



**Wiltshire Council**  
**ICT Strategy**  
**2008 to 2012**

**Version 2.0**  
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#### Document version control

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## 1. The ICT Strategy - Introduction

ICT is a key enabler for the delivery of effective and efficient services to our customers. Wiltshire Council's future success as an effective provider of services will rely significantly upon how we as individuals, as teams and as an organisation are able to strategically manage, develop and apply ICT.

This Strategy has been produced to provide a review of the provision of ICT services and a direction statement on how ICT will support the Council as it transforms its service delivery to the people of Wiltshire over the next 4-5 years. Inevitably given the current level of uncertainty surrounding the development of one council, the introduction of SAP, the major changes to service departments and the availability of resource this strategy will inevitably have to be iterative over the next 6 -12 months.

The Information, Communications and Technology (ICT) Strategy has been developed to cover the period 2008/12 and is one of Wiltshire Council's key resource strategies, alongside the Property, Resources and the Medium Term Financial strategies. It focuses on how ICT will be delivered to help the new authority to deliver better outcomes for customers

The experience within Wiltshire and across all private and public sector organisations is that successful change can never be achieved by technology alone and that equal, if not greater, effort is required to address the people, process and cultural change aspects. The right approach to, and the investment in, ICT will give the Council the technical foundation upon which these other aspects of change can be built and will provide the opportunity to transform the way the new authority delivers services but this will only be effective if the investment in the other aspects of change occur in parallel.

We need to ensure that the opportunities provided by modern technology are embraced and exploited to transform the way we deliver our services. We, in ICT, need to actively engage with our customers, stakeholders, partners and suppliers to make this happen.

To achieve this, we need to:

- improve access for customers;
- engage closely with managers and service providers to identify needs and exploit opportunities;
- drive efficiencies from existing and new systems;
- encourage and support staff to adopt modern and efficient ways of working;
- manage and exploit our information

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- and enable Members to have greater access to the Council's information and services electronically and encourage their constituents to do the same.

Fundamentally we need to improve our customer focus and our responsiveness to provide what the new authority needs for the future.

### 3. Background – where we are

#### 3.1 Wiltshire County Council's 2004 ICT Strategy

The 2004 ICT Strategy, authored by the NCC, established several high level areas requiring action with appropriate goals, notably:

- to remedy a disparate ICT infrastructure & duplication of information
- to re-structure the ICT management and service provision
- to commit to a five year rolling investment programme and provide an additional £3 million per annum funding invested through investment appraisal and standardisation

Although work remains to be done, most of the 2004 strategy has been delivered through a series of projects and through the reorganisation that took place in 2006. Appendix 1 reviews the status against the original objectives.

#### 3.2 The District Council's ICT Strategies

The District Council's separately created their own strategies to ensure that they achieved their required objectives especially in regard to:

- e-Government
- Transformational Government
- Customer Focussed service delivery

#### 3.3 The ICT Support Contract 2006 – 2011(with Steria)

A five year ICT Support contract with Steria Ltd. started on 01 October 2006. This realised significant savings while including project support, routine moves and changes, disaster recovery, extended hours support and support for home and mobile workers. Emphasis was placed within the contract on partnership working and continuous service improvement.

Although Steria clearly underestimated the complexity and the scale of the changes that the authority wished to pursue, most of the core service levels have been maintained effectively, and a large number of projects have been successfully delivered. The establishment of the new authority will, by necessity, broaden the scope of the contract to encompass the

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current district infrastructures. This gives an opportunity to renegotiate aspects of the contract and its scope. Key decision areas will include response times and operating hours, as these are important cost drivers. A decision will need to be made during late 2008 as to whether to exercise the option to extend the contract to 2013.

### 4. Wiltshire Council Vision.

The Vision for the new authority is 'to create stronger and more sustainable communities in Wiltshire.' This is to be attained by the goals of:

- delivering high quality, low cost, customer focussed services
- local, open and honest decision making
- Working together to support Wiltshire's communities.

The Characteristics of the new council are to be:

- One Council, one culture
- Innovative
- A great place to work

#### 4.1 Purpose of ICT.

ICT must help enable and facilitate the goals and objectives of the new authority. ICT is a key enabling function in support of the corporate direction. It is not an end in itself; it is there to provide essential services to a largely internal customer base. As such it has 4 key objectives to support the authority's vision, goals and characteristics.

4.1.1 ICT must deliver excellent customer service. ICT must help identify and determine business requirements and needs and work closely with the new departments so that better services can be delivered to all customers. In order to do this the ICT service must:

- Provide high quality, responsive, flexible services
- Be consistent and reliable
- Drive value for the business, in terms of performance and cost, through the better use of technology
- Work to be an business enabler
- Meet, manage and, where possible, exceed expectations

4.1.2 ICT must facilitate and enable business change.

- ICT is a major component in supporting and enabling transformation through an integrated approach to change. Transformational change requires a cross-organisational and an integrated approach, especially if better customer access to the services that cut across departments are to be delivered. This is a particular challenge for ICT, as this is likely to require greater

system integration and the need to retrieve and use information and data; this can be costly and complex.

- Helping the business to realise benefits. ICT can enable major improvements in process, improving services by eliminating waste and reducing complexity. However ICT is frequently an up front investment and cannot deliver the benefit directly; this will only be achieved when change is driven through within the departmental services.

#### 4.1.3 ICT must ensure business continuity.

- Resilience - the current ICT infrastructure has too many single points of failure and lacks the resilience required to provide a reliable and continuous service. This is a key target for infrastructure investment within the technology roadmap.
- Forward thinking - the ICT system must have the growth potential and flexibility to respond to business demands and changes and it must have access to the intellectual resources to support these requirements.
- Timeless Recovery – ICT must be able to offer as near timeless recovery of systems as is possible to minimise downtime and maximise usability of the key business applications.

4.1.4 ICT must enable Information Exploitation. Information is a critical resource for the effectiveness of the authority. Access to information is poor and is in silos and as a result the information cannot be used effectively, much less exploited. This is currently challenging but will intensify following the creation of One Council. ICT will work to adopt a pragmatic approach that enables the business to achieve.

4.1.5 Information Management. An effective information management framework needs to be introduced, together with relevant tools to effect access to information across the new authority.

4.1.6 Information Security. Information needs to be held and accessed in accordance with legislative requirements to protect our customers and staff. Our networks need to be protected against ever more complex electronic threats.

## 4.2 Looking Forward

### 4.2.1 Transition

A major objective of the establishment of one council is to initially transition services and then to transform the delivery of both front line and support services across the whole of the new council. This process will take at least 3-4 years and will only be achieved through an integrated approach that tackles, in a systemic way, the people issues, the processes and the technology. There are huge opportunities to use ICT as a key enabler for

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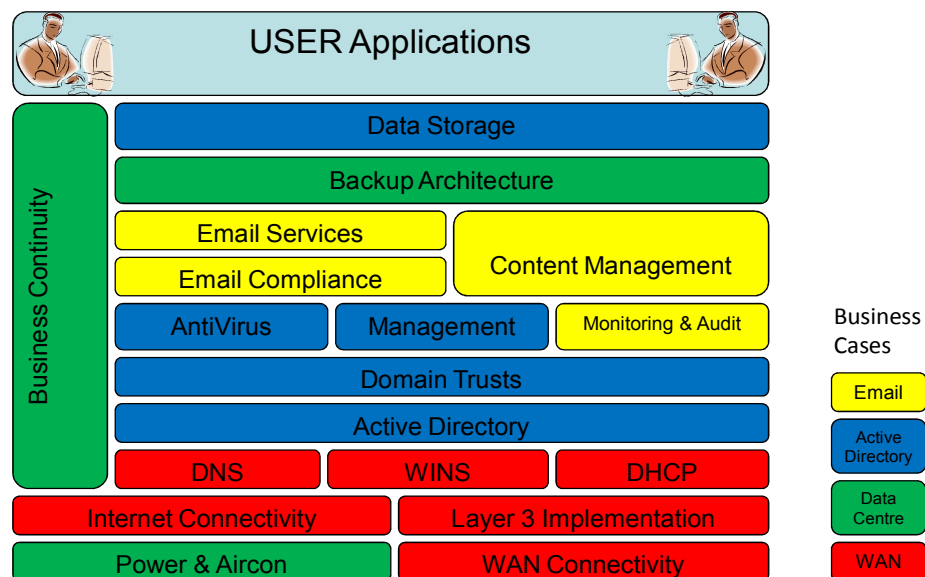
this change and this entails building on and maximising the return from the investment made to date, maintaining and enhancing our investment in new technologies and investing in projects that have the greatest potential for delivering efficiency and deliver better public services.

LGR will have a very significant impact upon ICT over this period. ICT is a critical path issue for the establishment of one council and a large number of ICT building blocks are required for Vesting Day if the authority is to work effectively. These include:

- WAN (Wide Area Network - network connections between buildings)
- Active Directory (Management of user profiles verses IT resources)
- Dual data centres – to provide back up and resilience
- Email – to provide a working and integrated mail system
- Telephony – short term telephony strategy
- Customer Care – one number – a single and updated Lagan system
- One Web presence – a new internet site
- Applications - transitional imperatives / business critical applications
- Security – securing the bigger network

Diagram 1 below, is a logical model of how these components fit together. Note that the components are interconnected and that each layer is critically dependent on the layer below – e.g. email requires Active Directory to be in place. As a result, the ICT organisation will be required to concentrate upon these core infrastructure programmes for the next year to 18 months and most of the available resources will be dedicated to this.



**Diagram 1**

#### 4.2.2 Transformation

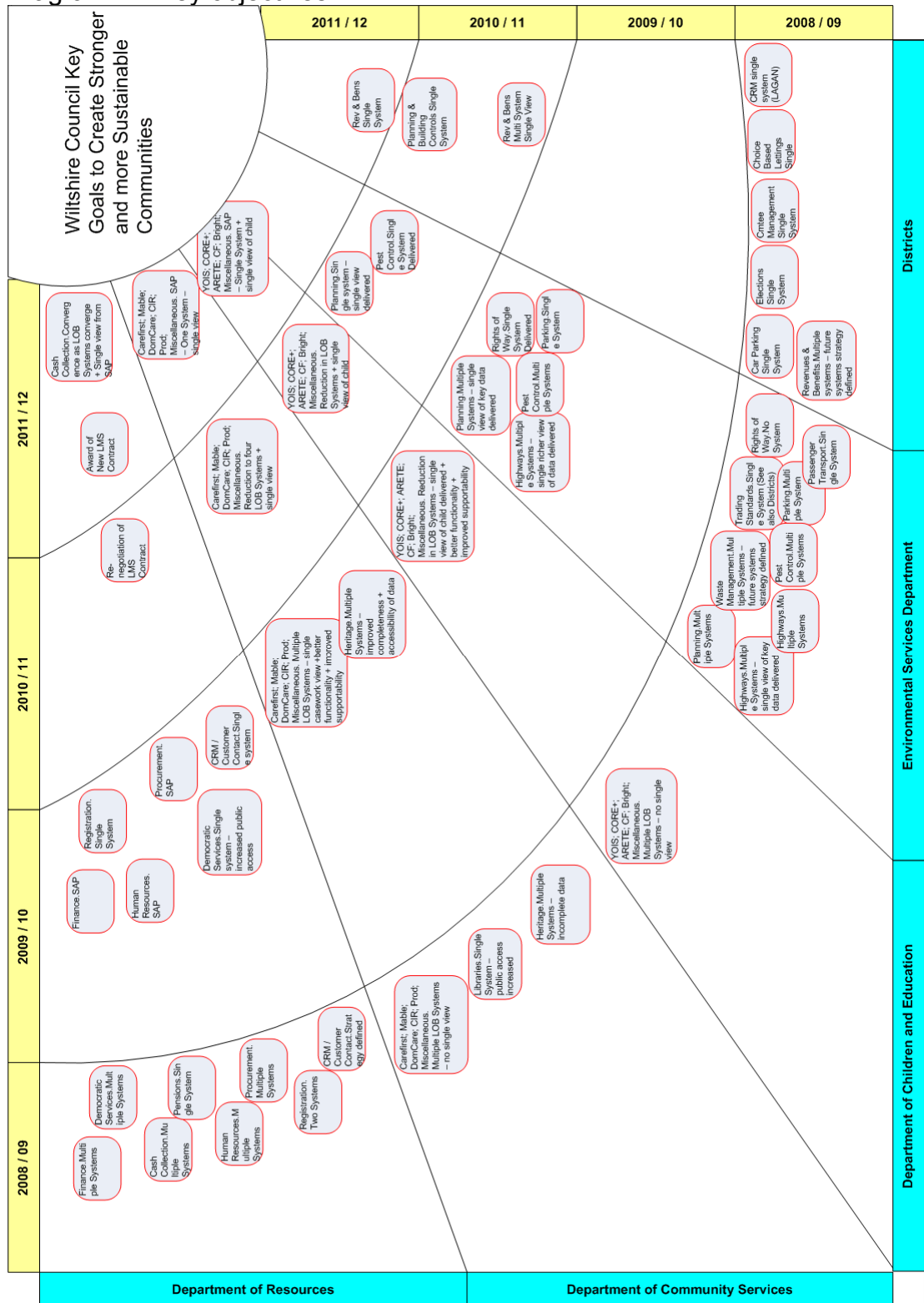
The rationalisation of applications and the management of information and data, as well as continuing activity on infrastructure, especially telephony, will form the key activity for the subsequent phase and will take up to 4 years, dependent upon resource availability. The current core ICT and LGR transition budget should be adequate to cater for the essential infrastructure and simple application migration issues. It will not be sufficient to cover major application purchases (such as a new Revenues and Benefits system) nor will it be sufficient to fund the medium/long term telephony strategy or information exploitation agenda. MTFS resources will have to be justified through business cases for these and other priority programmes.

Resourcing includes both financial investment and staff availability and will be limited. In the case of ICT enabled change, this must include departmental resources if change is to be delivered and benefits realised. Unless this resource is available then there will be little benefit gained in delivering the technology change and the authority has clear evidence and experience of this.

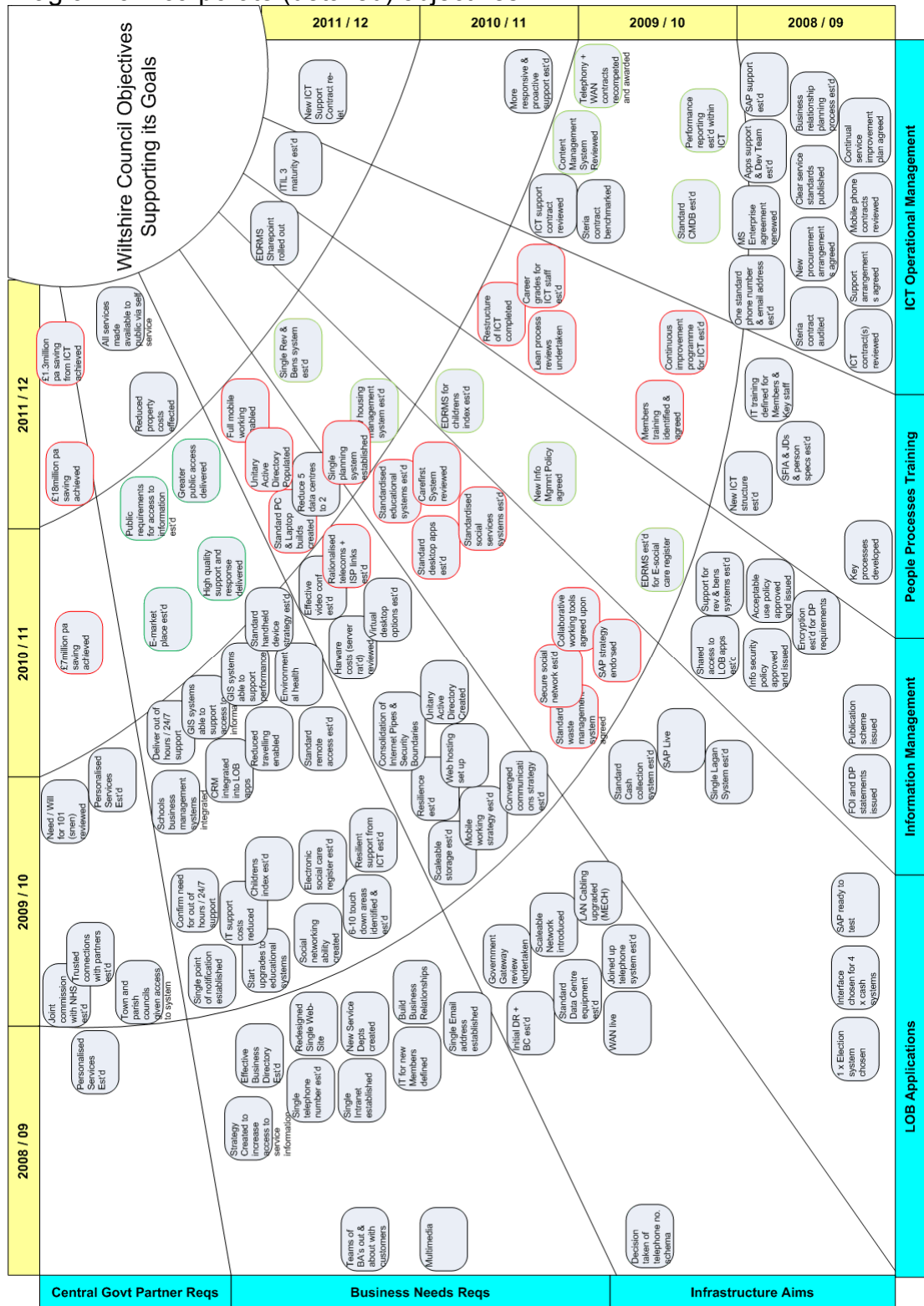
Diagrams 2 and 3 set the broad ICT objectives into a timeline of transformation for the business. Inevitably this will be dependent upon emerging priorities and upon the availability of resources; it will therefore be iterative. The scope and scale of these initiatives is extremely challenging for the business and for the ICT organisation.

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## Diagram 2 – key objectives



### Diagram 3 – corporate (detailed) objectives



### 4.3 The Role of ICT

There are a number of key themes which convey the role of ICT in the organisation. These include:

- 4.3.1 Business Transformation – ensuring that our services are delivered as efficiently and effectively as possible through the optimal use of business applications and tools.
- 4.3.2 Systems Integration - joining up systems will enable better use of information and better customer service. However, this is no panacea and the complexity and cost associated with integration should not be underestimated. Initiatives to integrate systems have to be carefully targeted. Key areas will include SAP, the LAGAN CRM, CareFirst and the multiple DCE systems.
- 4.3.3 Customer Focus – focussing on customers needs in order to enable internal customers (the business) to deliver their services effectively to the external customers (the people of Wiltshire and other agencies).
- 4.3.4 Flexible Working - flexible working enables staff and members to work effectively from wherever they need to be, through the combination of technology, property and people initiatives. The authority has already adopted an 80% desk provision target in order to reduce property costs. The technical facilities to enable more staff to work on the road and, on an ad hoc basis, to work from home, now largely exist. However, a more effective change programme to deliver this across the authority is required.
- 4.3.5 The implementation of new and innovative technologies – technology will support improved customer and staff services, including new access channels, more automated transactions for customers and staff and the use of tools such as video conferencing and web based tools such as messaging, blogs, on line whiteboarding etc to increase collaboration and reduce travelling.
- 4.3.6 Collecting information once and managing it effectively – ensuring information is exploited for the benefit of customers, staff and members and that information is handled in accordance with guidance/best practice to ensure personal information is not abused/exploited. This may entail more widespread implementation of EDRMS particularly to meet statutory requirements in the adult's and the children's care arenas.
- 4.3.7 Maintaining reliable services – improving resilience, ensuring business continuity, providing security and capacity of our ICT infrastructure.
- 4.3.8 Training. Basic and specialist ICT training is fundamental to the successful use of ICT. ICT training needs to be integrated with business process training if it is to be effective. A training needs analysis will be essential for all areas of business transformation and will identify a need for greater investment in training.
- 4.3.9 Business management - The implementation of SAP as the business support platform for the authority is a strategic decision. Although the go live for SAP is in Apr 09, it is unlikely that the full

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range of benefits from the use of SAP will be realisable until Apr 11. In the initial stages the focus will be on realising the benefits of standardised business support processes and the empowerment of managers through improved visibility of management and performance information. Further decisions regarding the use of SAP will be required during 2008-09. Use of SAP to provide social care management, the CRM system, asset management and EDRMS amongst a number of areas could all offer the authority a more effective and more integrated approach. A strategic plan for SAP is currently being developed and will be available during mid to late 2008.

### 4.4 The Structure of ICT

An effective and efficient structure of the new Wiltshire Council ICT Unit is an essential component in delivering a first class ICT support to the new authority. A structure is under construction as part of the development of the overall staffing for One Council. It has been agreed that this structure will be based on best practice adopted across all public and most commercial organisations. The interim structure will be in place by Autumn 2008 with the permanent structure fully operational until 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter 2009.

## 5 Wiltshire Council's requirements

Departmental requirements have been analysed and determined through interaction with departmental ICT user groups. Appendix 11 outlines the key requirements, where these are known, in detail. Inevitably many of these, particularly in DCS and DCE are policy driven and are frequently dependent upon external drivers from central government and partner agendas, these often emerge and change at short notice. As the LAA process matures it will become a key driver for change in the local arena.

5.1 Current District Council requirements. These requirements, which will be carried forward to the appropriate One Council departments contain:

- Central Government directives for e-Government; Transactional Government; and Transformational Government that are designed to ensure we can deliver to all customers the same level of service irrespective of the medium used by them (e.g. on-line; face-to-face; or by post)
- Working with customers on how they deliver services and to what standard

5.2 Department of Children and Education. DCE is especially challenged by an ever-changing policy agenda with regard to schools and children care. Of particular note over the next 2-3 years are:

- Integrated Children Services (ICS) – further tranches of change as required by government

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- e-Common Assessment Framework (CAF) – requirement not clear, further work from government, likely to be required late 09 or in 2010.
- Contact Point (Children's Index) and supporting integration technology (primarily MultiVue and Biztalk) – required during 2009/2010
- Integrated support for Schools (technical and corporate services) – much closer integration between schools and WCC needed to meet performance and business management needs. This may require a limited SAP rollout to schools.
- CareFirst - Further changes - management information reports and standard letters -2008-09, ongoing throughout period
- EDRMS for children's care services to meet record management requirements
- Schools connection to WCC Intranet
- Sure Start children's centres

5.3 Department of Community Services. DCS is undergoing major transformation at present leading to significant business and process changes. The 'personalisation' agenda will have a major impact upon the design and the delivery of DCS services and may necessitate significant, but as yet unclear, changes on the ICT support required by DCS. Initially this may be most evident in the support required by the newly established commissioning branch. CareFirst will remain as the core business application for at least the next three years and further developments of this application will take place. The community agenda is a key to the LAA and the one council agenda and enabling the operation of community area board may also require ICT investment. Major work areas will include:

- Introduction of the CareFirst CareAssess and Service Package modules
- Care Mobile, together with other ICT tools, to facilitate mobile working by care workers
- More work on DCS Finances and reporting services
- Domiciliary Care
- Commissioning Services ICT requirements
- Community – ICT requirements to support area boards and parish/town councils.
- Community Safety – creation of / accessibility to a multi-agency database of secure information e.g. on domestic violence, drugs, alcohol and anti-social behaviour
- Library & Heritage Services – re-tender of LMS contract and upgrade to Sites and Monuments records

5.4 Environmental Services Department. The new structure of the Wiltshire Council includes the creation of 2 departments that will cover the range of environmental services currently delivered by the County and the Districts. These 2 departments will be faced by a legacy of multiple business applications and processes and will be faced by



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intensive transformational change over the next 3 years, not least the rationalisation of the 4 planning systems between the 5 authorities. Much more work is required in this area over the next 6-12 months to determine priorities for early application rationalisation and to determine specific business needs. The current ESD department has a wide variety of specialist applications most of which will need to be maintained but any further investment needs to await the longer term plan.

5.5 Department of Resources. Further development and utilisation of the SAP system will be a key activity throughout the period. However DOR will also have to address the application support required for Revenues and Benefits and this is likely to be a major programme of change in 2010-11, with procurement activity probably commencing during 2009. Customer care developments will include a 2008 upgrade to LAGAN prior to vesting and then as applications are rationalised, interfaces and integration will be established between the CRM and line of business applications. The SAP strategy will analyse whether a change to the CRM system may be desirable from 2011/12. Considerable changes will also be required on web development with a new content management system required in 2009/10

## 6. Internal Drivers

The Authority require ICT to deliver strong, robust services, centred on strong policies and practical measures to achieve a cohesive and up-to-date architecture, within compliant but business friendly IT Security arrangements, together with effective Information Management. Key to delivering these is agreeing solid policies that deliver what the business requires. To do this we will need to agree and build on:

### 6.1 Customer Service

The integration of the five council IT teams into a new unified single service provides an opportunity to provide a more customer orientated approach. The Business Analysis Team will act as the 'intelligent client' on behalf of service departments, to ensure best value and high quality service delivery.

ICT aims to provide our customers with a positive experience every time they have contact with us. We will put both internal and external customers at the centre of everything we do and will improve customer satisfaction by:

#### 6.1.1 Being clear about what services we provide, the levels to which they are provided and the limitations they are subject to by:

- Publishing and maintaining a catalogue of ICT services, both on-line and in printed form
- Listing, for all services, hours during which service are provided.

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- For all services be clear about delivery schedules and costs and keep to them

### 6.1.2 Establishing customer account managers for all departments to:

- Capture current and emerging customer needs for ICT services
- Channel current needs into the appropriate area of ICT service provision.
- Liaise with service level management function to identify the resources needed to satisfy the emerging needs and service levels.
- Resolve concerns and issues.

### 6.1.3 Attaining a high level of customer satisfaction by:

- Adopting a can-do and flexible approach with our customers
- Establishing realistic expectations
- Delivering to an agreed time and performance
- Being knowledgeable about the service areas and proactive in identifying opportunities for change.
- Surveying our stakeholders and responding the issues raised
- Managing performance measured against best practice
- Ensuring that all our staff receive training and development in customer support, best practice service management (ITIL) to enhance services and fulfil customer expectations.

### 6.1.4 Providing Information Security services that:

- Support customers in using existing and new services, with as light a touch as possible, while maintaining security of our network and of our information.
- Maintain compliance with Data Protection and all other relevant legislation.
- Minimise the need for repeated customer sign-ons and authentications whilst maintaining required levels of information security

## 6.2 Infrastructure

ICT Infrastructure is usually invisible to the ICT user, who only becomes aware of it when it causes systems to fail or when the infrastructure is unable to accommodate desired business changes. The goal of ICT infrastructure is therefore to be as transparent as possible to the ICT user. ICT infrastructure investment is an essential foundation for an effective service. The ICT technology roadmap is at Appendix 5. In broad terms ICT infrastructure will continue to focus on improvements in the following areas:



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- Reliability - To ensure that systems and data are always available –the establishment of a second data centre by early 2009 and the constant reduction in single points of failure will reduce risks in this area.
- Capacity - To ensure that systems do not become slow and unresponsive and have adequate storage capability.
- Flexibility - To ensure that systems can be accessed when, where and how the ICT user requires it to make the most efficient use of ICT in their work.
- Standardisation - To enable changes to be made more rapidly and faults to be rectified more quickly and to ensure that all users receive a consistent response.
- Planning and research: To ensure that the best ICT infrastructure to meet the future needs of ICT users is selected.
- Efficiency - To improve the value and reduce the costs of the ICT infrastructure and thereby self fund further investment in improvements to ICT facilities.

### 6.3 Applications

Applications are a highly complex area for both WCC and the new unitary authority. WCC has some 3,800 desktop PCs on which some 1,600 desktop applications (or variants) are running on some 160 sites across the County. The new council will inherit significant application incoherence in all areas. There are for instance 3 different Revenues and Benefits systems that perform the exactly the same business function but require three of everything (supplier support arrangements, hardware, staff skills etc) and constrain service delivery e.g. not being able to conduct customer business in Salisbury when you live in Chippenham. A more detailed review of the applications environment is incorporated at Appendix 9.

Internal customers experience considerable frustration with their ICT applications. They have problems in finding an application to help them perform their work, understanding how to engage with ICT for help and support and in the quality and responsiveness of the support ICT are able to provide.

There are, consequently, three main themes to the application strategy:

#### 6.3.1 Simplicity.

This is working towards having one application for each business purpose. This minimises the ICT resources required to install, maintain and support the application and those using it and leads to:

- better quality of service for internal customers through greater ICT of knowledge of the retained applications

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- cost savings through bulk licensing arrangements and reduced support burden
- better quality work and customer outcomes as colleagues can move from worrying about the ICT (and the huge number of applications required to do their job) to focussing solely on customer service

### 6.3.2 Reliable and responsive ICT Applications service.

Our aim is to get to reliable, responsive service which helps internal customers consistently achieve their work objectives in a timely way.

- Desktops - desktop hardware problems will be resolved within hours through “swap out” and software can be “ordered” from an on-line catalogue with installation within hours across the network using “pre-packaged and tested” software. The foundation stones of this aim are a standard desktop build and fewer applications as these make a high quality service both practical and cost-effective. Without them significant service improvement is impossible as the numbers of applications and possible desktop builds make our desired service improvements impractical and cost prohibitive.
- Line of Business systems (e.g. CareFirst, Lagan etc) - we will achieve improved reliability and responsiveness by consolidation of functions into fewer applications, and by ensuring that those retained are installed in such a way that they are not vulnerable to individual component failures.
- Standardising on Infrastructure, Desk-top management systems, and remote utilisation tools - to minimise support time and effort.

### 6.3.3 Improved management information

Consolidation of applications means that data about the same entity (customers, assets etc) will be held in fewer systems with better data quality (through the eradication of poor quality systems with little or no data validation). As we move towards SAP becoming the “hub” of the council we will either move more and more required application functionality into SAP or implement integration where SAP will have access to the data generated by other applications. This means that over time we will have to interrogate fewer and fewer systems to get the vital information required to manage service delivery and report our performance.

## 6.4 ICT Security Policy

The delivery of Wiltshire County Council’s services is now totally reliant on the effective use of ICT systems and in order for staff to work efficiently and effectively, and for the Council to operate within the law

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we have developed an Information Systems Security Policy and a Strategy to deliver to that policy by 2009.

The responsibility for ensuring the security, confidentiality, integrity, availability and assurance of the Councils IT network and its data, whilst maintaining the legal and audit requirements for Council's ICT systems rests with the Information Security team within Corporate ICT Unit which works closely with IT colleagues, internal audit and the Information Management team.

Policy is endorsed by the Information Security Forum which comprises of senior personnel from across the departments and user base.

Information security is becoming increasingly important and challenging to Local Authorities as a result of:

- Continuous and ever changing threats to ICT systems
- Emerging technologies
- The move towards mobile working
- Legislation

In addition there is an ever increasing public awareness of the right to privacy and the protection of personal data whilst there is a public trend towards litigation and compensation resulting from damage and distress caused by compromise and or unlawful disclosure of personal information.

The council has embarked upon a major expansion project of flexible, mobile and homeworking for its employees. Information security policy has been adapted to meet the needs of the business whilst employing pragmatic, realistic and legal security requirements, to date this has been successfully with the adaptation of 2 factor authentication and several mobile working scenarios.

### 6.5 Information Management Policy / Strategy

Information Management is, in essence, a set of methodologies backed by policy, enabled and supported by technology. Wiltshire Council creates and holds a vast quantity of information both structured (i.e. in databases) and unstructured i.e. files in random folders on file shares. These records represent the corporate memory, providing historical evidence of actions, decisions and interactions with customers and clients.

The Authority is dependent upon its records in order to operate efficiently and to account for its actions. It is essential that Wiltshire Council adopts best practice for managing information so that it complies with its legislative obligations.

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In order to derive the benefit from our information and to exploit it to its fullest extent, it is first necessary to understand what we have, where it is and to attach a value to it. From this baseline, we can then ascertain the cost of the information in terms of storage, sensitivity, and recreation.

The major benefits from applying Information management practices are:

- The removal of obsolete and duplicative information allowing a better quality of information to be available, enabling more informed decision making.
- Less information stored increases the speed of retrieval through searches, enabling economies to be achieved through reduced physical and electronic storage requirements.
- Simplifies the retention process and allows the authority to meet its statutory compliance obligations.
- Enables the removal of organisational boundaries to information making it more available whilst providing access controls for sensitive information.
- Increases collaboration across organisational boundaries through the use of shared libraries and documents, promoting the use and reuse of information.
- Makes better use of existing tools to deliver information to the user, for example, Geographical information via web based applications allowing complex data sets to be joined, displayed and interpreted.

### 6.6 Telecommunications Strategy

A key aim of the new authority will be to provide a seamless, affordable and increasingly integrated voice and data telecommunications infrastructure that facilitates delivery by the authority and partner organisations of high quality services to Wiltshire's communities and neighbourhoods.

Currently the five authorities in Wiltshire have disparate voice and data telecommunication technologies and varied levels of voice and data integration, much of which is aged. The Telecommunications Strategy will be issued in May and will set out the medium and long term goals for integrating voice and data provision for the new authority in a way that is coherent, cost-effective and closely aligned to the needs of the front-line services. It will recommend a gradual migration to IP and unified communications technologies. It will also define short-term requirements for competitively re-letting / renewing existing telecommunications contracts / services whilst ensuring continuity of service.

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The primary short-term requirement will be to ensure by Vesting Day that the public can contact the new authority and that calls can be transferred between authorities to the point of service delivery by:

- Providing one number for Wiltshire
- Joining up the main PBXs at Kennet, West Wiltshire, North Wiltshire, Salisbury and Wiltshire County Council to facilitate call routing between sites.

In the medium term the considerable investment will be required to provide the telecommunications service required by the new authority and rectify legacy systems and a business case will be developed during 2008 for this.

## 7. Conclusions

As a key enabler of change ICT will be at the centre of many of the transformation initiatives over the next 2-3 years. Without the investment in technology the authority will struggle to deliver the improved low cost services to meet customer needs and our vision. However, as has been stated above, technology alone will not transform services this can only be done through an integrated change programme that is resourced correctly and of which ICT is but one component.

The amalgamation of the 5 authorities presents ICT with significant challenges and inevitably over the next 1-2 years much of the effort will be directed at establishing an effective infrastructure and consolidating the multiple systems. This has to be done while improving day to day service support and while providing the necessary support to business change initiatives. Clear priorities will need to be established and agreed at the ICT Steering Group.

Key to improving ICT services will be an increased emphasis upon the customer, to be responsive to their current needs and their future requirements. We need to help shape the customer requirements to optimise the benefits to be gained and to help define the way forward. At present many of the future requirements are extremely unclear due to the uncertainty around one council and other initiatives. ICT will act as a business consultant to help define the way forward and determine the necessary changes.

ICT is essential to the business and is critical to the delivery of the vision and goals of the new authority. Dependence upon ICT will increase year on year and this ICT strategy outlines the purpose and goals of ICT and the key areas of focus.