Report to the Finance, Performance and Resources Select Committee

Title:	Update on ICT and Digital
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Cabinet Member sign-off:	John Chilver, Cabinet Member for Resources

Purpose of Agenda Item

To help Members understand the progress and priorities of the Technology Services area which specific focus on understanding the Technology Services structure and dimensions, the current position of the council's technology, stability/resilience and security measures, the approach for agile and flexible working and an update on progress with the council's digital transformation agenda. The item is for **information** although it may assist in making future recommendations to Cabinet around performance monitoring.

Context

Committee has requested a review of the Technology Services area. The Technology Services team is the amalgamation of the previous ICT service and the digital team. Technology Services came into existence in March 2017. Committee received an update on the council's digital progress in 2016 but has not reviewed the council's ICT for some time. This report will provide details of both professional areas.

Technology Services – People and Finances

Technology Services comprises an overall team of 99 staff with 93 focussed currently on more traditional ICT and 6 focussed on digital. The Technology Services leadership team was restructured in March 2017 to reflect the requirements of the new Service and to create greater clarity of responsibility. The leadership team has 4 officers focussed on the following disciplines

- ➢ Operations
- ➢ Technology
- ➢ Commercial and contracts
- ➢ Digital strategy and transformation

Technology Services is responsible for running all of the council's core technologies such as its computers, its network and desktop productivity solutions such as Microsoft office 365 which provide most of the day to day solutions staff use such as email, spreadsheets, documents and presentations. It also supports many of the council's business systems such as Adults and Childrens social care systems, mapping, document management and the council's printing facilities.

The council currently has 4600 computers (mostly laptops) across the council for which Technology Services provides a proactive refresh programme. Devices are refreshed on a four year cycle for laptops and five years for desktops. Elected Members operate on Apple iPads which are also supported by Technology Services and are refreshed on a four year cycle also.

Technology Services is responsible for ensuring that all technology solutions work to agreed standards and the availability levels required for the council's Services needs. These services include but are not limited to redundancy and resilience, speed of operation and appropriate levels of security.

As a functional/technical community, most staff in the Technology Services team are highly specialised in particular areas of technology. This is a critical organisational design factor for Technology Services as technologies are removed when they become obsolete and newer technologies are introduced into the council, the skills required evolve and existing staff require re-training or new staff with the relevant skills need to be sourced.

The Technology Services budget is £5.9m per year and also has a capital programme for the further development of critical investments which is agreed annually. The current capital

programme allocation is £4.22m. In addition to this there is a separate fund for PC renewals which is allocated each year through Finance and administrated by Technology Services. The value of this pot is variable based on planned requirements. For FY17-18 this fund value was £978,000 but will reduce for FY18-19. The new value for FY18-19 has not yet been set.

Technology Services runs one major outsourced contract through Capita Networking Solutions (formerly Updata). This contract covers all networking provision to the council, the council's mobile phone contract and the new computer based telephony solution. Microsoft Lync. This contract was signed on a five year basis in 2012 with options for 4 further years of extended service on a 2+2 year basis.

Technology Services Strategy

Technology Services is currently defining a new strategy for the period 2017 to 2021. Previously there have been separate strategies for ICT and for digital which will come together into a single strategy. The current strategy is being developed and is targeted for release in the autumn. The new strategy is based around Buckinghamshire and its residents and visitors and how Technology Services support and drive improved service provision and delivery to the county. The strategy is based around a structure of six pillars

- From Static to Mobile
- From Paper to Online
- From Ownership to Rental
- From Complex to Simple
- From Council centric to Customer centric
- From Human Intelligence to Artificial Intelligence

The proposed strategic vision is

"Making the most of technology to create a smarter, better connected Buckinghamshire; offering digital services so good, people prefer to use them."

The strategy also contains an investment plan to achieve the vision which has been aligned to the current MTFP process. This plan is currently going through the council's approval process.

Technology Services Current Areas of Priority and Focus

Technology Services has developed and is implementing a plan of priority activities to support the current and future needs of the council. These areas of focus are listed below

> ➢ Improve the stability and quality of current technology service
> The council has experienced more service interruptions than acceptable which have risen over the past 18 months. The primary focus of the technology teams has been to identify and drive a remediation and improvement plan to stabilise and improve service provision and availability

> ➢ Create a new corporate digital work plan
> The previous digital plans across the council are moving to a natural conclusion and a new corporate plan of digital activities is needed

> ➢ Review of Technology Services contracts
> A comprehensive review of all contracts managed within Technology Services to identify effective management, controls and identification of savings for the council

> ➢ Review of the council's networking provision through Capita Networking Solutions
> Contract break/renewal is autumn 2017 and the contract is currently being reviewed for next steps

> ➢ Next Generation Devices
> A programme is being developed to examine the options to modernise the devices being used by council staff towards more modern, tablet style devices to improve efficiency, mobility and better delivery of council's services where they are required

This does not represent all activities underway in Technology Services but it shows the areas of critical focus.

Digital Update

The previous report to committee reported back on the council's progress on its digital savings agenda. The digital report highlighted cost savings targets associated with digital transformation, and at present still represents the current view, specifically;

	2015/16		2016/17		2017/18
	Target	Actual	Target	Estimated	Target
Communities, Health and Adult Social Care	£53,000	-	£267,000	£2,500	£634,000
Children's Social Care and Learning	£27,000	-	£137,000	£127,000	£325,000
Transport, Economy and Environment	£28,000	-	£142,000	£170,000	£337,000
Business Services Plus	£112,000	£142,000	£332,000	£161,500	£474,000
HQ	£2,000	£18,000	£7,000	£37,500	£18,000
Total	£222,000	£160,000	£885,000	£498,500	£1,788,000

Digital investment was provided to upgrade the council's core contact centre telephony, 'C-talk', a new customer relationship management (CRM) platform 'Firmstep', an ecommerce platform called Shop4Support and an upgrade to the content management system that support the www.buckscc.gov.uk website. These capabilities are now embedded and an active part of the council's digital landscape. The progress of these tools is highlighted below.

- C-Talk customer contact platform is currently handing circa 18,000 contacts per month
- The Firmstep platform manages circa.120 digital forms and has around 28,000 registered customer accounts
- The Shop4Support ecommerce platform has taken over £2.31 million in customer financial transactions between January and August 17
- The upgraded CMS web platform now handles over 2 million user visits to the www.buckscc.gov.uk website

Funding was also approved by 'One Council' Board to support two exemplar digital transformation projects; 'Schools Admissions' and 'Maintain my Street', with associated cost savings of £300,000 in FY16/17.

The current position of these exemplars is as follows

- The Schools Admissions system went live in the spring 2017. To date, no financial or service performance analysis has been undertaken to provide performance insight into the success of the solution. This is currently being assessed to collect performance information and insight

- A decision was made in May to close the MaintainMyStreet (MMS) project. This is being replaced by a nationally available alternative product, Fix My Street .The decision was taken as the functionality and integration that was not available in Fix My Street at the time the MaintainMyStreet project was initiated. This has now been developed by the owners of that system. A business case review was undertaken with TEE of the costs to move forward with both products and based on this review the decision was made to move to Fix My Street. This is due to be implemented towards the end of 2017. The solution will offer more and better functionality than MMS at a cost £35,000 per year over 3 years and will capitalise on the benefits of the solution being already used by many other local authorities.

Digital Transformation Update
Current Achievements

The council is already seeing and benefiting from a number of the digital enhancements that have been introduced from the first generation of digital activity

The move to a new web platform to manage www.buckscc.gov.uk in January 17, after some significant early performance issues, has delivered significant improvements to the efficiency of the content on the site with circa. 1000 changes a month being delivered. Usage volumes have continued to rise steadily since its relaunch and the speed and availability of the website have also improved considerably.

120 council processes have now been digitised and are live from our Firmstep platform. The recent introduction of a digital Waste Permit application process has saved around £27,000 in administration, paperwork and postage since January 17, and has highlighted a the opportunity within the council to adopt this approach to up to 500 other manual processes.

Our ecommerce platform continues to develop with user spend expected to reach nearly £5m this FY. Excluding School transport, which significantly distorts the figures, the platform now trades around £150,000 every month.

We have been working in collaboration with the Government Digital Service (GDS) as a lead authority for the development of the 'Verify Local' programme. Verify is an online authentication product, which uses major financially based organisations to validate the identity of individuals using their records and data. We are one of only three councils involved in developing this solution. We are expecting to run a pilot within the Transport area early in 2018 which, if successful, will allow us to begin to remove the need for human administration across as many as 100 application processes in the council delivering true self service capability to our customers

Moving to Transformation for Technology Services

The new strategy with the accompanying investment plan which is being developed for publication this autumn sets out a vision and a transformation journey based around the six pillar structure and based on a future council state that will be as follows

- ➢ Fully mobile delivering service where it is needed
- ➢ Available online 24x7 for customers to do what they need when they need it
- ➢ A simple and easy council to work for and work with
- ➢ Technically enabled to provide best cost and value solutions to support the councils needs using a rental not ownership model for systems
- ➢ Always connected when and where needed
- ➢ Data driven and customer centric in everything it does
- ➢ Using technology to drive health and wellbeing across Buckinghamshire

These outcomes are the drivers that will transform the council into a fully digitally enabled authority with customers at its very heart delivering the best services when and where they are needed supported by 24/7 self-service for all its customers.

Conclusion

Technology Services is a new entity which has rapidly found its identity and defined the priorities to work on to take the council's technology forward. The council has already embarked upon a significant shift towards modernising its technology but stabilisation is vital before moving further due to the pace of change. A new strategy will set the direction, style, tone and financial plan required to take the council forward and the Service is well placed to achieve a step change over the coming 18 months. Digitally good progress has been made and the evidence of that shared in this document but it is clear that there is much more that can be done to take the council even further down the path to digitisation. Addressing some of the easier digital gains such as online forms and processes will help to drive the culture of digital transformation into the organisation.

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