

The page features a decorative graphic consisting of several overlapping circles in yellow and light blue, connected by thin blue lines that form a triangular shape pointing towards the top right. The circles vary in size and are positioned in the upper and lower right areas of the page.

Solihull MBC

ICT Strategy

**The Strategic Position
Statement**

2010 - 2013

Delivering more – spending less

Version Control

Title: Solihull Council’s Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Strategy

Version: 1.1

Document type: Approved subject to OSMB Scrutiny

Prepared by: Steve Halliday Head of ICT Services

Approved by: Draft – unapproved

Review date: Annual refresh with a complete re-write in 3 years (2012)

Circulation: All employees

Version	Date	Authors	Comment and reviewers
0.1 to 0.19	Jan 2009 to July 2009	Steve Halliday Zac Bhana Alasdair Bullivant	ICT revisions of previous strategies and strategies from elsewhere. Consultation with all SMBC ICT Managers and with external peers
0.10	Sept 2009	Steve Halliday	Separation of Information Strategy, ICT Strategy and Technical Architecture. Consultation with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Elected Members, - CEO, - CLT, - OLT - ICT Leadership Team - And others regarding proposed structure and content.
0.11	Dec 2009 – Jan 2010	Steve Halliday	Feedback from V0.10 consultation absorbed and relevant aspects of version 0.9 included. Structure agreed with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - OLT - Information Strategy Board - Elected Members (ICT Steering Board)
0.12	Jan 2010	Steve Halliday	Feedback on “sub strategy” presentations and draft documents from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Elected Members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Cllr Ian Hedley o Cllr Ken Hawkins

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cllr Mick Corser - OLT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ - Information Strategy Board <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○
0.13	Feb 2010	Steve Halliday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ICT Division - Shaping Solihull Programme Operations Board - Other interested parties
0.14	June 2010	Steve Halliday	Update for revised Council Strategy External Auditors Review
0.16	June 2010	Andrew Kirk	Section 3 and 4 additions
0.17	June 2010	Steve Halliday	Updated Feedback from Councillor Hedley
0.17a	July 2010	Phil Mayhew	Commissioning DLT Review
0.17b	Aug 2010	Anne Brereton	Places DLT Review – esp Libraries feedback from Tracey Cox
0.17c	Aug 2010	Karen Murphey	People DLT Review
0.17d	Aug 2010	Deborah Martin Williams	Communications DLT Review
0.17e	Aug 2010	Philip Lloyd-Williams	Governance DLT Review
0.17f	Aug 2010	Kim Silcock	Customer Services DLT Review
0.17g	Aug 2010	Paul Johnson	Business Support DLT Review
0.18	Aug 2010	Caroline Lewis	Finance Review
1.0	Sept 2013	Cllr A Hodgson, Cabinet Member for Resources and Efficiencies.	Approved the ICT Strategy as the guiding document for ICT investment and service management. Presented for further Scrutiny to OSMB.
1.1	4 th Oct 2010	Cllrs S Slater (Chairman), M Corser, Cllr D Bell, H Cox, M Hewings, P Hogarth (Sub for Cllr K Meeson), R Sleigh, Mrs K Wild and J Windmill	Overview and Scrutiny Management Board resolved “That the ICT Strategy 2010-2013 be received and its use as a guide for ICT investment and service management be supported”.

Solihull MB Council ICT Strategy 2010 – 2013

Delivering more – spending less

Contents

Version Control.....	2
1 Introduction.....	6
2 Executive Summary	7
2.1 Governance	7
2.2 Finance.....	7
2.3 Strategic alignment	7
2.4 Risk	7
2.5 Service quality and measurement	7
2.6 Project, portfolio and programme management.....	7
2.7 Sub strategies	7
3 Sub-strategy executive summary	8
4 Background.....	10
4.1 Why invest in ICT?.....	10
4.2 Strategic development.....	11
4.3 Where are we now?.....	12
4.4 Where do we need to be?	13
4.5 How do we get there?	14
5 Scope.....	15
6 Financial summary.....	15
6.1 Historical.....	15
6.2 Future.....	16
7 Strategic context.....	17
7.1 Council Plan and ICT.....	17
7.2 Key relevant business strategies	18
7.3 Other strategic outcomes.....	20
8 ICT Governance.....	21
8.1 Member panels.....	21
8.2 Officer panels.....	22
8.3 The ICT Programme Board	22
8.4 ICT Project Boards	23
8.5 Technical Design Authority (TDA).....	23
8.6 Change Advisory Board (CAB).....	23
9 Risk	24
9.1 Risk management.....	24

9.2	Security	24
9.3	Business continuity	24
9.4	Project risk	24
9.5	Audit	25
10	Service quality and measurement	25
11	Project, portfolio and programme management.....	25
11.1	Project management methodology.....	25
11.2	Portfolio and Programme Management	25
12	ICT sub strategies	26
12.1	Best Value Customer Interactions – cheaper channels.....	26
12.2	Business Intelligence (BI) and reporting strategy.....	26
12.3	Records management strategy	27
12.4	Integration strategy	28
12.5	Virtualisation strategy.....	29
12.6	Thin client strategy	30
12.7	Mobile, flexible and home working strategy	31
12.8	Cloud computing and “Government Applications Store” strategy.....	34
12.9	Digital inclusion strategy	35
12.10	Green computing strategy	36
12.11	Open source strategy.....	37
12.12	Social Media	38
12.13	Web Content Management	39
12.14	Cost centre financial management strategy (“D32”)	39

Solihull MBC's Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Strategy

Delivering more – spending less

1 Introduction

This document describes a 3 year strategy which provides the strategic direction for the promotion, effective management and use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) across Solihull MBC, recognising its value as a corporate resource for the delivery of Council priorities and improved customer services.

The document sets out the purpose of ICT investment and the alignment of the Council's ICT Strategy to its Information Strategy and to the strategic objectives of the council at large. Every pound invested in ICT should help to deliver agreed customer outcomes, operating efficiencies and risk mitigation.

The Strategy is closely aligned to the Cabinet Office's National ICT Strategy – the SMBC Head of ICT is the Local Government representative on the National ICT Strategy Implementation Board.

Strategy and planning

Note that this strategy is not a plan. ICT Plans are set out elsewhere in the ICT divisional plan and in the Capital Investment Project Plans, as specific interventions to fulfil this plan and other corporate plans. This ICT strategy's purpose is to provide a strategic position statement in relation to key ICT initiatives – guidance for the development of plans in a coherent way.

Strategy and technology

Note also that this strategy is not a technical architecture document. The technical architecture is managed by the ICT Division through the governance structures described below¹, in particular the Technical Design Authority. New initiatives must comply with the council's technical architecture and must not re-invented or re-procure systems where there is already an existing solution.

¹ For the technically minded, SMBC's technical architecture centres on the Open Source Linux operating environment, Oracle and SQL data bases, Oracle ERP (Finance, HR, Payroll, procurement and CRM), Citrix thin client and Microsoft desktop.

2 Executive Summary

This ICT strategy seeks to focus on the business and ICT strategic questions, while endeavouring not to become over technical. As described above, it is a guiding strategy, not a detailed plan or a technical architecture.

2.1 Governance

- A key component of the strategy is to set out the governance arrangements for developing the strategy and making investment decisions. These include engagement with members, directors, their delegates, customers and ICT staff.

2.2 Finance

- The ICT service is financed through central and directorate revenue and capital budgets.
- There is a requirement for Capital Investment plan for 2011/12 onwards
- There is a requirement to centralise PC procurement budgets to enable new ways of working and mobile working infrastructure investments.

2.3 Strategic alignment

- The ICT Strategy is aligned to customer outcomes and corporate strategies, such as the customer strategy and the shared service strategy.

2.4 Risk

- The ICT service manages risk through the council's methodology and escalation through the ICT governance provisions.

2.5 Service quality and measurement

- The ICT service quality is managed, measured and externally benchmarked.
- A Continuing Service Improvement function exists, embracing industry best practice such as ITIL².

2.6 Project, portfolio and programme management

- The programme of ICT projects is managed according to Council standards with industry best practice as appropriate.
- Changes to the live ICT environments are managed by the Change Advisory Board, consisting of user and technical representatives.

2.7 Sub strategies

The ICT Strategy is composed of a number of sub-strategies to address particular business issues or technical opportunities. These are set out in more detail below and are include the council's strategic position regarding longstanding requirements (such as business intelligence) and new opportunities (such as "cloud computing").

² A library of ICT management best practice business process is provided by the international standard, ITIL (Information Technology Information Library).

3 Sub-strategy executive summary

The following sub-strategies are explained in this document, with the concluding paragraphs collected below.

The customer interaction strategy is to continue the migration to the most cost effective channels (such as email and Web forms), wherever appropriate.

Business Intelligence Strategy: to develop divisional solutions and business cases with corporate architecture in mind. Exploit what we've got (skills and licences) in the first instance. Corporate business intelligence to be developed as divisional requirements and benefits become clearer – and as economic recovery permits.

The SMBC EDRMS strategy is to implement the records management file structures and retention strategies on standard “file server” storage. It is also to continue to deploy departmental solutions, funded by departmental business cases for the short term. It is likely that such departmental solutions may be migrated to a corporate solution in some five years time – pending an economic recovery and potentially procuring best value from the “G-Cloud” (see below).

Integration Strategy SMBC's strategy for integration is to continue to maintain and develop the existing application interfaces. And then to identify a technical solution that will deliver affordable and resilient point-to-point integration solutions for at least 3-4 years and scale up to a hub and spoke solution (potentially from the “Cloud” (see section 12.8)) as our integration requirements become more demanding over the years to come.

The SMBC Virtualisation strategy is a refresh approach. Server virtualisation is a way of reducing cost and Carbon emissions by sharing computing power between systems. At the time of writing, good progress has been made with 60 out of 250 servers virtualised.

Thin client strategy This is a technique to provide greater flexibility to users by providing their “stuff” at whatever computer they sit down at. To date thin client has largely been deployed where the creation of a new environment (such as the Chelmsley Wood contact centre and library) have made it possible. Further thin client deployment is taking place through tactical refresh opportunities.

The strategy is to centralise PC refresh budgets and then migrate to thin client over the 2010-13 period.

The Strategy for Home Working is to continue to develop and maintain provisions in line with the Shaping Solihull requirements and budgets. This is dependant on the centralised PC budget strategy.

The strategy for mobile officers is to provide access to portable, where a business case permits, through secure technologies – currently the Blackberry and through other portable devices.

The Strategy for Flexible Working is to continue to develop and maintain provisions in line with the Shaping Solihull requirements and budgets. This is dependant on the centralised PC budget strategy.

Cloud Strategy: Continue to assess Cloud solutions on a “case by case” basis. Wait for G-cloud and G-AS readiness; identify early adopter possibilities in order to make savings and develop learning.

The Digital Inclusion strategy is to build on our Beacon Status for Digital Inclusion, and to continue to identify opportunities to deliver more. Particularly working with regeneration, planning and LSP Partners such as Solihull Community Housing, the Care Trust, ReCOM and the Colebrige Trust, to action ideas such as expanding broadband access across the borough and ensuring it is mandatory to include high speed broadband in planning for new developments.

The Strategy for Green Computing is to continue to deliver carbon reductions and to embrace shared IT delivery through G-Cloud solutions as they become feasible.

The strategy for Open Source is to build on our already leading position and deploy further Open Source solutions wherever a Total Cost of Ownership business case indicates it to be the best solution.

The Strategy for Social Media is to encourage staff to engage professionally with social media and to encourage citizen’s to engage with the council through social media channels.

The Web Strategy is to converge the web content management technologies as much as possible over the next 3 years and deliver more for less.

Cost Centre Strategy It is the intention to migrate all PC refresh budgets (or the refresh pressure represented by the assets) to a central cost centre. This is a pre-requisite for continuing the development of **flexible working** and **home working** through the development of **thin client** solutions.

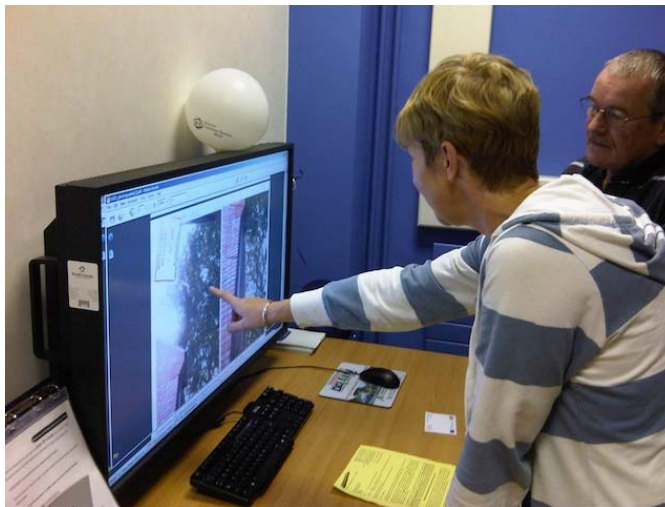
4 Background

4.1 Why invest in ICT?

There is only one reason why a single pound of tax payers' money should be spent on Solihull's ICT equipment and services. It is in order to deliver better Council services to the citizens of Solihull.

Better services to Solihull's citizens can be delivered by ICT investment either directly or indirectly. Direct ICT investments result in the provision of online services, such as those making it easier to engage with the council through online forms, payments and consultation. Other direct provisions include citizen access points for ICT, such as those made available in the libraries, schools, contact centres, housing

and special provisions for expanding home access to ICT for some citizens.



Solihull Citizens view plans in the Contact Centre

Indirect ICT services include the development of systems to help council employees deliver services to citizens more efficiently. This includes the deployment of ICT systems such as social care to help social workers safeguarding vulnerable people.



The typing pool is no longer the best way to deliver customer services

Indirect ICT investments also include the so called "back-office" systems and network infrastructure. In back-office ICT investments, every pound spent should either save more than a pound by reducing the costs of beaurocracy, or improve the quality of services to citizens.

Before the introduction of desktop computing, for instance a "typing pool" of several hundred people would type up hand written notes. This was of-course

expensive, slow and vulnerable to substantial human error.

Successive investments in ICT have sought to improve cost efficiency, speed of service and the quality of the customer outcome. The flow of information, through databases, web sites and emails has been radically enhanced; the sense of a cumbersome bureaucratic organisation has been eroded. While significant gains have been made in most organisations however, a complex, closely integrated and business critical ICT infrastructure has emerged.

The challenge of the ICT strategy is to continuously reduce risk, drive down cost and improve customer outcomes, without being seduced by the glamorous offerings of the IT industry.

4.1.1 Information as an asset

There are four key assets of any service providing organisation; people, finance, property and information. The SMBC Information Strategy sets out the strategic objectives of information management. This ICT strategy sets out the Information Technology measures required to deliver the information objectives, as well as property, financial and ultimately customer outcomes.

4.1.2 Spending less

ICT's single investment purpose must be to spend as little as possible and deliver as much contribution to customer outcomes as possible – continuously improving the cost efficiency of the council's delivery of citizen services. Global recession and public sector spending cuts sharpen this focus, but sound value for money investments need to be made in any economic climate for local government ICT.

4.2 Strategic development

In order to develop a strategy, it is important to understand *where we are now*, *where we want to be* and *how we will get there*. This summary sets out that journey.

4.2.1 Transformation, modernisation and exploitation

Most local government "Transformation" programmes include an ICT "modernisation" programme, centralising services, implementing single "back-office" systems³, updating aging line-of-business applications and enhancing networks for increased volumes and of voice and data. They then move into a continuous "exploitation" phase – delivering more customer value from the investment previously made, refreshing equipment as it reaches the end of its shelf life, and making incremental investments to deliver more.

Occasionally "game changing" opportunities present themselves. Personal computing and the internet are game changers that required different strategies and investment plans to

³ Typically ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) systems such as SAP or Oracle are implemented in larger authorities to deliver some or all "back office" functions of Finance, Procurement, HR, Payroll and CRM. SMBC has implemented all of these with the Oracle ERP e-business suite.

deliver optimum citizen value. The emerging “Cloud Computing” initiative may be the next game changer and is discussed below.

This transformation pattern of modernisation, exploitation and “game change” is not unique to Local Government, of course. Broadly speaking it is mirrored in all other large public sector and private sector organisations, delivering customer or shareholder value.

4.3 Where are we now?

Modernisation At SMBC we have already completed, or are in the process of completing the “modernisation phase” described above. With Oracle e-business suite running for Finance, Procurement, HR, Payroll and CRM, there is no requirement to modernise the back-office systems, although there are opportunities to drive out more value from this investment. There is no pressure to replace large numbers of critical line-of-business applications. Best practice ICT service and project management methods are deployed.

Lessons learned. Like many large change programmes, the SMBC transformation programme – that delivered the contact centre, modernised ICT and facilitated new ways of working smarter – achieved some successes and also made some mistakes. Lessons have been learned, particularly in relation to setting expectations and keeping stakeholders informed of changes.

Growth There are, of course ongoing pressures for change and the ICT provisions need to be continuously upgraded and refreshed as the equipment ages. New business demands (such as extensive flexible working) will continue to emerge and new opportunities to deliver efficiencies will continue to present themselves. Business cases for ICT investment will be required to be considered to address these over the three years of this strategy to 2013, and beyond.



Figure 1 Customer Satisfaction award presented by SOCITM

Service benchmark System availability and break-fix response rates are above national benchmark targets and within the Service Level Agreement tolerances agreed with service providers.

The ICT services are reliable and focus has moved from inward looking service initiatives to externally focussed customer outcome views, embracing Digital Inclusion and prioritising ICT initiatives that help deliver strategic objectives.

The ICT service has won national awards for Customer Satisfaction⁴, Shared Services⁵ and Social Inclusion⁶ and is a Beacon status council for Digital Inclusion⁷.

A groundbreaking shared service, delivering a Financials and Procurement system for Lichfield District Council successfully went live in 2009.

Jointly delivered between SMBC's Financial Operations and ICT divisions, this is believed to be the first example of a Metropolitan Council delivering services of this type for a District.

Budget constraints are a reality; the strategy is to deliver more while spending less – by prioritising initiatives on strategic, customer oriented outcomes and by ensuring robust business cases underpin investments.

4.4 Where do we need to be?

Having made a substantial investment in ICT we now need to be releasing demonstrable value from our ICT and information assets. In essence we need to be doing the following four things:

- Exploiting what we've got.
- Realising demonstrable benefits.
- Identifying and realising savings.
- Investing wisely to deliver important outcomes.
- Resisting the lure of technology for its own sake.
- Ensuring good communications with members and other stakeholders.

⁴ National Society of ICT Managers (SOCITM) benchmark - best Metropolitan Council in 10 years, 2009

⁵ Business Matters with Lichfield District Council and others, 2010

⁶ National e-government Awards 2010 - Finalist

⁷ 2009 Beacon Council for Digital Inclusion

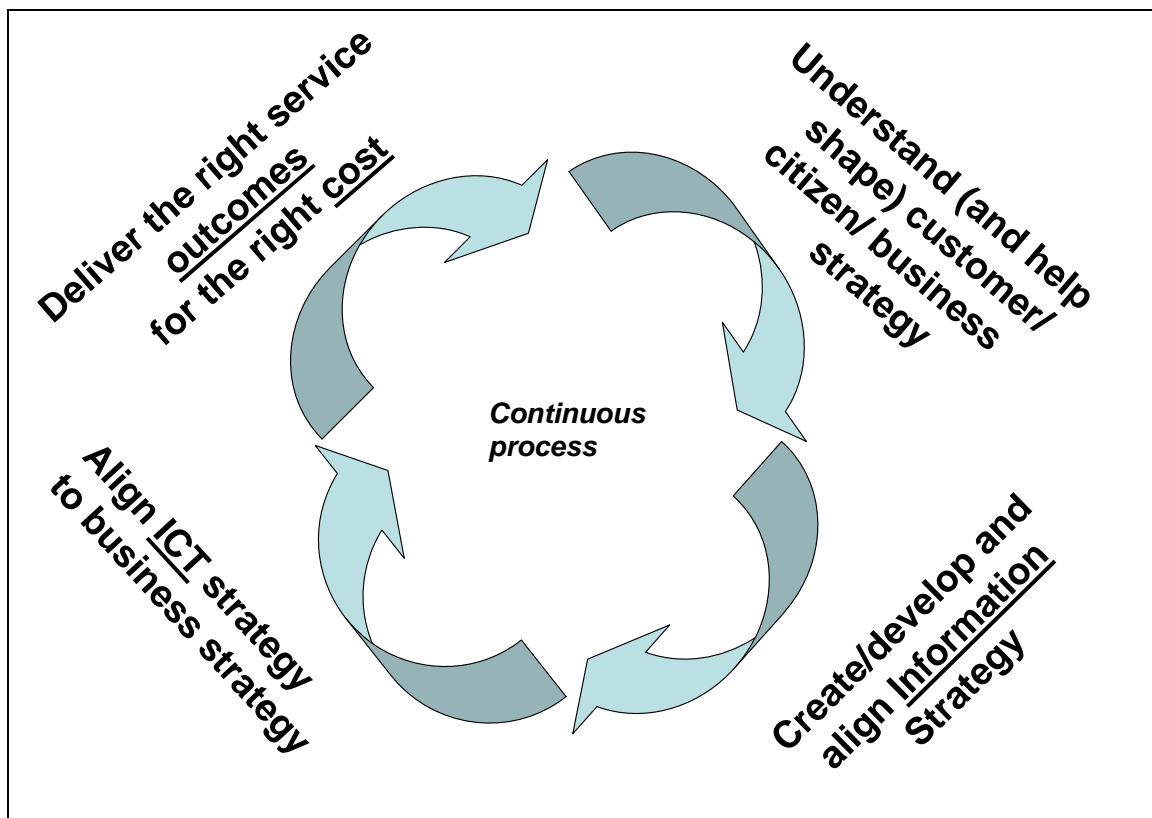
4.5 How do we get there?

There is no single ICT project or programme of projects required to achieve the efficiency objectives. Rather it is continuous reviewing and re-shaping of the ICT services, identifying business needs and implementing efficiencies, as is set out in the diagram below.

Shaping Solihull, the council's current Transformation Programme is about "every thing we do and everyone's business". The ICT development strategy is closely aligned to Shaping Solihull. Many of the Lean initiatives result in better exploitation of the ICT investments as the business learns to drive out waste from business processes.



The continuous improvement process is represented in the following diagram.



Within this continuous process, business cases for change need to be made to ensure value for money is delivered through investments. Projects need to be prioritised and spend to save and spend to improve cases reviewed. The methodology for achieving that prioritisation is set out below. Some of the key anticipated changes are set out in section 12, “ICT sub strategies”.

4.5.1 More for less

Wherever possible officers and members involved in the governance of ICT will seek to exploit the existing investments in ICT infrastructure before investing in further technology products – “sweating the assets”.

A compelling business case, mitigating against risks, improving services and/or delivering cost savings will underpin further investments. Many ICT investments are “enablers” rather than direct contributors to cashable benefits and the combined management of ICT and business benefits realisation is necessary.

4.5.2 Innovations

The Council’s current position in relation to potential further ICT innovations are set out in section 12, “ICT sub strategies”.

4.5.3 2010-11 costed project plan

While this strategy addresses the years 2010 to 2013, there is a requirement to focus on the immediate financial year 2010/11. For this financial year a prioritisation review of ICT project investments has been carried out and is appended.

5 Scope

The scope of this ICT Strategy is to cover the corporate services delivered by central ICT. Other ICT services, such as the strategy for ICT in Schools and the provision of ICT services for (or from) partners is not covered directly within this strategy, although many of the corporate solutions are enablers for schools and partners.

6 Financial summary

6.1 Historical

In revenue, the centralised ICT service spends around £5.5M pa on staff, licences, contracts and equipment refresh.

A further £863k is spent from budgets managed in the directorates.

(Schools ICT funds are excluded from these figures).

In capital, a large investment was made over 2003/4 to 2007/8. This amounted to some £3m pa on ICT over that period (more was also spent on a new contact centre and related staffing). Over 2008/9 and 2009/10, this has reduced to around £500K pa – a run rate

expected to continue for 2010/11 for central ICT capital projects provisions. A further £400K is also available for central ICT capital refresh.

6.2 Future.

6.2.1 Future revenue

On a like-for-like basis, the ICT Revenue expenditure is anticipated to decrease with identified cashable savings over the years 2010-13.

Within that timeframe, however there will be capital investments made which will require additional revenue funding for new licences, support and maintenance. Where businesses cases show there to be a greater saving made elsewhere in the business, the ICT revenue budget will be increased to meet these costs.

6.2.2 Future capital

Certain capital refresh funds have been made available for the years 2009 to 2019. This addresses replacing existing equipment only, not funding new projects.

No provisions are currently made for ICT capital projects investment from 2011/12 onwards. As it is anticipated that further mandatory and risk mitigation spending requirements will materialise, along with other business case opportunities, it is planned to build a capital investment plan for ICT into the Council's 3 year capital plan from 2011/12 onwards. It is anticipated that 2011/12 investment funds can be sourced from re-phasing an anticipated capital programme under spend from 2010/11.

6.2.3 Centralised budgeting for "new ways of working".

As is set out below in the cost centre budget strategy, PCs are procured largely from budgets held in directorates. In order to migrate from inflexible PCs to the more flexible "thin client" it is necessary to centralise these budgets.

Budgets for specialist applications and related requirements can remain with the departments and directorates, or be centralised on a case-by-case basis.

7 Strategic context

7.1 Council Plan and ICT

ICT investment is only valuable if it meets specific business objectives. So the ICT strategy must develop the outcomes from the Council's "Shaping Solihull Strategy Map" (see section **Error! Reference source not found.**), creating a future for **"Solihull – 2018: where everyone has an equal chance to be healthier, happier, safer and prosperous"**

The ICT divisional plan sets out how specific interventions will assist the delivery of the council plan. This includes the implementation of better Social Care finance reconciliation and management reporting and the enhancement of an ICT infrastructure to deliver mobile working to more staff. The Council Plan sets out key drivers, initiatives and outcomes. Those where ICT has a substantial role to play are shown in bold-italics, below.

Drivers

- *Closing the gap of inequality – digital inclusion*
- *Understanding the needs of customers – business intelligence*
- *More for less – business process automation*
- Our Brand

The Top 5

- *North Solihull Regeneration – digital inclusion*
- *Putting Solihull People First (Transforming Adult Social Care)*
- *Integrated Delivery of Children's services*
- *New Ways of Services Working – Home, remote and mobile working*
- *Going Lean – ICT in the Lean business process*

Outcomes

- Building healthier communities
- Building safer communities
- Building stronger communities
- Building prosperous communities
- A brighter future for our children and young people
- *Good value services – Cost reduction both in and through ICT deployment.*

7.2 Key relevant business strategies

Four Council strategies are of particular relevance to the ICT Strategy. These are the Information Strategy, the Customer Strategy, the New Ways of Working Strategy and the Shared Services Strategy. These are elaborated below.

7.2.1 Information strategy

An Information Strategy was agreed by officers and members and has been published. Fundamentally the SMBC Information Strategy is to treat information as an asset that is as significant as finance, people and buildings. The ICT strategy needs to ensure the development of ICT solutions that enable officers, members and the public to access and make sense of appropriate information – and therefore make well informed decisions about the provision of services to our citizens.

The Information Strategy has five priorities, which the ICT Strategy seeks to deliver to particularly priorities (1), (2) (4) and (5):

1. Improve the understanding of Information Management responsibilities.
2. Improve the management of information.
3. Develop employees and elected members information management skills and competencies.
4. Exploit the information and systems we have.
5. Ensure information is adequately safeguarded.

Priority (3), developing skills and competencies is to be progressed through close working with Human Resources and the Organisational Development plans.

The full Information Strategy is available, see section **Error! Reference source not found.**

7.2.2 Customer strategy

The SMBC Customer Strategy has two key components of relevance to the ICT Strategy:

i) Driving customers to cheaper channels. This means that wherever appropriate we will seek to manage our interaction with citizens not with expensive face-to-face conversations or telephone conversations but with much cheaper email or text interaction and through citizens completing requests for services over the internet.

ii) Driving contact to the Contact Service. Migrating citizen's first point of contact from the specialist directorates to the Solihull Connect Customer Contact Service. Some 80% of calls can be dealt with without reference to specialist staff. This saves money and delivers a better service to citizens.

Additionally a citizens consultation strategy is under review – setting out the strategic direction for consultative budget setting and decision making. Building on electronic petitions capability, this may result in further ICT systems requirements.

7.2.3 Buildings and Flexible working (New Ways of Working) strategy

The ICT strategy needs to be mindful of the buildings strategy – there is little point in investing in significant long term ICT infrastructure that would be lost if the council relocated.

- The building’s strategy is under review, but it is likely that the main Council buildings will remain at least until 2014.

Similarly, where a flexible working, hot desking, home working and mobile field working becomes a strategic objective, the ICT strategy needs to deliver to that.

- The flexible and mobile working strategy is currently under review.

Emerging strategic objectives are to:

- Adopt new occupancy standards of 7 workstations to 10 employees
- Develop flexible working
- Work towards two primary locations (one north/one south) and two village centre locations (North Arron Way and Craig Croft).

7.2.4 Shared services strategy

There are opportunities to drive out efficiencies through greater shared services. The Council’s strategy is to be opportunistic with Shared Services. Opportunities to consider importing or exporting shared services will be considered. Shared Services will be considered across any geography and any sector.



SMBC’s ICT services (along with other SMBC departments) currently provides shared services principally to Lichfield District Council (Oracle Financials), the Solihull Care Trust (Adult Social Care) and Solihull Community Housing (Housing and related systems). Other shared services include the provision of services for the Solihull Observatory.

Further shared services across Coventry, Solihull and the Warwickshire (CSW) area are under consideration, both at a strategic big picture level (including the proposal for a Virtual Sub Regional Authority) and at a tactical savings level.

SMBC's delivery of Oracle Financials to Lichfield District (LDC) council went live in 2009 and is believed to be the first example of a Metropolitan Council delivering this type of services to a district.

The strategy in entering into the partnership with LDC was to "grasp the nettle", deliver a service and learn from that experience. SMBC ICT is now well placed to consider other similar shared service efficiencies with other organisations.

7.3 Other strategic outcomes

7.3.1 Reducing our costs

In any business ICT infrastructure and investment exists only to improve customer experience and reduce costs. ICT is part of the cost reduction problem (its "expensive") and part of the cost reduction solution (automated business processes can be more efficient). At SMBC, this is true too and it is inevitable that further "spend to save" ICT investments will help create savings in the business at large. This will drive ICT costs up, but reduce the net costs of running the Council.

Similarly where there are costs of ICT that can be reduced without having a disproportionate impact on front line services, this will be actioned. In particular, it is expected that contractual costs and some staffing costs will be reduced within 3 to 4 years through the deployment of G-Cloud framework contracts, described below.

Should it be the case that Council front-line services reduce, and the staff required to provide such services reduce, there will be a reduction in the ICT costs required to support fewer users.

7.3.2 To be a commissioning council

Developing opportunities to make greater use of our infrastructure and knowledge to provide services to, or commission services from, other organisations. (As evidenced through the provision of the finance ICT system to Lichfield District Council).

Providing customer access and information – innovations such as the Solihull Observatory, e-Petitions, Web forms, well informed customer service agents with access to information relating to the person they are talking to, etc.

7.3.3 Fit for the Future

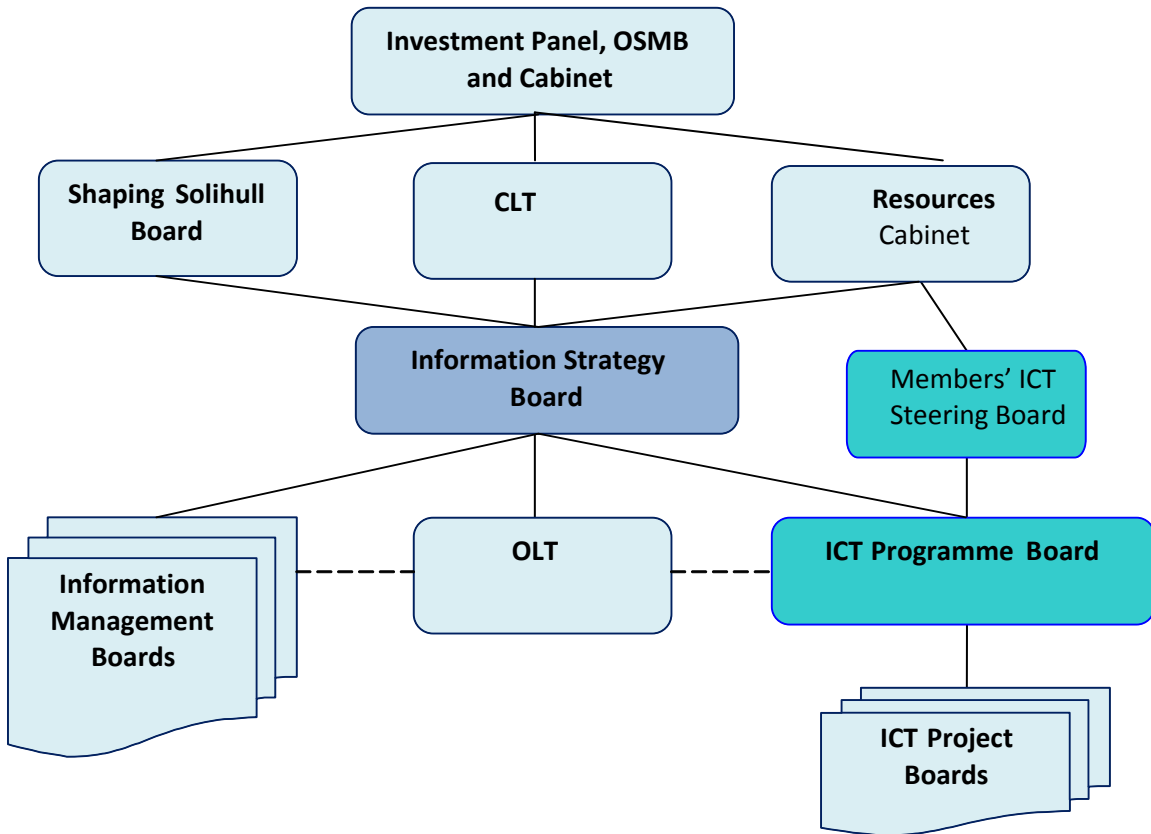
Staff committed to new ways of working - the inter-relationship between Organisational Development and Technological Development. For instance, more mobile working will drive efficiencies and cost reductions, through new ways of working, embracing HR, ICT and Buildings plans and strategies. Also, for example "self service" modules contribute to the creation of a cultural climate in which people become accountable for their own destinies, which drives efficiencies.

8 ICT Governance

Ensuring that the Information Strategy is implemented and that projects that deliver to it meet the needs and priority outcomes of the Council is achieved by the governance arrangements shown in the below diagram.

In essence it is overseen by elected members at the Investment Panel, OSMB, Cabinet and Resources Cabinet and given ongoing direction from senior officers through CMT, the Shaping Solihull Board, a specific Information Strategy Board and related officer boards.

ICT is an enabler to the delivery of the information strategy; the governance of ICT falls within the information governance structure.



8.1 Member panels

Full Cabinet and OSMB will receive a quarterly ICT Programme highlights report and other reports, as appropriate, timed to coincide with the Shaping Solihull quarterly reports.

The Cabinet Member for Resources is also the Council's Information Champion.

Requests for “spend to save” and “spend to improve” funds are taken to the **investment panel**, for recommendation to cabinet. Increase in revenue pressures are dealt with through the budget setting process and managed through the governance set out below.

A Member's ICT Steering Board exists to ensure officers and members have an opportunity to review ICT initiatives in more detail than might otherwise be possible at cabinet and scrutiny. Representation from each of the three major parties is invited to the board, as well as the corporate Director for Resources, Head of ICT and other officers as the agenda requires.

8.2 Officer panels

The Information Strategy Board oversees all Information investment and change and reports upwards to officers at the Shaping Solihull Board and CMT. Specific issues, such as the recruitment of extra staff to mitigate against a risk are reported to elected members, via the Members ICT Steering Board, at the Resources Cabinet.

More detail of the Information Strategy Board's membership and agenda is set out in the Information Strategy.

8.3 The ICT Programme Board

The ICT Programme Board consists of officers and will perform the detailed scrutiny for all ICT investments for recommendation to senior officers and elected members. The Programme Board also balances priorities between projects, monitors project progress, and helps to resolve risks and issues. Substantial changes are brought before members as recommendations.

Membership of the ICT Programme Board will be:

- Head of ICT (Chair).
- Representative of the Director for Commissioning and business change team.
- Representative of the Director for People.
- Representative of the Director for Places.
- Representative of the Head of Customer Services
- Representative of the Business Support Director
- Finance Advisor.
- ICT Programme Manager & Project Support Officer
- ICT Operations Manager & Applications Manager

Frequency of meetings

The ICT Programme Board will meet fortnightly, as required.

Agenda

- Continuous refresh of the ICT strategy.
- Monitoring the progress of initiatives.
- Review of new business cases for recommendation
- Review of projects prioritisation for recommendation
- Allocation of ICT resources to projects
- Review of Quarterly ICT Programme Highlights report

8.4 ICT Project Boards

Each ICT project has a Steering Board, reporting to the Programme Board.

8.5 Technical Design Authority (TDA)

The risk of re-inventing the wheel is a common problem in large organisations. A departmental procurement of a CRM solution when there is already a central solution that could be used, for example, would waste money. It is important to ensure that new initiatives make best use of existing ICT investments, and minimise support run costs by minimising the spread of different technologies.

To this end, proposals for new projects must be approved by the Technical Design Authority (TDA) before a business case is taken to the Programme Board to commission a project. The TDA consists of senior ICT managers.

8.6 Change Advisory Board (CAB)

In a complex inter-connected environment it is important that changes to live systems are made in a controlled and planned way. Technical staff should not be making changes without the approval of the business users who should understand the implications of the change and have carried out user acceptance testing where appropriate.

To this end, all material changes to the live environment must be approved by the Change Advisory Board (CAB). The CAB consists of representation from all directorates, the ICT Change manager, testing co-ordinator and senior ICT staff.

9 Risk

9.1 Risk management

Risk management is a key component of the ICT delivery strategy and is delivered in line with the Council's Risk Management Statement of Required Practice (SORP 6).

Within the ICT division, a team exists to ensure quality, called the "Continuing Service Improvement Team". The Risk Registers are maintained by this team, who also perform test co-ordination, change management, incident management and problem management functions. SMBC has embraced ITIL (the Information Technology Information Library) best practice approaches to IT service delivery, which includes, but is not limited to these disciplines.

9.2 Security

Security of customer information and related data is of critical importance to the Council. The introduction of the public sector network Government Connect, or GCSx has brought with it stringent security standards and close scrutiny of its compliance.

SMBC's ICT security strategy is to adopt best practice guidelines as they evolve and ensure that good value for money investment decisions are made (through the governance processes described in this document) to deliver appropriate ICT security.

This includes virus protection, firewalls, mobile device encryption, strong passwords, locked down desk-tops, two factor remote access and related provisions.

It is an unfortunate fact of modern life that such security provisions have become necessary to protect the organisation. A balance is sought between on the one hand allowing ease of access and creativity of Council employees, and on the other necessary security restrictions.

9.3 Business continuity

The Business Continuity and ICT Disaster Recovery (DR) strategy and plans are developed in close partnership with the Council's emergency planning team.

A framework agreement for ICT DR provision has been negotiated by Solihull MBC on behalf of all the regional local government organisations as a shared service benefit.

9.4 Project risk

As part of the Project Management method, all ICT projects are required to develop and maintain an issues register and a risk register.

9.5 Audit

ICT Audit is a complex task requiring specialist knowledge. The Council's strategy is to procure ICT Audit Services from specialist providers, in conjunction with other neighbouring councils, but managed through the internal Audit function.

10 Service quality and measurement

The ICT service is delivered according to the best practice guidelines of ITIL (the Information Technology Information Library).

The ICT service and quality measures are defined in a Service Level Agreement (SLA).

Key measures (such as time take to resolve incidents and the availability of key business systems) are taken monthly and reported to stakeholders. Problem management is undertaken to identify trends and treat causes, not just symptoms.

Regular benchmarking is undertaken to ensure value for money, through the SOCITM benchmarking service and other benchmarks – both for customer satisfaction and for service delivery Value For Money.

11 Project, portfolio and programme management

11.1 Project management methodology

Project management is a key component of the ICT delivery strategy and is delivered in line with the Council's Project Management Statement of Required Practice (SORP 8).

In addition some specific ICT related method components are applied, such as the introduction of development lifecycle gateways. Also components of Lean thinking (such as A3 project reporting) are deployed.

11.2 Portfolio and Programme Management

The ICT department has an ongoing requirement to deliver change and a constant portfolio of projects. These are managed through a Project Support Office and Programme Manager with progress reported to the ICT Programme Board and then on to members through the governance structure. Elements of the MSP Programme and Portfolio Management method are deployed.

A project prioritisation methodology is deployed to align ICT investment with customer outcomes and strategic objectives. Officer recommendations are generated by agreement across the directorates and with ICT and then presented to Members for approval.

12 ICT sub strategies

The technical ICT strategy is composed of several “sub-Strategies” which all embrace the general principle of driving out as much value as possible from existing investments and solutions. A short description of each key sub-strategy is given below.

12.1 Best Value Customer Interactions – cheaper channels

A customer contact service exists, through which it is a corporately stated intention to managed all first point of contact customer interactions. A Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system exists to facilitate this. It is well known that a face to face customer interaction costs between 10 and 100 times as much as an email or a Web form, so migrating as much interaction to electronic channels such as these is in the interests of the tax payer. While some interaction will probably always need to be face-to-face, more will migrate to web forms over time.

Additionally council payments can largely be made on-line through an e-payments system. There are still some that can’t and the strategic objective is to maximise the use of e-payments wherever the business case makes sense.

Integration between e-forms and CRM requires manual intervention for most forms at present, but a programme of work to automate this is funded for one financial year.

The customer interaction strategy is to continue the migration to the most cost effective channels wherever appropriate.

12.2 Business Intelligence (BI) and reporting strategy

Business Intelligence (BI) refers to skills, processes, technologies, applications and practices used to support decision making.

BI technologies provide historical, current, and predictive views of business operations.



Common functions of Business Intelligence technologies are reporting, online analytical processing, analytics, data mining, business performance management, benchmarking, text mining, and predictive analytics.

At SMBC, over the last five years, development has focussed on operational systems. We have been good at “data in”, but not so strong on “information out”. However, we do have resources (including software licences and skilled analysts) that we are not using to their full capacity. Some software we have procured (such as

Oracle Financials) has included with it business intelligence tools that have not yet been implemented.

Business Intelligence solutions need to be business driven – a number of attempts to drive technology solutions into the business have floundered. There is also a tension between corporate solutions (which might deliver better value for money and more holistic decision making) and divisional demands (which are more easily identifiable – and quantifiable in a business case).

There are pressures across the council for better business intelligence, particularly in relation to both children's and (with the Care Trust) adults social care; and also in relation to all of the Oracle systems (particularly Finance and HR). At the time of writing the Transforming Finance initiative is close to being able to set out its requirements for business intelligence.

Business Intelligence Strategy: to exploit what we've got (skills and licences) and develop divisional solutions with corporate architecture in mind.

12.3 Records management strategy

Electronic Document and Records Management Systems (EDRMS) aim to enable businesses to manage documents and records throughout the life cycle, from creation to destruction.

EDRMS is a type of content management system and refers to the combined technologies of document management and records management systems as an integrated system.

Typically, systems consider a document a work in progress until it has undergone review, approval, lock-down and (potentially) publication, at which point it becomes a formal record within the organization.

Once a document achieves the status of a record, the organization may apply best-practice or legally enforced retention policies which state how the second half of the life cycle will progress. This typically involves retention (and protection from change), until some events occur which relate to the record and which trigger the final disposition schedule to apply to the record. Eventually, typically a set time after these events, the record is reviewed and either destroyed or archived for a further period of time.

EDRMS can either be applied as an “enterprise solution” – everyone uses the same one, or as “line-of-business” solutions – many specific solutions relevant to each business area's business processes are implemented. From a “whole organisation” point of view, enterprise solutions will typically cost less, but not necessarily deliver the richest business functionality.

At SMBC an enterprise solution was procured which delivered substantial head count reduction savings in the first business area into which it was implemented. However technical issues later materialised and the roll-out was halted. The technical issues have

since been resolved and the system has been working well. Concerns remain about the scalability of this product as an enterprise solution and alternatives have been considered.

The EDRMS application functionality is amongst those anticipated to be delivered as a shared service from the Government Application Store, and G-Cloud. Therefore it may be prudent to meet our requirements without making substantial investments, with a view to migrating to the G-Cloud in due course.



EDRMS is a significant aspect of any Flexible Working strategy. For staff to be able to “find their stuff” from whichever desk they sit down at, including working from home or in partner organisations, they cannot be dependant on paper records in filing cabinets and on desks.

EDRMS is a critical enabler of the council’s Flexible Working Strategy set out at sections 7.2.3 and 12.7.

Solutions range from the very simple “exploiting what we already have” by providing tools to structure and search simple file storage, to the more complex “implementing a world class solution”, potentially from the G-Cloud. The former is cheaper but has fewer benefits – the business case analysis will determine the best solution for us.

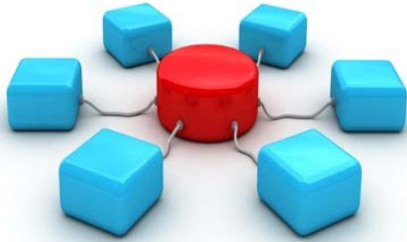
Members and officers considered the business case to implement a corporate EDRMS solution in 2010 and concluded that although the system costs were small, the implementation costs outweighed the benefit.

The SMBC EDRMS strategy is to implement the records management file structures and retention strategies on standard “file server” storage. Also, it is expected that the Council will continue to deploy departmental solutions, funded by departmental business cases for the short term. It is likely that such departmental solutions may be migrated to a corporate solution in some five years time – pending an economic recovery and potentially procuring best value from the “G-Cloud”.

12.4 Integration strategy

Integration is about joining systems together to share processes, data or related entities. It solves a business problem created by the presence of many different systems holding similar data. A single customer address, for instance, might be held in over 100 systems within the council. This creates a consistency problem when the address changes, resulting in substantial costs to try to update all the systems manually. By integrating the systems, it is possible to have one manual change update all systems.

Integration is also how data is transferred from one system to another (say from a cash receiving system, to the finance and accounting system).



There are a wide variety of integration approaches and essentially two extremes. On the simplest extreme integration is achieved by joining systems directly together as and when required – “point solutions”. This is often quick and easy to do, but as it grows, it creates a spaghetti of integrations which are expensive to support and introduce many single points of failure risks into the business.

On the more complex extreme, an integration hub is created and all systems are joined to the hub, never directly to each other – a “hub and spoke” model. This is less risky to run, but much more expensive to implement. For complex highly integrated business systems, where “real time processing” is critical (such as within the finance sector), the integration hub is usually the best answer, delivering the best value for money. Run well, it requires 3-4 FTE staff to run.

SMBC’s 2003 IT strategy sought to introduce an integration hub. Experience has since shown that the cost benefit of implementing a hub is not compelling – it solves a business problem that we do not have.

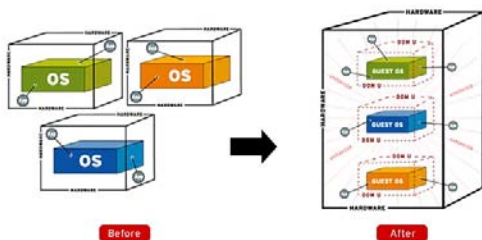
Integration Strategy

Therefore SMBC’s strategy for integration is to continue to maintain and develop the existing application interfaces. And then to identify a technical solution that will deliver affordable and resilient point-to-point integration solutions for at least 3-4 years and scale up to a hub and spoke solution (potentially from the “Cloud” (see section 12.8)) as our integration requirements become more demanding over the years to come.

Additionally, where there is not a high volume of change – for instance with the registration of deaths – the strategic answer is to keep system managers informed of changes through email and allow manual updates.

12.5 Virtualisation strategy

Enterprise applications (like Oracle, or email) run on central computers called file servers. In a traditional “non virtual” environment there is effectively one file server for each application. Some file servers will be permanently running very inefficiently and some will have peaks and troughs of utilisation. The cost of the data centre and the



amount of energy consumed is higher than it needs to be.

Servers Virtualisation is a technique to run many applications on large file servers (or clusters of file servers). In this way the processing power can be shared. When one application is very busy it will use a lot of

the servers processing power while others have less demand. The peaks of use in one application are offset by the troughs of demand in others.

In this way the total cost of hardware is reduced, as is the amount of power consumed to run the file servers. Additionally, the amount of heat generated is reduced, so the amount of air conditioning required is reduced, having a reducing impact on carbon consumption.

There is also a business resilience benefit to server virtualisation. If one physical server crashes in a virtual cluster of servers, the others will simply pick up the demand. Everything will run a little slower until it is repaired, but that is better than having specific applications completely unavailable.

There are two main approaches to virtualisation. One is to create a virtualisation project, invest in a whole new suite of servers and implement a new “virtualised” environment. Another approach is to gradually virtualise. File servers last about three years so with a large estate there are always some being replaced and a refresh budget exists for this purpose. As they are replaced, the existing budget can be spent on virtualised technology.

The SMBC Virtualisation strategy is a refresh approach. At the time of writing, good progress has been made with 60 out of 250 servers virtualised.

12.6 Thin client strategy

This works by spending less on desktop computing and more on central file servers and licences. So instead of spending £150K pa refreshing 3,000PCs⁸, one might spend £150K pa on cheap “thin client” devices as well as file servers, licences and network bandwidth. While the direct procurement cost case is roughly neutral, the benefits for flexible working are substantial. It also drives down costs where staff would otherwise have a PC in the office and another at home. Other cost savings are made by removing the temptation from budget managers to buy PC’s at the financial year end. Centralising support costs also creates an efficiency saving.

Other benefits include carbon reduction. The Government CIO office envisages that the desktop design will evolve through thin client deployment to converge with the cloud strategy. In line with the Green ICT strategy, all shared utility desktop services will be carbon neutral by 2012.

Thin client strategy To date thin client has only been deployed where the creation of a new environment (such as the Chelmsley Wood contact centre and library) have made it possible. Further thin client deployment is taking place through tactical refresh opportunities. The strategy is to centralise PC refresh budgets and then migrate to thin client over the 2010-13 period.

⁸ Assuming PCs cost £250 each and last five years

12.7 Mobile, flexible and home working strategy

Great opportunities exist for efficiency savings through mobile, flexible and home working. Real cashable savings can be made through reducing the size of buildings required by the Council in order to deliver services. Carbon consumption can be reduced and team working can be improved through flexible working practices.

At the time of writing, flexible, mobile and home working solutions are well developed at SMBC and there is an expectation that substantial further investment will take place in this area over the 20010-13 period. Policies, procedures and technologies are set out elsewhere; the strategy is for ICT provision to respond to and help develop the business need.

Flexible working cannot be driven by ICT. Like many ICT rich opportunities it requires an asset strategy, HR engagement, ICT and an overall benefits realisation programme. Shaping Solihull will be the focus of developing modern working practices.

12.7.1 Home working



Allowing officers to work from home permanently, frequently or occasionally is central to the ICT strategy. Secure access over the internet is provided with numerous technologies – typically a laptop or PC at home accessing corporate systems. At the time of writing, some 500 officers have provisions for home and remote working. This has been organically growing over the past few years and investment is expected to gather pace as a cost reduction tactic.

The Strategy for Home Working is to continue to develop and maintain provisions in line with the Shaping Solihull requirements and budgets.

12.7.2 Mobile working and field workers

Allowing field workers, such as benefits assessors and maintenance workers, to receive work instructions, complete their tasks and report progress without having to come into the office is the goal of mobile working.



Solutions have been implemented at SMBC and are being continuously developed and extended to meet the demand, through line-of-business applications running on hand held wireless devices and tablets, communicating with a central mobile server infrastructure. This is an area of rapid change as suppliers compete in a crowded market.

SMBC was the 2010 winner of the Good Communications Award (sponsored by Vodafone) for the Highway Inspections system, pictured above.

The strategy for field workers is to maintain a central technical architecture that securely delivers applications remotely irrespective of the remote device. As field working is a “line of business” requirement, costs will be devolved to the business areas actively deploying mobile field worker solutions.

Additionally some officers and members have a requirement for accessing e-mail, diaries, and contacts between meetings and while away from the office.

The strategy for mobile officers is to provide this, where a business case permits, through secure technologies – currently the Blackberry.

12.7.3 Flexible working

Flexible working practices allow officers to work from wherever they might be within the council buildings. Instead of having a PC that “belongs” to an officer and is permanently located at their desk (irrespective of whether or not they are there), flexible working allows officers to share PCs and desks. With hot desks and touchdown spaces, savings can be made on equipment and more significantly on building costs. From an ICT point of view, the requirement is for people to sit down at any desk, log into any PC and “access their stuff”.

This form of flexible working is delivered either through officers taking laptops with them wherever they go, or through “thin client” computing. Thin client also delivers other benefits, such as reducing the cost of occasional home workers having two PCs.

Flexible working also requires that people have the ability to sit down at any desk, log in and have people phone their extension number at rings at the desk at which they are sitting. This is achievable with further investment in the already extensive “Voice Over IP” (VOIP) telephony system. VOIP is a way of routing phone calls over computer networks. This has the double benefit of reducing costs (only one network, instead of two are required) and enabling flexibility (wherever you have a data connection you can have your work phone number routed to – including your home – at no extra call cost)

Flexible working requires a thin client approach; and thin client computing requires a central PC refresh budgeting strategy, as is set out in sections 12.14 and 12.6.

The Strategy for Flexible Working is to continue to develop and maintain provisions in line with the Shaping Solihull requirements and budgets.

12.8 Cloud computing and “Government Applications Store” strategy

Recent developments in ICT have made it possible to share ICT infrastructure in a way that delivers increased flexibility and responsiveness to business needs whilst reducing



costs. This change involves a move from ICT that has been procured separately by organisations as ICT infrastructure, to a new model in which ICT is provided as a utility. This utility model of ICT provision is known as "cloud computing".

Nationally, the public sector’s Chief Information Officer’s vision is to develop and implement a government cloud infrastructure (G-Cloud) that enables public bodies to source ICT infrastructure, development capabilities and software applications from a secure, resilient, flexible and cost-effective service based environment.

Development of the G-Cloud is the key enabler of the £1.6 billion savings from ICT outlined in the Operational Efficiency Programme report (the remaining amount comes from collaborative procurement of ICT goods and services).

Aligned to the G-Cloud is a proposed Government Applications Store (G-AS) proposal. The G-AS strategy sets out to enable a substantial reduction in the 10,000+ of unique applications and applications contracts that are currently used by public sector organisations. The goals are to enable annualised savings exceeding £500 million per annum by 2020, to heighten the public sector’s ability to respond to change, and to move to standard approaches for providing citizen and business facing services across the public sector.

In the commercial sector “Cloud” solutions are emerging; such as the proposition from Google to deliver corporate e-mail services. SMBC has been procuring software and services for some time, in a “hosted” solutions scenario. Our cash receipting and e-petitions solutions are examples of hosted solutions. The google e-mail proposition has been shown to be unsuitable for “safeguarded” information at present – however when our e-mail licences come up for renewal in 2012 this position will be reviewed.

As the G-Cloud and G-AS mature, it will become increasingly unwise to procure individual solutions for SMBC’s ICT. This will need to be borne in mind for potential procurements from 2010 onwards.

Like the “paperless office” however, the Cloud may remain a goal objective that we continually strive towards and never reach. The first prediction of the paperless office was made in a Business Week article in 1975. Thirty five years later the dream is not yet

a complete reality, although the way we share information with and without paper has radically changed.

One of the greatest challenges for cloud computing is “enterprise integration” (see 12.4). Local government is like many other sectors, delivering services with partners. A complex web of data integration and interfaces has been developed with partners over the years. Delivering simple, isolated one-user solutions (say a word processor, or operating system) to the individual consumer is relatively straight forward. Delivering a multi-user data base application solution that must be integrated across a partner supply chain, probably including some “Cloud-to-Cloud⁹” integration and some “Cloud-to-traditional on-premises applications”, creates a quantum leap in complexity.

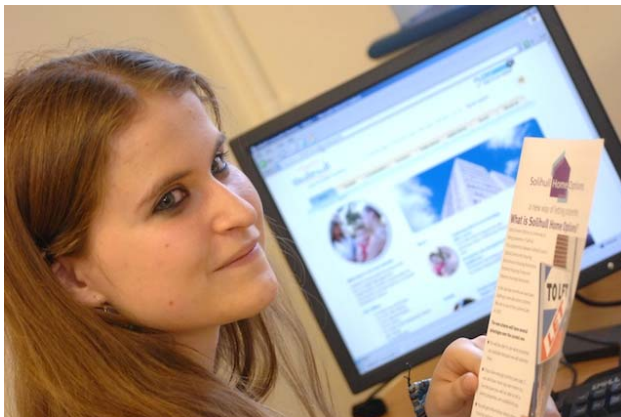
The Cloud and the G-Cloud will come – but they are certain to be different to what we envisage them to be right now.

Cloud Strategy: Continue to assess Cloud solutions on a “case by case” basis. Wait for G-cloud and G-AS readiness; identify low risk, early adopter possibilities in order to make savings and develop learning.

12.9 Digital inclusion strategy

Digital Inclusion is about ensuring that citizens are not excluded from opportunities because of not having access to personal computing and particularly the internet. As such, Digital Inclusion is core to the moral purpose of the council.

Digital technologies, of course, pervade every aspect of modern society. However these opportunities are not enjoyed by the whole of the UK population - for example, 17 million people in the UK still do not use computers and the Internet and there is a strong correlation between digital exclusion and social exclusion.



Solihull Council is amongst the “thought leaders” on Digital Inclusion. Along with Solihull Community Housing and third sector organisations from the Strategic Partnership, we have been awarded Beacon Status in 2009 and were National e-government finalists (20th Jan 2010) for digital inclusion projects.

⁹ An example of cloud-to-cloud integration is procuring email from the “Google Cloud” and a Procurement system from an “Oracle Cloud”. The Procurement system needs to be interfaced to the email system so that purchase requests can be sent to the right people. So a Cloud-to-Cloud integration would be necessary. In system implementations the interfaces are often the most expensive part of the project – managing this between three organisations will be more challenging still.

Some of these projects are set out in the more detailed “digital inclusion strategy” (see link below in **Error! Reference source not found.**) and include activities such as providing old council PCs for use by citizens of the borough, provision of internet access in libraries, provision of broadband in council tower blocks and the provision of laptops for looked after children.

The Digital Inclusion strategy is to continue to identify opportunities to deliver more, particularly working with regeneration, planning and LSP Partners such as Solihull Community Housing, the Care Trust, ReCOM and the Colebrige Trust, to action ideas such as expanding broadband access across the borough and ensuring it is mandatory to include high speed broadband in planning for new developments.

12.10 Green computing strategy

At 2-3% of global carbon emissions, ICT globally emits more carbon than the aviation industry - and use and emissions continue to grow. Recognising this, national and local initiatives are being taken to reduce the carbon footprint of ICT.

Nationally, the government CIO envisages that the desktop design will evolve to converge with the cloud strategy between 2012 and 2015. In line with the Green ICT strategy, the target is to have all shared utility desktop services carbon neutral by 2012. Work is ongoing with Defra to define Carbon Neutrality and how this can be delivered.

Within SMBC, much has been done to reduce the ICT Carbon footprint.

- Overnight shutdown

Although staff have been asked to switch off their PCs when they leave the office, not all of them do. Therefore, every evening all the council’s PCs attached to the network are shut down automatically. This saves the Council some £60K pa.

- Virtualisation

As well as the cost and service benefits from virtualisation (see 12.5) there are carbon reduction benefits as well from powering fewer physical servers.

- Black screensavers

Further savings have been made by ensuring that all PCs that are not in use switch to a black screen after 5 minutes, reducing power consumption.

As demand for computing grows, with more efficiencies being driven out through the automation of more business processes, the carbon footprint of ICT in the council continues to grow. Power use in the data centre is roughly 50/50 between servers, and required cooling.



Remote working can have a positive impact on the environment as it requires people to take fewer journeys and the mobile and flexible working strategy supports this proposition.

Disposal of ICT equipment has an environmental impact. At SMBC all ICT equipment is made available to approved charities and only equipment which cannot be recycled is disposed of.

Disposals are in compliance with the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive (WEEE Directive).

Future “big ticket” carbon reduction is aligned to the migration to the “G-Cloud” and also migrating to thin client PCs, which require much less cooling and therefore have a energy saving that is greater than the energy increase required from having more thin client file servers.

The Strategy for Green Computing is to continue to identify tactical opportunities for carbon reduction and embrace G-Cloud solutions as they become feasible.

12.11 Open source strategy

Open Source principles have created a wealth of robust enterprise and consumer software that can be obtained free of charge.

Open Source is a relatively new phenomenon in the IT Industry although the concept of open standards and intellectual property pre-dates computing. In essence it is characterised by legal and commercial terms (eg “free distribution”, “access to the source code” and “no restrictive licences) rather than by technical characteristics.

Global “communities of interest” emerge around Open Source initiatives and programmers will write solutions to business problems and make them available to everyone else across the internet.

Open Source solutions exist for many desk top applications (word processors, spreadsheets, presentations) as well as for many enterprise applications (finance, Records Management, Customer management) and operating systems.

Using Open Source is often not free in an organisation – while the software is free, there are implementation and support costs to consider. To manage risk, third party companies exist that will, for a fee, provide support and maintenance services for Open Source products.

SMBC is a leader amongst local government organisations in its deployment of Open Source. Most of our back office systems (including Finance, HR, Payroll, Procurement and CRM) run on the Linux open source operating system.

The strategy for Open Source is to build on our already leading position and deploy further Open Source solutions wherever a Total Cost of Ownership business case indicates it to be the best solution.

12.12 Social Media

Social media uses Internet and web-based technologies to transform broadcast media monologues (one to many) into social media dialogues (many to many). Social Media is also sometimes known as “Web 2.0”. It supports the democratization of knowledge and information, transforming people from content consumers into content producers.



Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, and others allow people to create and share content with friends. Twitter is an example of a social media tool that allows for real-time transmission of content and news.

Social Media began to achieve exponential usage for individual internet users over 2004 to 2010. From around 2008 businesses and public sector organisations began to succeed with using social media to achieve their outcomes. For

instance, Dell have built sales by \$6.5m over 6 months with Twitter and Medway Council have used FaceBook to publicise events.

At SMBC the journey to social media has begun. For instance, Facebook has been used for the Solihull Youth Service to engage with youths within the borough; Heritage and Local Studies have developed a YouTube, MySpace and Flickr presence; the Digital Inclusion strategy was developed with Social Media¹⁰ and the winter school closures are announced over Twitter. The council can be accessed by citizens and other interested parties on, LinkedIn (Solihull Business Forum) and Twitter.

An e-petitions site has been procured and through third sector engagement, elected Members have been provided with volunteer workshops to show them how to use Social Media in their engagement with their electorate.

Internally, blogs have been created to allow officers to communicate with each other, lead by the Chief Executive who is a regular blogger on the council intranet.

¹⁰ A collaborative internet tool called a “Wiki” (similar to Wikipedia) was used.

Ownership The presentation of Council Information, both internally and externally, is the responsibility of the Communications Division.

The Strategy for Social Media is to encourage staff to engage professionally with social media and to encourage citizen's to engage with the council through social media channels.

12.13 Web Content Management

Web content management relates to how we present and manage information on our external Internet (solihull.gov.uk) site, our internal Intranet (Solnet) and shared web presences that work with specific trusted partners ("extranets").

Technologies to deliver web content management have been implemented at SMBC over the last decade in an unstructured way, resulting in some inefficiencies and limitations – particularly in relation to publishing, searching and exploiting social media (see 12.12).

The Intranet is particularly over due for a refresh and its replacement has surfaced as a key requirement to replace in 2010/11 within the Information Strategy.

The Strategy is to converge the web content management technologies as much as possible over the next 3 years and deliver more for less. A programme of work is required to migrate to new solutions delivering best of breed and value for money solutions, in three phases embracing, Intranet, Internet and Extranet.

12.14 Cost centre financial management strategy ("D32")



In order to deliver more flexible working, it is necessary to provide officers with access to the information they need wherever they are (see 12.7 Mobile, flexible and home working strategy). In order to deliver this, we need to migrate away from PCs with data and applications stored on them to "thin" devices that access data and applications from a central store (see 12.6 Thin client strategy).

In order to spend on central servers instead of local PCs, it is necessary to hold the PC refresh budget centrally. It would not be feasible to hold the budget for all project and specialist requirements centrally.

Cost Centre Strategy It is the intention to migrate all PC refresh budgets (or the refresh pressure represented by the assets) to a central cost centre.