



South Oxfordshire DC Vale of White Horse DC

ICT Strategy (Draft)
17 June 2010



Introduction

- This document presents the combined ICT strategy of South Oxfordshire DC and the Vale of White Horse DC
- The strategy was developed in the period February-May 2010 through facilitated workshops with officers and senior councillors
- The purpose of the strategy is to set out the key principles and investments which will enable both councils to deliver better performance through the effective use of ICT, to properly plan ICT investments and to make optimal decisions in relation to ICT
- The strategy also equips the councils with management frameworks which will be used to manage the applications portfolio and the technical infrastructure on an ongoing basis



The strategy development process

The strategy workshops were based around a number of key considerations and techniques:

- The establishment of a set of guiding principles which underpin the strategy and form the basis of future ICT-related decision making
- Evaluation of the councils' current applications portfolios and identification of where there are improvement needs
- Evaluation of the councils' technical infrastructures and identification of the key directions in which technology investments should be directed
- Consideration of the councils' governance arrangements for ICT



Key strategic principles

- **Key strategic principles were identified and were categorised as:**
 - **Fundamentally implicit with the strategy and are a prerequisite before the explicit principles are considered**
 - **Explicit to the strategy and evaluated formally as part of the decision making process**
- **The explicit principles were then grouped in order of importance into three categories (high, medium, low) for the purposes of facilitating decision making, but all principles were deemed to be important and must be considered when making ICT-related decisions**





The strategic principles

Implicit fundamental principles

The two key fundamental implicit principles on which the strategy is based are:

- There will be a consistent evaluation process for ICT business cases which must be adopted for all ICT-related investments, and the councils should apply the principles of the OGC's five-case business case model and its associated evaluation process
- To prevent sub-optimal decisions being taken "common sense" will always apply as a final decision checking mechanism, however the councils were mindful that this could potentially be used as a reason for supporting irrational or illogical decision making as it provides a mechanism for over-riding the key explicit principles



Explicit principles (1)

The following explicit principles were categorised as highly important when making ICT-related decisions:

- ICT investments must demonstrate an explicit linkage to the achievement of corporate priorities
- ICT investments must lead to improved productivity and deliver a positive return on investment
- All application-level investments must have the option of self-service for the end-user, but there may be circumstances in which the option is not enabled
- All applications must be presentable over the web OR the application vendor must demonstrate that web-enablement is on the application's roadmap
- Both councils must move to common applications and a common operating environment when new investments are being made
- Both councils must be able to demonstrate a year-on-year increase in the value derived from ICT

Explicit principles (2)

The following explicit principles were categorised as important when making ICT-related decisions:

- Where practical there will be a single source of master data, collected once, and shared by multiple applications
- Applications and data will be accessible from all locations and will support flexible, remote and mobile working
- Where practical dependence on paper records will be eliminated
- Training and awareness of facilities and support will be provided for all new investments
- Standards to prevent data loss will be enforced
- When making ICT investment decisions the councils will reduce, as much as possible, lock-in to a single vendor

Explicit principles (3)

The following explicit principles were categorised as significant when making ICT-related decisions:

- Where practical there should be a single or simplified sign-on mechanism for applications
- The councils should be on a supported version of an application (this is a requirement of the government's code of connection)
- Where practical applications are rationalised by making better use of embedded functionality rather than implementing additional applications
- The councils will manage the applications portfolios and technical infrastructures using a formal framework
- Where practical the councils will seek to secure efficiencies by working with external partners and stakeholders

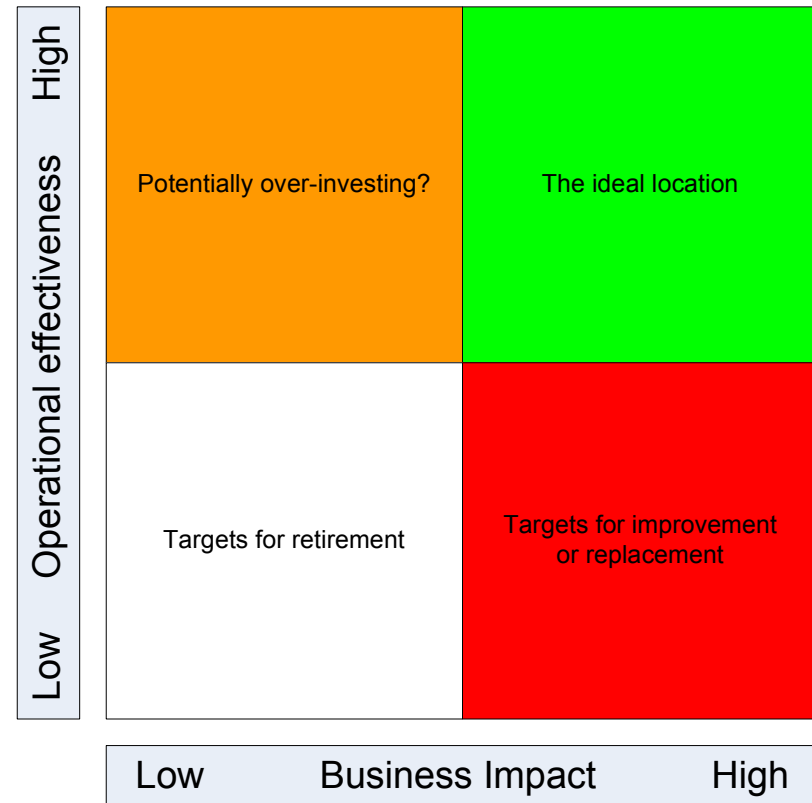


The councils' applications portfolios

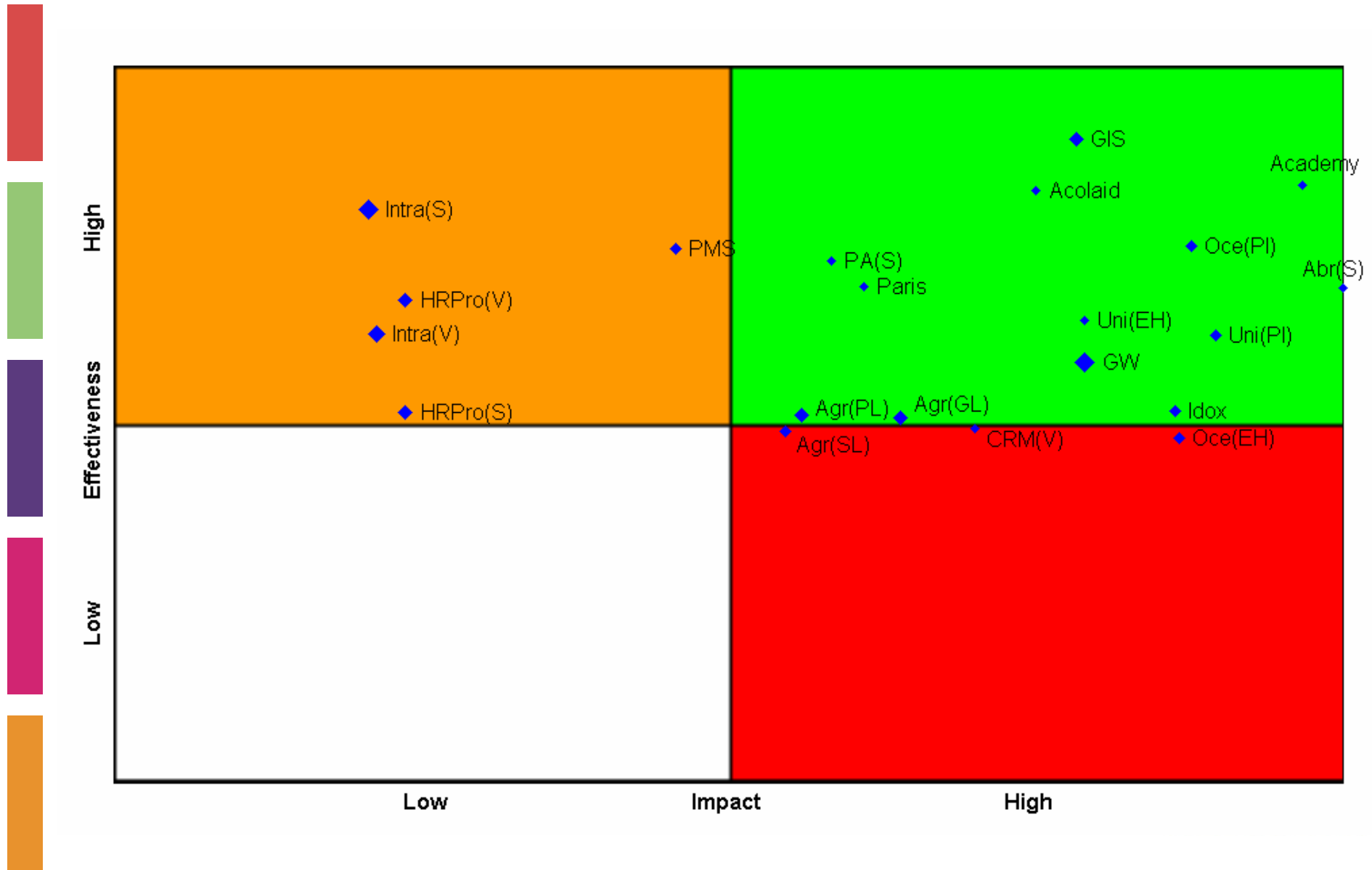
Applications portfolio management

Applications portfolio analysis is a management technique which is used to help an organisation to determine when changes to the applications should be made:

- It is based on evaluating applications in relation to importance to the business and effectiveness
- Ideally applications are both important and effective, but in some instances this is not the case and it may be necessary to remove, replace or improve an application
- The framework for applications portfolio management is shown opposite and was used in the workshops and subsequently with a user survey to determine where current applications are located



Applications portfolio analysis



Important and effective applications

The following applications were found to be both important and effective:

- South
 - Geographic information system
 - Ocella (planning)
 - Acolaid (local land and property gazetteer)
 - Public amenities (PA) database
 - Abritas (housing)
- Vale
 - Uniform (planning)
 - Uniform (environmental health)
 - Idox (document management)
 - Paris (cash receipting)
- Shared
 - GroupWise (email)
 - Agresso (general ledger)
 - Agresso (purchase ledger)
 - Academy (council tax and business rates)

When considered on their own merits these applications should not require much immediate attention. However, we need to consider the case for harmonisation of each of these systems in order to achieve efficiency improvements from joint operations.

Important but less effective

The following applications were found to be important but less effective:

- South
 - Ocella (environmental health)
- Vale
 - Customer relationship management (CRM)
- Shared
 - Agresso (sales ledger)

These applications should be high priority for action.

Effective but less important

The following applications were found to be effective but less important:

- South
 - HR Pro
 - Intranet
- Vale
 - HR Pro
 - Intranet
- Shared
 - Performance management system

These applications should be low priority for action.

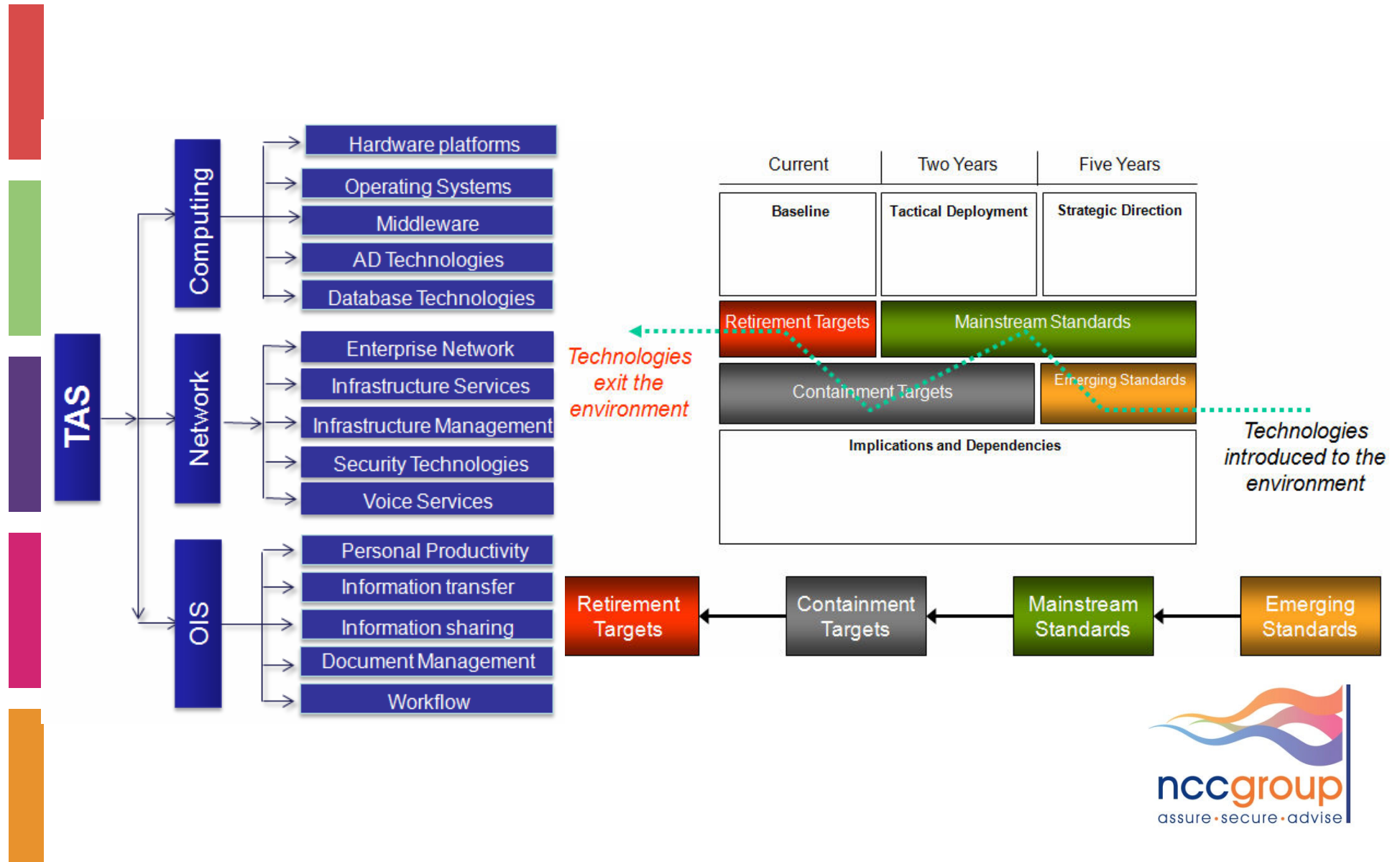


Technical architecture strategy

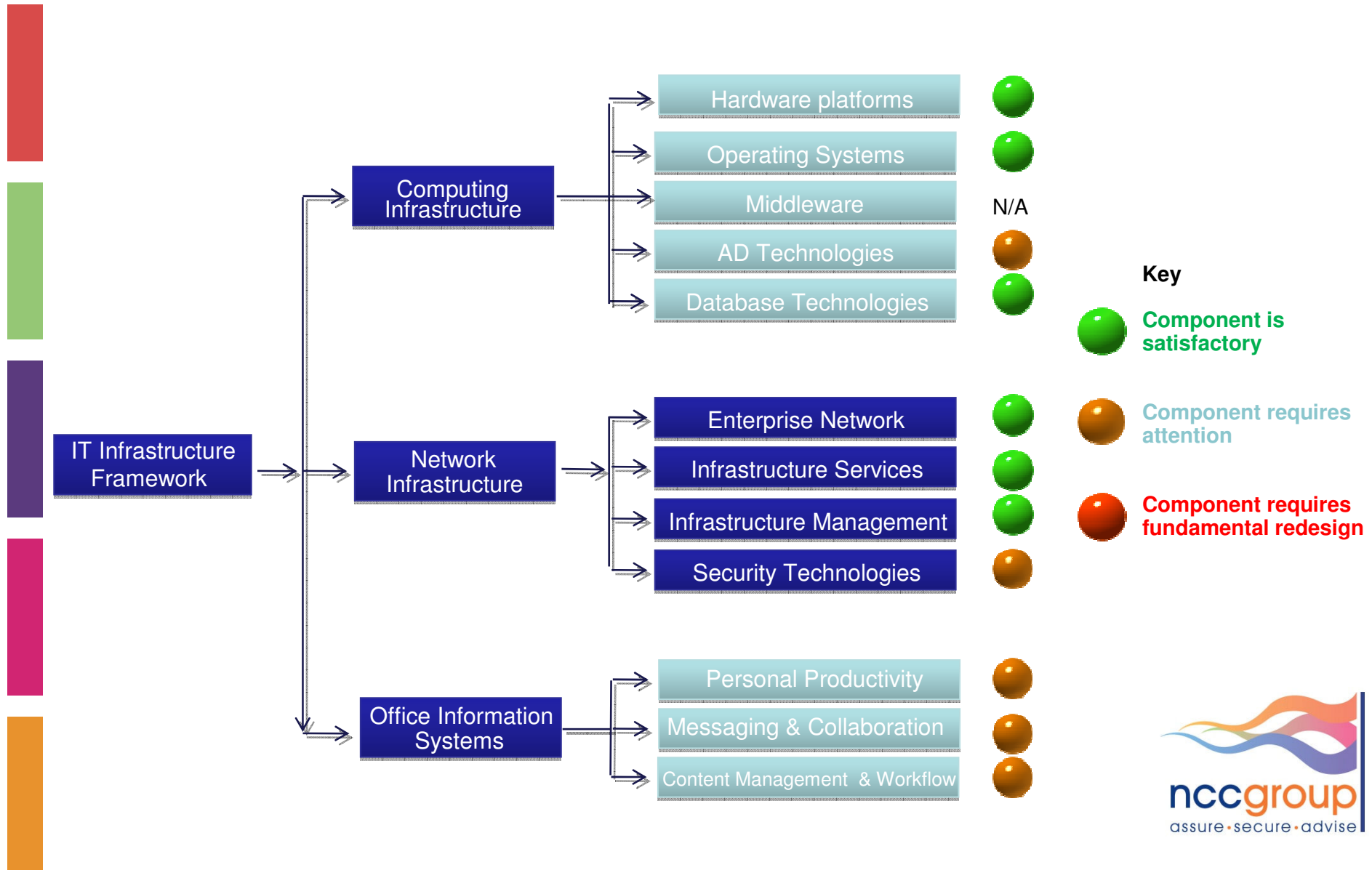
Technical architecture management

- We examined the councils' technical architecture using our standard framework. As with applications this framework seeks to categorise components into portfolio categories so that investment planning can be facilitated
- The categories we use are:
 - Emerging – technologies are moving into the environment
 - Mainstream – the period of peak productivity from the investment
 - Containment – the technology is approaching the end of its life
 - Retirement – the technology should be removed from the environment
- The technical architecture framework should be reviewed every six months so that it is refreshed and can be used to determine if the key actions, such as retiring components, have been undertaken
- The model is shown in more detail overleaf

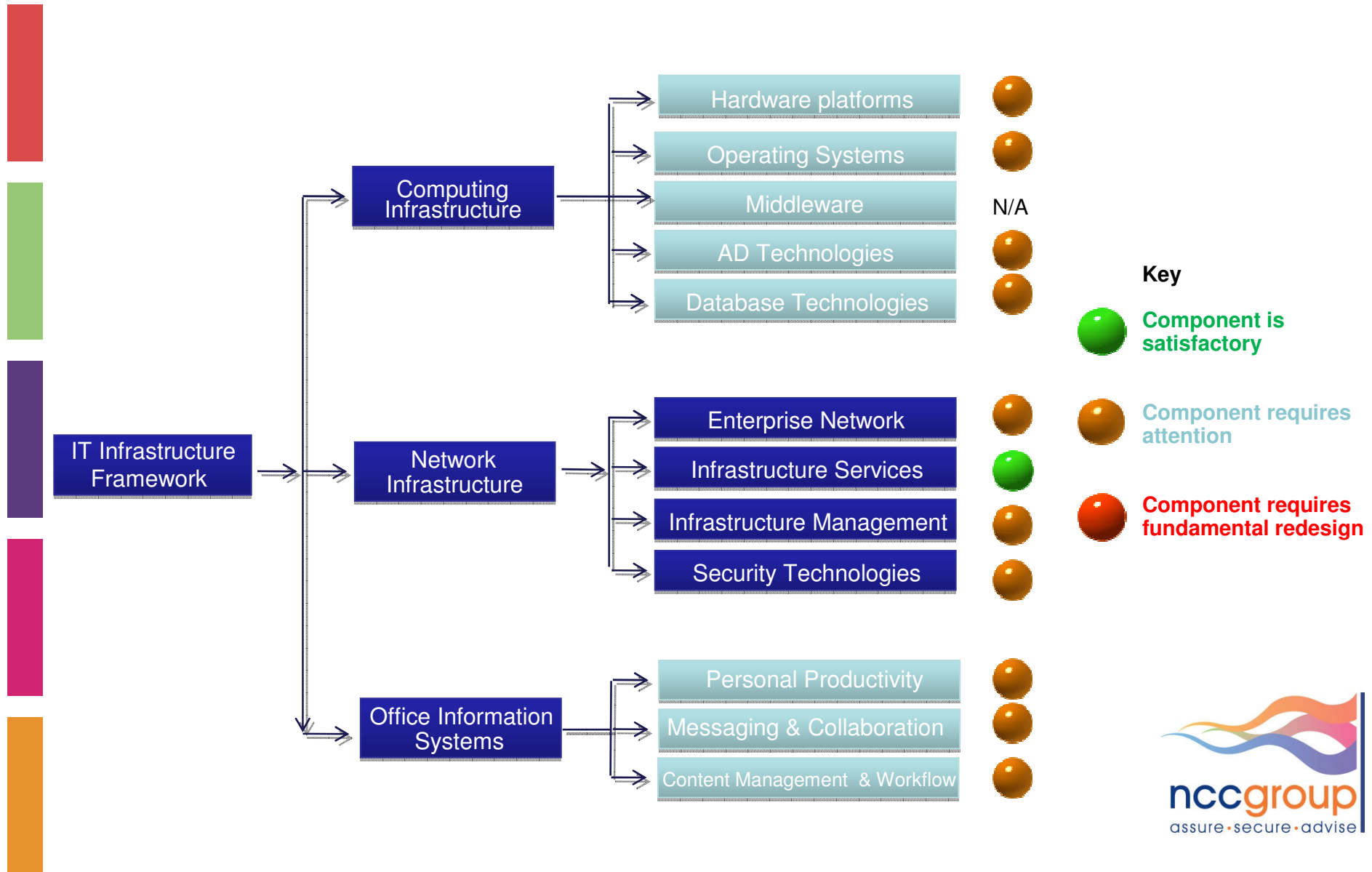
Architectural strategy



Architecture at a glance: South



Architecture at a glance: Vale



Overall view on architecture

Both councils have reasonable architectures in place but plans should be put in place to:

- Introduce further virtualisation at data centre and desktop level
- Retire Windows XP and consolidate the number of images of its replacement
- Retire Windows 2000 server at the Vale
- Move to a common development environment across both Councils
- Retire SQL 2000 at the Vale
- Move to common security platforms and ensure all client devices are risk assessed and where appropriate encrypted
- Develop a common strategy for voice services integrated with the customer services strategy
- Retire current office suites (XP and 2000) and consider greater use of collaboration tools when these are refreshed
- Explore the business case for council-wide content, document and workflow applications as part of the long-term unification of ICT across the Councils



ICT Governance

Governance defined

- **Good governance is about “Doing the right thing deliberately” and in relation to ICT it promotes strong alignment between the ICT service and the achievement of organisational goals**
- **Governance is concerned with:**
 - **Priority setting and business alignment**
 - **Funding sources and levels**
 - **Allocating resources**
 - **Standards, practices and guidelines**
 - **Agreeing the sourcing strategy for ICT**
 - **Incentives and compensation**
 - **Benefits realisation**
 - **Risk identification and management**
- **All stakeholders should be involved in governance processes, and some of these will be external to the Councils**

Appropriate governance

- Both councils expressed the view that they prefer light-touch governance in relation to ICT given the relatively small size of the organisations
- Neither council has an ICT steering group or any similar arrangements in place
- We agree that it is sensible to minimise the effort devoted to governance by making sure that any governance activities are focused and efficient
- As the councils merge their operations further we think that they should establish a light-touch governance forum for ICT which is responsible for ensuring that all ICT investments are evaluated according to the implicit and explicit strategic principles outlined in this document, and that the actions planned in relation to applications portfolio management and technical architecture investment are funded and executed





Key actions

Key actions

Both councils should:

- Apply the implicit and explicit strategic principles set-out in this document when considering acquiring new ICT applications and infrastructure
- Undertake a comprehensive applications portfolio analysis to determine if all applications are fit-for-purpose
- On the basis of the applications portfolio analysis prepare to invest in removing, replacing or improving applications which have a high business impact but are deemed to be less effective than necessary
- Move towards a common technical architecture and plan to retire components such as desktop operating systems, databases and office systems

