



Xentrall Shared Services

The ICT Strategy

2011 - 2013



Introduction

At the heart of all successful changes are the 3 components of people (provider & customer), processes and technology. In order to transform the services provided to the people of the Borough, Information & Communication Technology (ICT) is key to providing the Council's Elected Members and workforce with the tools and supported environment they need to fulfil the Council's plans for the future. ICT has and will continue to be fundamental in enabling Darlington to be one of the highest performing councils in the Country.

This Strategy will support and help deliver the Council's priorities and vision for the Borough. It has been developed in consultation with stakeholders and the services they represent. It builds on previous strategies and will be key to empowering our people to deliver great value to customers and make Darlington an even better place to live and work.

The Strategy will help us to meet the challenges facing public services over the next three years and it will help us to meet our vision.



Achievements So Far

Since the last ICT Strategy was developed in 2008, the Council has already seen major changes to the services it provides and held a local election. As major changes continue and gain pace, ICT can be a vital catalyst for change and is often the tool which will help drive and underpin the change programmes.

Over the last 3 years, a major element of the ICT Strategy was the formation of Xentrall Shared Services. With the aim to deliver improved services and savings, Xentrall ICT got on with the job of designing a new joined-up ICT architecture for both Darlington and Stockton Councils as well as transforming the ICT Service itself.

A new data centre was built in Darlington from which the Council's ICT systems will be served. This means that the significant risks we faced with the old Darlington computer room have now been removed and the Council now has a modern fit for purpose facility in which to house its ICT infrastructure for many years to come.

The new data centre houses a highly efficient virtualised server and storage array. This allowed the consolidation of some 600+ servers into a much more efficient configuration of "super servers", each of which can do the job of many of the previous devices. This gives Council services and IT applications much more resilience and flexibility, as well as lowering carbon emissions. A new facility is currently being commissioned in Stockton to act as a smaller scale backup for the main Darlington site.

To support the new data centre and to increase resilience across the Council, a new network core has been implemented linking Darlington to Stockton and the disaster recovery site, and a new upgrade to the telephony core has been procured and will be implemented this year.

Many aspects of licensing the Council's software have been reviewed which have improved security, virus protection and accessibility, as well as helping with standardisation and delivering savings or avoiding future expenditure. The Council has also benefited from savings resulting from a reverse auction on desktop PCs and laptops.

Other strategic projects have included the delivery of the ICT infrastructure which underpins Xentrall and allows it to work across the two Councils; and the Government Connect programme which allows both Councils to securely transact with other Government and public bodies. Mobility and integration tools have been successfully deployed, including data matching and data synchronisation systems. Major projects currently underway also include a consolidation of printers & copiers and the delivery of WiFi and video conferencing facilities in the Council. A further project to simplify IT sign-on procedures and remote access is also underway.

As well as significant developments in strategic technology architecture, the ICT service itself has been delivering a major service improvement programme following the merger of both Darlington and Stockton ICT Units. This has included the adoption of many best practice standards and procedures as part of a review of all elements of service. The service has successfully retained the security standard certification (ISO27001) and is working to Prince2 project management standards and IT service management framework best practice (ITIL), and it has recently been recommended for ISO9001 Quality Management certification. A new service desk and asset management system has been deployed along with a series of monitoring systems to be able to effectively manage key elements of architecture.

All this development of service delivery & strategic architecture has been undertaken alongside the many large & complex customer based ICT projects in both Councils. Each of these aimed, as with the upgrade to the CRM system, at utilising ICT to enhance the interface with the public and improve the delivery of services direct to the community.

As a result of these many activities to modernise and integrate our technology platform, as well as maintaining the day to day effort that results from supporting the 5,400 ICT user base, ICT has ensured that the Council is better prepared to face the many challenges ahead and continue to exploit the opportunities that ICT can provide. However, in order to realise the full benefits of integrated technology architecture, this drive must continue.



Challenges over the Next 3 Years

Darlington Council is a successful and innovative organisation achieving excellent results and setting high standards in service delivery. The current economic climate and subsequent cuts in Government funding in the long-term means that it is difficult to forecast the future shape for what are existing Council services. The Council is focussed on ensuring good overall outcomes for the public and place. It has clear and acknowledged leadership of Place and is a facilitator of partnerships concerned with delivering One Darlington: Perfectly Placed. The existing Transformation programme is taking a fundamental look at how all Council services are funded and delivered; considering a number of options going forward, including further partnering, outsourcing and trusts.

The Council has already seen large-scale changes to the services it provides as indicated below with:

- Increased demand for services due to an increasing and changing population
- New emerging service delivery models
- Increased partnership working with and providing services for other agencies (public, private & third sectors)
- Providing easier access to our services
- Providing more flexible and timely services
- Delivering against national and internal MTFP efficiency targets

Going forward the focus for ICT will be to support the Members and Officers of the Council in transforming the way the Council currently works. It is certain that demand for services will continue to grow and we therefore need to be in a position to respond to change quickly and flexibly, working with partners across the public, private and voluntary sectors to deliver cost effective, personalised services into the future. Continued investment in ICT as an essential enabler is therefore a critical success factor in delivering this transformation.

The ICT architecture is being designed in such a way to achieve the following. The services and data will be secure and resilient, from data centre through to desktop and out into the mobile environment. ICT systems will be high performing and standardised, yet cost effective and affordable to the Council. Within this framework, innovative use of technology will be used to add real value and flexibility to service delivery. Aggregation and standardisation will be used to drive down the cost of ICT provision and leverage improved facilities in provision.

The aim for a typical ICT user is to be able to securely access their desktop and telephony services from different locations within the Council and via mobile and home-based technologies, with wireless access where appropriate. A standard and secure method of

authentication to systems will be in place and a centralised approach to data storage and backup will ensure that the same information is available regardless of the point of access. Wherever the user accesses ICT, the facilities will be the same and have all good practice governance elements built in.

This whole architecture will be made as flexible as possible to allow the Council to change size and shape as alternate delivery models are deployed and re-shaped. Ultimately, as service models develop, due to the scale of change, there may be a need to change the ICT architecture elements to match the scale of any resulting core organisation.

To achieve this, the purpose of this ICT Strategy is to give a focus and framework for future strategic ICT investments and projects and concentrates on five strategic priorities for the next 3 years.

- ICT Service Development
- ICT Governance
- ICT Strategic Architecture
- Business Change Programme
- ICT Competent Workforce and Members

All five areas are intrinsically linked and critically all are required for the strategy to succeed.

The Five Strategic ICT Priorities 2011 -2013

ICT Service Development

The service has recently been restructured to contribute savings to both Councils' MTFPs and to build on lessons learnt as the previous structure evolved. This new ICT Service will be responsible for delivering the strategic initiatives outlined in this ICT Strategy and also the day to day delivery of operational ICT services.

The programme of implementing best practice standards and procedures will continue across the service.

ICT Governance

Further development of ICT governance arrangements is underway as a result of the service restructure. New standards for the management of projects are being developed along with a review of the engagement of customers and reporting of project progress. The Chief Officers Board (COB) will oversee the customer project work plan. The pooling of what have previously been dispersed budgets has delivered significant improvements in service as the aggregated spends have allowed more strategic and long term planning of ICT architecture. This aggregation process will continue to be considered where benefits can be gained.

The COB continues to oversee the strategic delivery elements of the service and monitors the direction set out in this strategy.

ICT Strategic Architecture

The current programme of architecture developments will continue to deliver the secure and flexible infrastructure outlined previously. These developments include; Government Connect Compliance, completion of server virtualisation and backup facilities, completion of video conferencing facilities, a review of the corporate data/voice network, implementation of print consolidation and a review of the desktop strategy, which will include a major upgrade of standard Office systems to MS Windows 7 and Office 2010 across the Council.

The nature of ICT architecture usually means that these individual elements do not stand alone. There is often a complex set of interrelationships and layers between systems which means that a lot of planning, risk management, testing and control must go into any project to achieve the aim of a successful implementation without impacting related areas.

Business Change

The Council has established a Transformation Programme. The aim of this programme is to review every area of the Council and challenge the way it provides its services. As well as the challenge element, there may be activities such as the procurement/commissioning/de-commissioning of services or areas where business process re-engineering may be required. As with recent projects such as the CRM upgrades and enhancements, all of these activities are likely to be influenced or enabled by ICT.



ICT Competent Workforce

Our workforce must be developed so that they have the confidence and competence to respond to new demands, to challenge existing ways of working and to develop new solutions to problems with the technology available to them. Similarly our Elected Members also need the skills to access information and communicate effectively. To maintain awareness, skills and efficiency, employees and Members need time within the work environment, to acquire new skills or update existing skills, whether on standard office software or specific applications used within service.

A user survey will be undertaken to inform the Chief Officers Board (COB) of how skilled and confident the end users of ICT are.

How will we achieve these Priorities?

Delivering these priorities is the responsibility of ICT, and the Council services themselves. Each service will be responsible for ensuring the provision of the resources required from them for the successful delivery of each project, including where appropriate, developing business cases, project planning and testing solutions. The role of Xentrall ICT is to lead and support these changes in technology, working closely with services who will play a critical role. The Chief Officers Board (COB) oversees the overall programme of delivery.

As has been outlined, this new strategy is in the main a continuation of the original strategy with new aspects and elements of refresh. Accordingly, there are a number of projects which have either completed or are continuing through to completion and there are also new projects about to start. Existing investment in ICT architecture has been through:

- Xentrall funding through existing budget and procurement efficiencies
- Capital/revenue funds for specific schemes
- Service based funding through the aggregation of devolved budgets and existing spend

This mix of resource has allowed the ICT investment programme to progress to date and future projects will require the same range of funding sources, although each project will have its own specific requirements.

As many of the strategic architecture projects involve a joint implementation with Stockton Council, there is the requirement for both Councils to be aligned on the same ICT architecture strategy, each with appropriate funding identified. Xentrall ICT works with both Councils in the development and the delivery of the strategy and therefore is able to advise and direct where necessary to achieve synergy and efficiencies across the two organisations.

New projects which are yet to be funded are shown in the table below. An indication of anticipated funding sources has been given. Each project in turn will be subject to an individual business case. The other projects which support the strategy are either underway and/or have funding already allocated.

Note: Line of business ICT developments across the Council are subject to individual business cases and assessment. An annual work programme of these projects is approved and monitored by the COB. This Strategy provides the necessary foundations for those developments.

New Project Funding

New Projects	Proposed Funding Source	Comment
Government Connect, System Security & Public Sector Network Compliance	Within existing Xentrall budgets and MTFP capital/revenue allocations. To be approved.	Xentrall & Resources fund compliance activities and all Departments share the annual subscription fee.
Corporate Network Review	Within existing Xentrall budgets and MTFP capital/revenue allocations. To be approved.	This project is expected to be approximately cost neutral.
Printer Consolidation	Service budgets based on spend analysis	This project is expected to deliver savings.
Desktop Strategy Review	Service budgets based on spend analysis	This project is expected to be approximately cost neutral.
Wireless	Service based budgets based upon service need for roll-out	The technical proving has been funded by Xentrall.



Timetable

The timetable for the projects which deliver the ICT Strategy is shown below. This is a mix of existing and new projects within the overall strategic architecture programme.

Implementation Timetable

Project/Initiative	2011/2012				2012/2013				2013/2014			
	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4
Information Security (ISO27001) On-Going Compliance & Audit												
Government Connect Compliance	→	→	→	→								
Public Sector Network (PSN) Compliance					→	→	→	→				
PSN On-Going Compliance & Audit									→	→	→	→
ICT Business Continuity Management (BCM) (ISO25999) Certification	→	→	→	→								
ICT BCM (ISO25999) On-Going Compliance & Audit					→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→
ICT Quality Management (QMS) (ISO9001) Certification	→	→										
ICT QMS (ISO9001) On-Going Compliance & Audit			→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→
ICT Customer Engagement Programme On-Going Compliance												
Server Virtualisation Complete	→	→	→	→								
On-Going Server Management & Monitoring												
Corporate Network Review					→							

Project/Initiative	2011/2012				2012/2013				2013/2014			
	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4
Corporate Network Implementation (TBC)												
Desktop Strategy Review	→	→	→									
Desktop Strategy Implementation (TBC)												
Wireless Project	→	→										
Video Conferencing Project	→	→										
ICT Strategy Review	→	→										
ICT Strategy Ongoing Monitoring & Refresh												

