

## BEST VALUE REVIEW OF ICT & E-GOVERNMENT

- *Is ICT supporting the Council's strategic agenda?*

### 4.1 *Is the Council investing effectively in ICT?*

- **Is the Council's investment in ICT meeting the Council's strategic needs?**
  - **Is the Council's ICT strategy aligned to the business needs of the organisation? Is ICT positively contributing to the achievement of our strategic agenda?**
  - **Is everyone committed to the Council's ICT strategy?**
  - **Can we evidence its implementation?**
  - **Are we considering the corporate, strategic application of current technology e.g. document imaging?**
  - **Are we sufficiently rigorous in the application of corporate standards and procedures or overly prescriptive?**

How we plan to address the questions:

- Appoint consultants to review our current ICT strategies (corporate and departmental).
- Gauge general awareness of the existing strategy across the Council (possibly via an e-mail questionnaire or workshops).
- Review progress against the existing strategies to evidence its implementation and practical value.
- Compare the strategy against current new technologies available; review the suitability of departmental rather than corporate solutions.
- Consider how the corporate standards are implemented; investigate to find any areas where deviation has occurred, and whether there was sufficient justification for it. Re-consider the process for establishing and maintaining the corporate standards. Compare our standards against SOCITM's best practice examples.

Lead officer: Jill Craig

- **How effective are we at implementing ICT change?**
  - **Do we resource planned changes properly?**
  - **Our users don't feel properly involved in planning new systems, why not? What needs to change?**
  - **Are the project roles and responsibilities properly understood?**
  - **Is the training of staff given appropriate priority?**

How we plan to address the questions:

- Set up a task group (also involving Internal Audit)
- Review the existing implementation plans for a major and a minor projects.
- Review project documentation.
- Run a workshop with the users of a recent implementation to obtain their feedback and examine why they didn't feel involved.
- Compare against SOCITM's best practice examples.
- Consult with those involved on their roles and responsibilities.
- Review the commitment to training as a part of the project planning process.
- Make recommendations for improvement.

Lead officer: Ismail Vania

- **Investment priorities**

- **Are our investment priorities determined by corporate need or the availability of departmental funding?**
- **Equality of deployment – are some sections ICT ‘richer’ than others, if so why? What are the implications of any disparities?**

How we plan to address the questions:

- Set up a task group.
- Review the overall budgets for sources of funding for departmental initiatives.
- Review the level of ICT budget and spend within the council's departments.
- Investigate the PC inventory details and IT training records for rich or poor pockets. Consider whether this is determined by the service need or by cash availability. Examine the implications that higher or lower levels of technology and training would have on service provision in these areas.
- Make recommendations for improvement.

Lead officer: Ismail Vania

- **Skills**
  - **Comparison with other Local Authorities suggest that our investment in ICT training is significantly less than the national average. Why is this and what are the implications?**
  - **How effective is our investment in ICT training?**
    - **Does our investment reflect business priorities?**
    - **Is the training received the training needed to do the job?**
    - **Do we apply the most appropriate training methods? What about e-learning?**

How we plan to address the questions:

- Set up a task group (perhaps chaired by someone from Corporate Training).
- Verify the validity of our data for IT training.
- Evaluate and compare IT training budgets across the organisation and how and where they are spent.
- Consult with as large a group of users as possible, particularly those who do not receive IT training.
- Set up workshop/s for managers to discuss what type of training will best meet their future business needs
  - i. Identify audience.
  - ii. Address how to counter the possible response of “we would train if we had the budget”.
- Consult with users who have received training whether:
  - It was appropriate for the needs of their work;
  - They used all, part or none of what they learned;
  - The course content was suitable;
  - It was sufficient, and ask for any recommendations they might make.
- Review the use and effectiveness of ECDL.
- Compare the costs of centrally provided IT training against possible alternative training methods and suppliers.
- Review why our investment in IT training is apparently so much lower than other organisations.
- Assess possible impact and implications for corporate initiatives such as the introduction of e-gov.
- Make recommendations for improvement.

Lead officer: Paul Masters

- **Awareness**

- **We know from user consultation that most staff rely on New Connections and the IT Awareness events to keep users informed of technical developments? Is this sufficient? How could it be improved?**

How we plan to address the questions:

(BV Core Review Group to act as Task Group)

- Consult with other authorities (perhaps our family group) or large private organisations for their experiences.
- Review existing information – e.g. IT Awareness questionnaires.
- Investigate how workshops could usefully be set up to gather feedback.
- Use New Connections to distribute a questionnaire (with a prize draw to encourage returns):
  - How long have you been receiving New Connections?
  - Do you find the information useful?
  - What sort of articles would you like to see in it?
  - Do you pass the copy onto anyone else?
  - Have you ever attended an IT Awareness event? – If no, have you heard of it?
  - How else do you hear of any new developments in IT?
- Make recommendations for improvements.

Lead officer: Paul Masters

#### **4.4 Does the ICT support service represent good value?**

##### ***Cost and quality issues***

- **Comparison with other Local Authorities suggests our unit costs are higher than average? Why is this? How can they be reduced?**
- **Some existing departments are supported entirely by ICT Services; others have their own local, first line technical support arrangements. Which model is most effective?**
- **Is the Council's ICT support service actually meeting the needs of its customers?**

How we plan to address the questions:

(BV Core Review Group to act as task group)

##### ***Cost/value for money***

Jonathon King, Financial Services, has been tasked with reviewing the cost and value of central support services. The exact brief is still to be agreed by SRG, but it is anticipated that Jonathon will lead a task to gather internal information to enable us to consider the most effective model for the delivery of ICT support – central or devolved.

We will work with Jon to determine whether there is value in commissioning further independent consultants to compare our costs against both private and public sector.

We are also actively seeking some partner authorities to work with to evaluate our costs at an application specific level e.g. cost per payslip and cost per Council House etc.

When our costs are better understood and we are confident that the data can show us where our areas of strength and weakness lie we will explore options for improvement including externalisation as necessary.

##### ***Delivering the services our customers need***

- Consult with users to determine whether there is a need to extend the opening hours of the Support Centre. Investigate cost implications and negotiate a way forward via the TAG process.
- Run a series of workshops with users to better understand the issues raised by December's customer consultation exercise.
- Run workshops with ICT support staff to see how we can make improvements to current arrangements.
- Make recommendations for improvement.

Lead officer: Paul Masters