have access to a wide range of self service facilities to allow them to record attendance, training records, mileage, expenses etc. undertake e-learning activities and book resources.

Sharing Services

To many citizens the exiting models of public service delivery mean understanding and navigating a range of different organisations, or parts of an organisation, set up to allow each part to operate as a self-contained business with clearly defined business rules and hand over procedures. Sharing services allows the hand over of the service incident and associated information to be passed seamlessly from one organisational unit to another.

Administrative tasks may also become shared . Tasks that are not a core component of service delivery are consolidated into one central organisation, supporting multiple directorates, or even multiple organisations. This reduces administrative overheads by reducing duplication and increasing economies of scale.

There are examples of local partnerships supporting shared services, both within the Dudley area(Dudley Community Partnership), at sub-regional (Black Country Knowledge Society) at City Region levels and at a national Level (e.g. the government gateway "Directgov" at www.directgov.gov.uk). These may need to be expanded in order to deliver transformation, and one of the key enablers of this approach will be connection to the West Midlands Regional Broadband network, which will provide reliable secure access to a range of regional services. Clearly such an initiative should only be considered if it brings benefits and has a proper business case.

Achievements

The ICT Strategy 2005 – 2009 contained a section called accessible services, which is the pre-cursor to transformation. Progress made to date includes:

- Achievement of the governments Priority Outcomes

- Achievement of the BVPI 157 on e-enablement

- Implementation of all the ICT required by Dudley Council Plus, including:

    o Call Centre Telephony

    o Self Service Cash Machines

    o A Customer Relationship Management system

- Improvements to the infrastructure, including secure encryption and virus protection, to provide the foundations for greater use of the Internet for citizen transactions

- Increasing training, awareness and understanding of Data Protection, Freedom of Information and Information Security

- Introduction of 24x7 directly accessible services, such as Automated Telephone Payments (ATP) using credit and debit cards, and online job applications,

- Development of core facilities such as an A-Z of services, e-Forms and Content Management for the website

Future Objectives

In order to deliver the aims of this interim strategy, our key objectives will be:

- To promote a Council wide culture of sharing information and embracing change.

- To promote debate on a leadership model to ensure that the transformation is led from the very top of the organisation and lack of commitment to the transformational culture is not supported.

- To develop the skills of managers to recognise opportunities for change and drive them forward.

- To develop and approve an overall Channels strategy, setting out the Council's approach to the various ways in which services can be accessed (e.g. Kiosks, website, face to face)

- To increase the provision of self-service facilities, and to improve existing provision where possible.

- Encourage facilitated access to the web site to ensure that citizens who choose not to use the web site themselves are not disadvantaged.

- To increase consultation with citizens on the use of access channels

- To increase the number of service lines supported by Dudley Council Plus,

- To develop personalised services to provide information of the greatest benefit tailored to the needs of individual citizens

- To ensure a Corporate approach to Information Management is followed by all directorates

- To monitor Government sponsored National Projects products and services and adopt them where there is a clear benefit

- To ensure appropriate services are accessible using web browsers via the Internet and conform with World Wide Web Accessibility Standards

- To ensure that ICT availability and reliability achieves levels that are consistent with a high quality experience for customers over extended operating hours

- To support staff in delivering better quality services, responding to citizen's at first point of contact and meeting the citizens' expectations

- To develop systems to gather information so that targets can be set and monitored

Key Organisational Issues

The delivery of Transformational Government cannot be seen as the role of the Council's I CT Services Division. It requires commitment and leadership from a high level within the organisation, and corporately across the whole organisation. The role of e-dudley and the e-champions needs to be reviewed, but it must be recognised that the adoption of this model has allowed Dudley to achieve success in the e-government programme; we must build on this success, rather than re-engineer a new governance structure.

At the time of writing this Strategy the final shape of developments in the area are still unclear. During the next 12 months the Council will have to address this issue if it is to meet Transformational Government targets.

Key Business and Professional Systems Issues

In order to support the Transformational Government Agenda it will be necessary to ensure that the business and professional services used to support the day-to-day operation of the council are suitable. This section of the interim strategy sets out additional activity not already covered in the current ICT Strategy.

Achievements

Since 2005 - 2009 strategy was introduced the Council has made considerable progress in the business systems area. This includes:

- Replacing the corporate Financial System(CFS)

- Replacing the Council's Council Tax and Benefits systems with a single integrated solution.

- Commencing work on the integration of the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system with a number of back Office Systems

- Extending the Council's Cash Collection system to include a number of WEB based facilities

- Re-launching the Council's Web site using a content Management solution, based around accepted government categories

- Delivering the systems necessary for achieving the governments Priority Outcomes

- Adding considerable GIS functionality to the Council's Web Site.

- Implementing an online Planning service

Objectives

In order to support transformation, our key objectives will be:-

- To ensure that information systems are provided to meet the Council's core objectives, this includes the implementation of an integrated electronic document and records management system to improve the management of information in the authority

- To ensure that information systems are implemented that improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Council's operations in line with the recommendation of the Gershon report and Council's Annual Efficiency Statement

- To ensure that common systems are used across the council to support shared processes, and promote the use of shared services.

- To ensure that the council changes procedures and policies to gain maximum benefit from recently implemented Corporate systems;

- To ensure a close integration between the systems supporting the council's business processes and citizen's contact systems;

- To maximise the benefit the Council obtains from the information it uses to support its business processes;

- To promote a Corporate Applications Architecture to allow information and technology to enhance and enable flexible service delivery;

- To maximise the benefits of technological innovation, and raise awareness of the potential benefit from new technologies;

- To integrate our processes, where possible to speed up our response and work as one organisation,

- To ensure that corporate and directorate systems are capable of sharing information with each other and with outside agencies in an effective, and secure way with the minimum of intervention,

- To ensure that systems comply with data protection and freedom of information legislation, and are delivered in a robust way according to latest professional standards.

Key ICT infrastructure issues

In order to meet the needs of Transformational government our strategy needs to address a number of key ICT Infrastructure issues, in addition to those set out in the current strategy.

Achievements

Recent achievements in the area of Infrastructure developments include:

- The replacement of all operational systems running on the mainframe, in preparation for removal of the mainframe at the end of 2006.

- Introduction of Thin Client computing into a number of areas both to extend the life of existing equipment and to reduce support costs.

- Introduction of a range of Mobile ICT facilities including tablet PC's and Blackberry mobile devices.

- Introduction of corporate call centre technology using the council's network to support voice communications

- Introduction of more compact Blade server technology to improve resilience and flexibility.

Future Objectives

In order to support transformation, our key ICT Infrastructure objectives will be:-

- Development of the Council's Intranet and associated corporate filestore to exploit the facilities offered by the Content Management solution already implemented on our Web site and to implement a Electronic Document and Records Management System to ensure that the process of document creation maintenance and retention and ownership required to ensure information is managed effectively

- Implications of supporting Dudley Council Plus and the CATS project, and developing closer integrations between the systems used by the service agents and those used by back office staff to increase efficiency by reducing double keying and making information available in a more timely manner.

- Ensuring that the Council's infrastructure responds to the need to support a variety of flexible working models. These include:-

   o Dedicated home workers

   o Staff working Part time from home part time form an Office

   o Staff working from a variety of Office locations

   o Staff working from anywhere with the borough, including citizen's homes.

- Implementing the latest hardware and software in our data centres to ensure that we continue to deliver reliable, secure and cost effective ICT Services.

Risks

In any strategy of this nature it is essential that potential risks are identified and mitigating actions planned. The following table sets out the risks identified from this interim strategy.

Risk	Impact H/M/L	Probability H/M/L	Mitigation Actions
Government Strategy on Transformational Government will Change	High	Low	Re-write the Strategy to reflect new Government Direction
Insufficient buy-in at High levels in Dudley MBC to drive changes	High	Medium	Re-write the Strategy to reflect level of commitment
Citizen feedback indicates Change is not required	Medium	Medium	The strategy need to be flexible enough to respond to changing citizen needs
Insufficient buy-in from	Medium	Low	Seek feedback and

partners and other community groups, which may result in a change in strategy.			commitment from partners
Resistance to change in directorates	Medium	Medium	Ensure High Level commitment to strategy
Insufficient internal dedicated resources, capacity and competencies will be available to deliver Transformational Government?	High	Medium	More accurately identify resources when needs are better understood

What we intend to do

In order to achieve the aims we have set the following programme of work and targets which will not only deliver short term aims but protect our longer term needs until a new strategy can be developed:

Target Area	Actions	Target
Intranet	Review publishing capabilities on Intranet and replace with strategic products	2006
Regional activity / joint agency working	Participate in groups such as Black Country Knowledge Society (BCKS), Black Country Smartcard, WMLGA Managers e-Government Network, NHS Local Implementation Strategy	Ongoing
e-Dudley / e-Champions	Further develop the role of e-Champions as the leaders of e-Government initiatives	Ongoing
24x7 and Mobile / Home Working	Encourage Council to exploit ability of Internet to deliver 24x7 services by introducing more services online	Ongoing
	Develop policies to support mobile and home working	2006
Provide information for citizens tailored to their needs	Develop capability to communicate pro-actively with citizens information that reflects their interests / needs	2007
Information security and management	Develop information management facilities to support customer focused service delivery	2006
	Further develop BS7799 and ISO 15489	2006
Access Channels	Develop Access and Channels Strategies that provide self service capabilities	2006
	Achieve high take up of fully electronic/self service/low cost services mirrored by reduced capacity/investment in expensive/ fully mediated services	2009
National strategy	Ensure the new and existing systems are developed to comply with national e-gif standards and support National Initiatives	2007
Systems Integration	Integrate the Aspire CRM System into at least one "back office" system	2006
	Ensure all directorate systems 'integrate' with corporate GIS	2007
	Integrate systems to support development of solutions based on life episodes	2007

Target Area	Actions	Target
Directorate Operational Systems	Ensure back office systems exploit features offered by mobile working	2006
Information Management	Ensure business systems / back office systems achieve statutory targets for FOI / Data Protection / BS7799 during the life of this strategy	2009
	Complete an inventory of all information held electronically across the Council	2008
	Develop detailed Business case for the implementation of a corporate Electronic Documenmt and Records Management System.	2007
Systems Exploitation	Continue effort to support the exploitation of the Corporate Office Strategy	Ongoing
	Promote improved financial management through extended use of the Corporate Financial System	
	Promote extended HR facilities in the |areas of Training Records, Absence monitoring and Recruitment via exploitation of the corporate HR system	
	Promote the adoption of single corporate solutions to common adnministrative tasks such as Booking resources, Time Control, Document Management etd.	
National strategy	Ensure the new and existing systems are developed to comply with national e-gif standards and support National Initiatives	2007
Regional activity – joint working	Develop a solution to connect our wide area network to regional or national government networks as appropriate	2006
	Monitor developments with WM Telematics Group, Black Country Knowledge Society and the Smart Region initiative.	Ongoing
	Monitor developments on smartcards	Ongoing
24x7 Working	Ensure evidence and availability of infrastructure supports 24x7 requirements as they emerge	Ongoing
Desktop	Investigate Open Source Software with the objective of reducing software costs without impacting on usability or compatibility	2007
Voice/Data Network	Implement Large Scale trial of Voice over IP technology	2007
	Negotiate new Voice Contract	2008

CONCLUSION AND ACTIONS

This strategy is a short term view of ICT in Dudley over the next 18 months to two years. It needs to be robust enough to be a real planning document upon which actual decisions and investment can be made, but flexible enough to meet the emerging Transformational Government strategy.

As the Transformational Government Strategy emerges it will be necessary for the council to evaluate its impact and decide on its approach. At that time a new full four year strategy will be required.

Even though this is an interim strategy it should also used to inform other Council strategies to ensure that opportunities and changing working environments are consider when planning other areas of the Council's business

The Council has a vision of where it wants to be in four years time. This interim strategy is aimed at helping move us towards that vision. Over the next four years the way services are delivered will be very different as indicated below:

Key Changes	Timescale
A significant proportion of citizens will conduct their business with the Council electronically. This trend has already started with nearly 2,000 citizens choosing to use electronic billing for council tax in 2004.	1-2 years
Information will be collected once and used for many different purposes	1-2 years
Citizens will use new channels, e.g. text Messaging, video phones or Kiosks to contact the council about things that mater to them	1-2 years
The Council will communicate with citizen's electronically to notify them of events or information of relevance to them due to location or special interest	2-3 years
There will be a single Smart Card to enhance citizens ability to transact with the Council	2-3 years
People will be able to view a comprehensive area profile including details of schools, medical facilities, transport links, crime rates	1-2 years
Communications between school and home will be electronically enable, with pupils able to use school resources and submit homework, and parent able to monitor pupils progress.	1-3years
Mobile technology will significantly improve personal safety for vulnerable staff	1-2years
Transport information, such as bus times, road works, and parking availability will be available via a variety of electronic channels	1-2 years
Flexible working practises will mean fewer people have to travel to work in the rush hour, either working different patterns, or from home.	1-3 years
Satellite Navigation will improve management and provision of transport and care services	1-4 years
Improved technology in the home will enable vulnerable citizens to remain in their own homes for longer, and reduce care needs.	2-3 years
It will be possible to design a document on any desktop within the council, publish it on the Council's web site and print the required copies remotely	1-2 years
Councillor's surgeries will electronically enabled	2-4 years
A wide range of e-learning opportunities will be available for staff at Dudley	1-2 years
Sharing network infrastructure for both voice and data traffic will improve quality of communications.	1-2 years
Council staff will be equipped with a phone that works at no cost anywhere, in any Council Building	2-3 years
Wireless Wide Area Networks will improve the level of communications available to small locations, and will help to support mobile workers	3-5 years
Smart cards will provide access to buildings, time control, and access to PC's etc.	1-3 years
Use of mobile hand held computers, with radio based networking will provide e-mail/diary throughout the council's buildings	1-2 years
Document Imaging will capture ALL incoming post and manage workflow.	2-3 years
Use of video Conferencing for meetings and interactions with the public will be in place.	1-3 years
Technology will be used to enable service users to complete simple tasks essential to independent living	12 years