	Cabinet		**Item**
			11(i)
	27 January 2016		
Report of	**Assistant Chief Executive**	**Author**	**Kieran Johnston** ☏ **507880**
Title	**ICT Strategy – Technology 2018**		
Wards affected	All		

This report concerns the ICT Strategy and the associated Investment Plan.

1. Decision Required

1.1 To approve the Council's ICT Strategy and the associated investment plan.

2. Reasons for Decision

2.1 To enable the implementation of the ICT Strategy, which will
- enable existing systems to continue to function where appropriate
- ensure that our ICT matches our aspirations and operational service delivery
- build resilience and business continuity, reducing our reliance on complex, 'legacy' networks and systems, with clearer financial unit costs.

3. Alternative Options

3.1 The alternative option would be not to approve the ICT Strategy, but that would leave some systems without appropriate support, impact on system reliability and prevent or delay the improvements which are needed to deliver the technology which will enable the Council to continue to respond effectively to its customers.

4. Supporting Information

4.1 The Council's current ICT approach results from the Fundamental Service Review of Customer Contact, approved by Cabinet in 2012. Some notable improvements from 2012 to 2015 include:
- Implementation of Microsoft Dynamics CRM within the Customer Service Centre (CSC)
- Investment in new top tasks website functionality
- Implementation of the MITEL Voice over Internet Protocol (VOIP) telephony system for the whole organisation (including CSC)
- Upgrading our systems from Windows XP to Windows 7
- Upgrading from Microsoft Office 2003 to Microsoft Office 2010
- Upgrading our email system
- Implementing new file storage systems to improve availability and response times
- Upgrading our anti-virus protection and performance
- Implementing a new backup solution to improve resilience
- Moving our servers from a server room within Angel Court to a dedicated space with Braintree Council's server room

- Delivery of a new self-serve solution for Council Tax, Benefits, Housing and Business Rates (NNDR).

4.2 Mobile technology has become a facet of daily life, the way in which people interact with friends, family, services and businesses. New digital technologies such as wearable devices, mobile apps and massively scalable computing power are combining with mobile connectivity and social media to transform how organisations and their customers communicate.

At the same time as this technology shift takes place, local government must be smarter and better at a lower cost. Flexibility is the key to this. The Council will adopt the innovative models of some of the most forward thinking and efficient companies and benefit from the improvement in digital skills across the community. We will make use of cloud environments and cloud applications to deliver services that are focused on customer experience and are available when and where people need them.

5. Approach taken

5.1 The Council has made great strides over recent years by enabling flexible working, improving processes and allowing customers to serve themselves. The next steps will involve embracing truly paperless working, extended self-serve and more efficient sharing of information across staff, councillors, customers and partners.

5.2 The ICT Strategy has been developed in line with future challenges in mind. Authored by Officers in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, it is in line with our collaborative work with the Essex Online Partnership (all public sector organisations in Essex – councils, fire and police), and with similar trends taking place within the public and private sector.

5.3 The ICT Strategy enables new ways that customers can self-serve, improves our workflows and automates our processes, enables paperless working and improves access to information. It is also key to new ways of working for councillors and staff, for further culture change, and will also help us achieve our ambition to earn more income from commercial trading.

6. Outcomes

6.1 The ICT Strategy and associated Investment Plan will:
- Enable us to maintain those existing ICT systems which are still required
- move us to globally adopted, cloud-based infrastructure and technologies
- reduce our reliance on our own network and the complex integrations between systems which currently limit our technological capability and functionality
- provide clearer, more transparent cost of usage
- improve reliability and resilience
- ensure our ICT is suitable to help us meet our challenges over coming years

6.2 As well as ensuring existing systems continue to operate effectively, this Strategy will:
- Make it easier for Councillors and staff to work on any equipment from any location by introducing Office 365

- Implement a new cloud-based document creation, storage and management system across the organisation. This will make it significantly easier for people to share and access the information they need.
- Reduce the volume of paper we print by facilitating easier access to viewing 'papers' electronically.

6.3   Delivery of the ICT Strategy will enable:
- improved operational efficiency
- the foundations for "anywhere, anytime, any channel" access for customers
- flexibility, responsiveness and mobility for customers, councillors and staff
- greater opportunities for harnessing data.
- Digital by default processes and fully electronic working

7.   Strategic Plan References

7.1   The proposals contribute to the vision and broad aims set out in the Strategic Plan of a vibrant, thriving, prosperous and welcoming place. Technology acts as an enabler for the delivery of the Council's Strategic Plan over the next three years.

8.   Consultation and publicity considerations

8.1   Our ICT needs to meet our customers' expectation of how services are delivered in the 21st century. Times are changing fast, and many of our customers are very familiar with digital technology and expect instant or 24/7 access to services. They also expect this to be accessible from any device, at a time and place that suits them, and tailored to their needs and situation.

8.2   Councillors have highlighted their requirement for smarter, simpler access to the information they need to support their communities. This reflects the customer expectations shown in 8.1 for improved, straightforward access to relevant resources.

8.3   The 2015 staff survey highlighted that there was room for improvement with the equipment/software available to staff, access to information and knowledge, and ease of communication between teams. This Strategy addresses these needs by modernising our infrastructure, and improving the ability to share information.

9   Financial implications

9.1   The investment over the next 3 years is £1.31million. The estimated cost of maintaining ICT 'as is' over the next 3 years is £750k. This means that the additional funding required over and above the cost of 'standing still' is £560k.

9.2   This investment beyond supporting standstill will enable further significant savings in the Digital Challenge business case which will come to Cabinet in March. Preparatory work on the business case for the Digital Challenge shows that this investment will be vital in unlocking a good return.

9.3   In addition to the Digital Challenge savings, it is also anticipated that this investment will reduce the need for significant further investment in our Windows Operating system in 2019. Based on the costs of the recent transition to Windows 7, it is anticipated that adoption of this strategy could remove c£500k of Windows upgrade cost in 2019.

9.4   Based on previous funding decisions and proposals within the 2016/17 budget, allocations of £730k have been identified. This leaves a balance of £580k which it is proposed is included in the capital programme as shown in the budget report on this agenda.

	16/17	17/18	18/19	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Total Investment required	**685**	**325**	**300**	**1,310**
Funding available:-				
New Homes Bonus allocation *(see budget report on this agenda)*	500			500
Uncommitted Capital Programme sum	130			130
Agreed in-year revenue contribution	100			100
Total available	**730**			**730**
Capital Funding requirement	**(45)**	**325**	**300**	**580**

9.3.   There are forecast annual revenue costs associated with the strategy of c£200k which would start from 2019/20. It is forecast that the revenue cost associated with standing still would be c£100k.

9.4   The revenue costs have been included in the Medium Term Financial Forecast (MTFF). It is envisaged that the investment shown in the ICT strategy will help the Council in identifying ways to reduce revenue costs in later years through efficiency gains. These opportunities will be considered as part of future reviews of the MTFF.

10.   **Equality and Diversity Implications**

10.1   The screening stage for an Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out, and is available by clicking this link, or following this pathway from the homepage of www.colchester.gov.uk: Council and Democracy>Policies, Strategies and Performance>Equality and Diversity>Equality Impact Assessments>Corporate and Financial Management>Managing Customer Experience. We are using this EQIA as the ICT Strategy is the enabler for the achievement of these aims and outcomes, and will be supplemented by additional screening if needed during implementation.

11.   **Other Standard References**

11.1   There are no specific Human Rights, Community Safety or Health and Safety implications at this point. As with Equality and Diversity above, the implications for these areas will be considered at the implementation stage.

12.   **Risk Management Implications**

12.1   Key ICT risks are already included in the Corporate Risk Register. A detailed risk assessment and register will be finalised, in line with the timescales around adoption of this ICT Strategy and development of the implementation plan.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Technology 2018 ICT Strategy for Colchester Borough Council 2015-2018 (or follow the pathway www.colchester.gov.uk/Your Council/Committees, Agendas and Minutes/Cabinet/27 January 2016)

Appendix 2 – ICT Strategy Investment Plan (or follow the pathway www.colchester.gov.uk/Your Council/Committees, Agendas and Minutes/Cabinet/27 January 2016)

Background Papers
None.