

Cabinet Report



Listening Learning Leading



Report of Head of Corporate Services

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To: CABINET

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Joint Technology Strategy 2018/19 – 2023/24

Recommendations

- (a) That Cabinet approves the joint technology strategy for both councils, endorsing the principles documented to set the direction for any investment in and use of technology and supporting the proposed approach for delivery.
- (b) That Cabinet approves a virement of £38,000 from each council's contingency budget, totalling £76,000 across both councils, for the provision of backfill and specialised resources to aid delivery of the immediate priorities set out in the strategy, to be managed by the Head of Corporate Services.

Purpose of Report

1. The councils recognise that to secure best value for their investments in technology they have a pressing need, driven by a combination of customer demand, digital disruption driving radical change and the financial challenges faced across the public sector, to:
 - a) Establish a set of core principles for the investment in and adoption of technology to support effective working and embrace the potential it offers for improved services to our residents and businesses.

- b) Define a clear direction, aligned to business plans, for the ongoing use and development of technology that will drive how those services are delivered internally and by external service providers.
- c) Ensure the councils' workforce is confident and capable enough to embrace the potential of digital and technology to deliver services, faster, cheaper, better and right first time.

This proposed technology strategy has been designed to address this need by establishing the principles, creating a short-term action plan covering immediate needs and setting four year delivery programmes to turn the principles into practice and ensure clear direction. It also sets out how the councils can unlock the potential within our workforce to embrace digital in the way we do business.

The delivery programmes are being developed over the next two months with the senior management team as part of business planning and budget setting, and will be reported back to Cabinet in the new year, with an update on progress against the short term action plan addressing immediate issues.

Financial Implications

2. The financial implications for this strategy are being addressed in three parts over the next three months:
 - a) Where there are existing contracts in place for the provision of services, the commercial position is that the cost of change and resulting like for like service will not increase costs and we will be actively seeking efficiencies where possible.
 - b) Where any changes to current services or new service requirements are identified, any new costs will be considered on their merits as part of the business case driving that change
 - c) Changes require some one-off investment for additional resources to carry out the activity, either to backfill resources needed to deliver the extra work needed or to bring in specific expertise that we don't have. This is the cost of change.
3. The development of the proposed delivery programmes set out in the strategy will provide full visibility of costings, budgets and any gaps as part of the process, which is being carried out alongside the councils' business planning and budget setting round for 2019/2020. This in turn will feed into the medium term financial strategy.
4. The baseline assessment of the councils' core IT services (mainly delivered by Capita) and the change in direction being proposed by this strategy, mainly in the areas of end user computing and the corporate finance and resource management systems, has identified a potential need to invest up to £100,000 per annum across both councils over the term of the strategy (five years). This will represent one-off work on specific projects and products, rather than any increase to the base contract price. For example, the councils choosing to invest in additional functionality for business intelligence through the finance and other corporate systems or technology to provide better data on customers.
1. On cost of change, there is already a pressing need for additional and some specialist resource to support projects in progress over the next 5 months (Migration to Pay360, the finance system upgrade, the new Active Directory setup, managed print services and the web site hosting are all examples). One-off funding in this financial year of up to £76,000 across both councils will meet this need. This requires a virement from contingency and will managed by the Head of Corporate Services. Any costs of change

for future years will be included in business plans and as part of the 2019/2020 budget setting process to ensure they are considered as part of a whole systems change rather than in isolation.

Legal Implications

2. There are no legal implications in terms of the technology strategy itself. However the projects to deliver the strategy will create changes with legal implications. Examples include:
 - Changes to current contracts for services
 - Information sharing and governance
 - Shared services
 - Regulatory compliance
3. Where legal implications arise through the execution of the strategy, they will be addressed as part of the project management process.

Risks

4. There are three substantial risks to delivering the strategy:
 - Achieving the required contract changes to our main IT contract, the 5 Councils Partnership;
 - Having sufficient resources to execute the projects (financial, expertise and people); and
 - Impact of change and resistance.
5. All three will be addressed at the corporate, programme and project levels, following our corporate risk management processes.

Conclusion

6. This strategy will complement the councils' business plans, budget setting process and other corporate strategies including workforce, customer and communications, and will ensure direction, activities and objectives are all aligned towards providing high quality, affordable services to our residents and businesses.
7. Cabinet are asked to approve the joint technology strategy for both councils and the principles therein, and to approve a virement of £38,000 of underspent budgets from each council's contingency budget, totalling £76,000 across both councils, for the provision of backfill and specialised resources to aid delivery of the immediate priorities.

Background Papers

None