

Ward: N/A

Digital Update

Report by the Director for Digital and Resources

1.0 Summary

1.1 On December 2nd 2014, Joint Strategic Committee approved funding for the introduction of new cloud-based technology platforms to support the re-design and 'digitisation' of council services and ways of working over the next three years. The preceding assessment work done during Autumn 2014 established that new enterprise-grade cloud technologies were critical enablers for the delivery of 'end-to-end' digital customer self-service at the scale and pace required to modernise operations, improve the customer experience and drive out efficiencies.

1.2 Implementation summary

The following table provides updates on the workstreams mentioned in the previous report to JOSC in March 2015:

Workstream	Current position
Google Apps for Work	Rolled out successfully with go live on 14th April.
Customer Interaction Platform	Development continues on the contact centre and green bins products. Currently due to go live at end of July 2015 (previously April 2015).
Enterprise and contact centre telephony procurement	Tender process underway with evaluation of responses due to take place 29th June 2015.
Introduction of smartphones to staff	Contract has been signed with Vodafone and 500 smartphones to be rolled out to staff and members during July.

Network and wifi technical assessments	The network assessment is complete and the network as it stands is fit for purpose. A wifi study has been carried out and recommends an increase in the number of access points in Council buildings. A procurement process is starting up to make this happen.
Creating the Adur & Worthing Digital and Design Service	<p>Head of Digital and Design is now in post. Team has been brought together within the organisational structure.</p> <p>The service's strategy is being written and a number of projects undertaken.</p>

1.3 The digital programme is progressing well.

The Google for Work rollout was completed successfully and in a very short space of time and has already seen a number of business benefits achieved as well as savings on software licencing costs. Further training and support is planned for all uses to help them make the most of the new technology.

The development of the customer interaction platform is taking longer than previously advised, however, this is to be expected given the innovative nature of the work and the fact that the original timescales were very aggressive.

The green bins product is part of a wider suite of products being built for AWCS, all based on shared technology 'building blocks'. These are very close to completion, and work will then start on rolling them out to customers. This is expected to start during July 2015.

Following the appointment of the Head of Digital and Design, much progress has been made in developing the service. Highlights include:

- Development of a Digital and Design Strategy to define our ambitions and how we plan to achieve them
- Knowledge transfer from our technology partner to the Digital and Design team is underway
- Design of a Digital and Design Confidence programme to improve knowledge and skills across the organisation
- A member development programme - "Connected Councillors" had been started
- Service design work has been started with Human Resources to help them continue to deliver their service following the recent restructure
- Performance management within the Councils is being redesigned, to reduce paperwork and duplication and improve access to business intelligence for better decision making

Work has begun on a benefits realisation model, which will track investment in the digital programme and the savings achieved as a result, as well as the positive impact on customer experience.

We are also exploring with partner organisations how they may be able to make use of our technology platforms to develop their own products and services. This will be the point where what we are doing stops being a technology project and instead becomes something more interesting: a redefining of the role that the Councils play in the local area.

1.4 IT Infrastructure update

In recent months there have been several outages where some or all IT services have been unavailable at some or all locations.

The worst of these was a week-long problem at Commerce Way, where a BT engineer, acting upon incorrect instructions from Capita, disconnected the entire site from the West Sussex Wide Area Network, thus removing all network connectivity. Due to several issues, the site was not restored to full working order for several working days. A meeting was held with Capita and West Sussex County Council to investigate the issues. Several were uncovered and measures are being put in place to ensure such an issue would not recur.

There has also been a long running issue with the performance of the financial management system, Total. This has been performing very slowly, holding up the work of the finance team at a vital time of the year as well as impacting on other service areas. A project has been started to resolve these issues by upgrading the server that runs the software and moving it from Horsham's data centre to our own.

The network connection between Adur and Worthing Councils and Horsham, where several of our applications are hosted, has also recently suffered intermittent down time. This has been fixed recently with the connection being switched to the West Sussex Wide Area Network.

The project to develop disaster recovery plans for every service has recently been completed. This ensures that there are arrangements in place for when IT is not available so that Council services can continue to be delivered with minimal disruption.

1.5 IT infrastructure moving forward

We are working hard to improve the way technology is delivered within the Councils. The digital platform work is a key part of our response - by developing our applications on our own platform, we retain control of our own technology destiny.

We are also working closely with our partners in Census ICT to ensure the service provided is fit for our purposes. We are pleased at the progress being made there around change management processes which will result in fewer outages and a more predictable service.

Working with Census ICT colleagues, we also investigating how we can take our cloud approach to IT further and whether we can host all of our applications that do not currently work on the new platform via another form of cloud based hosting, and thus remove the need for a physical data centre at the Town Hall. This will enable us to make savings, but also provide business benefits such as greater resilience and reduced risk during an emergency. A piece of work is to be commissioned that will determine the Councils' options in this area.

1.6 Digital inclusion

As part of the digital programme, we must ensure that our customers are able to access our services using whichever channel they prefer. For many the convenience of using online services will be ideal, however we must not assume that this is the case for all.

As well as ensuring that there are multiple ways for customers to access our services (online, telephone, face to face, etc) we can also help customers who are currently unable to access the internet to get online.

Some great work has already been started in this area by the Wellbeing service, where the IT Junction network has been established to provide spaces for people to develop their digital confidence.

A group recently formed to take this work and expand upon it, raising its strategic profile and investigating other ways in which we can help our communities make the most of the digital opportunity. The group resolved to make a commitment to digital inclusion be adopted by the councils.

The commitment is currently being drafted, and it will be signed off by the leaders of the Councils and the Chief Executive. It is important to involve members in this important work, and it is suggested that this committee considers add the monitoring of progress on digital inclusion to its work programme.

2.0 Legal

2.1 Section 1 Local Government (Contracts) Act 1997 confers power on the Local Authority to enter into a contract for the provision of making available assets or services for the purposes of, or in connection with, the discharge of the function by the Local Authority.

2.2 Section 1 Localism Act 2011 empowers the Council to do anything an individual can do apart from that which is specifically prohibited by pre-existing legislation.

2.3 Under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 the Council has the power to do anything that is calculated to facilitate, or which is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of their functions.

2.4 Section 3(1) Local Government Act 1999 contains a general duty on a best value

authority to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

- 2.5 The Council must comply with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the principles within it, including Principle 7: appropriate technical and organisational measures shall be taken against unauthorised or unlawful processing of personal data and against accidental loss or destruction of, or damage to, personal data.

3.0 Financial implications

3.1 The digital strategy is to rationalise the amount spent on software by procuring generic platforms, which can be tailored to meet the Councils' needs means that the Councils are required to invest in the short term to save in the medium term. Direct annual revenue savings relating to the project are estimated at £233,000 and should start to crystallise from 2017/18 . There will also be indirect corporate savings related to improved productivity and the reduction in direct contact with customers due to easier access and reliable digital information and services.

3.2 A detailed analysis of the financial implications of the digital programme is contained in Section 5 of the report 'Investing in New Technology: The Springboard to Excellent Customer Experience and Business Efficiency.' This report was agreed by the Executive on 2nd December 2014 and included approval to release £623,900 funds from reserves to support the planned investment expenditure in 2014/15 and 2015/16 .This is to be split indicatively on a 40% Adur and 60% Worthing basis.

4.0 Recommendation

4.1 Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

- note the contents of the report;
- request an update in October 2015;
- consider adding the digital inclusion agenda to the work programme.

Local Government Act 1972

Background Papers:

Report to Joint Strategic Committee, 2nd December 2014

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Schedule of Other Matters

1.0 Council Priority

1.1 This programme is a key enabler for the Adaptive Councils priority in Catching the Wave.

2.0 Specific Action Plans

2.1 The actions being undertaken are detailed in the Joint Strategic Committee December 4th 2014 report on Digital Investment.

3.0 Sustainability Issues

3.1 There are long term benefits anticipated through the adoption of these new technologies by increasing home working, more efficient mobile working, video meetings etc.

4.0 Equality Issues

4.1 Designing for accessibility is a key requirement for all software applications.

5.0 Community Safety Issues (Section 17)

5.1 Matter considered and no issues identified.

6.0 Human Rights Issues

6.1 Matter considered and no issues identified.

7.0 Reputation

7.1 The councils reputation is expected to be significantly enhanced through making the council more accessible online and improving responsiveness to customer enquiries.

8.0 Consultations

8.1 Matter considered and no issues identified.

9.0 Risk Assessment

9.1 The digital programme is contributing to the mitigation of a number of risks and business continuity issues that the Councils are facing. These are detailed in the Councils' corporate risk register.

10.0 Health & Safety Issues

10.1 Matter considered and no issues identified.

11.0 Procurement Strategy

11.1 G-Cloud and other government procurement frameworks have been utilised to secure these technologies and services.

12.0 Partnership Working

12.1 None at the present time. However, the 'platform' approach to technology will enable us to work closely with other organisations, sharing technology and expertise where appropriate in future.