



NORWICH
City Council

ICT strategy

Norwich City Council
transformation through technology

January 2008

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Introduction

This strategy, and the creative use of technology, will continue to be an indispensable part of our programme of modernisation and improvement. It very much supports our corporate aims, and will also enable us to meet government targets for continuing transformation. The delivery of this strategy will therefore contribute significantly to our performance in the provision of services, and to future audit commission assessments of the council.

This strategy is for all staff and managers to improve the council's services, including our partners and the public. It is also intended that service areas will plan their development and implementation within the corporate framework contained in this strategy.

Looking to the next three years, this strategy takes on a wider horizon, with much greater emphasis on interaction with citizens, business, other agencies, and use of ICT in the greater Norwich wider community. Whilst the strategy rightly focuses on supporting the direct provision of services through the city council, it also recognises the importance of wider public service partnerships in the region, and we hope it will be widely shared and used to help improve the provision of public services more generally.

More information

Our website at www.norwich.gov.uk gives everyone a quick and easy way to refer to this strategy, and to see some of the more detailed key information on which it is based. Particularly relevant information is contained in:

- delivering for Norwich – corporate plan 2007-08
- policy and improvement service plan 2007-08
- customer contact strategy
- shared folder policy
- sustainable community strategy
- community engagement strategy
- medium term financial strategy
- Norwich-Dedza partnership – IT recycling policy providing support to Malawi
- directgov – on-line public services information
- implementing electronic government return 2006 (IEG6).

In addition, further information on the transformation government vision can be found at www.cio.gov.uk



Where are we now?

1. National context – transformational government

The government published *Transformational government – enabled by technology* in November 2005. This strategy set out how effective use of technology to deliver services designed around the needs of citizens and businesses can make a real difference to people's lives. It set out a vision for 21st century government, requiring three key transformations:

- “services enabled by IT must be designed around the citizen or business, not the provider, and provided through modern, co-ordinated delivery channels”
- “government must move to a shared services culture – in the front-office, in the back office, in information and in infrastructure – and release efficiencies by standardisation, simplification and sharing”
- “there must be broadening and deepening of government's professionalism in terms of the planning, delivery, management, skills and governance of IT enabled change”.

In December 2006, a further report was published to the Chancellor of the Exchequer on *Service transformation: a better service for citizens and businesses, a better deal for taxpayers*. This report identifies that “the service sector has an increasingly important role in the economy, and public service delivery needs to evolve to meet the emerging challenges. There are opportunities to deliver better public services through joining up service provision across the public sector, and by engaging more directly with users in the design and delivery of services.”

It is the intention that the potential of transformational government is realised through the comprehensive spending review and proposals for expenditure and reform are consistent with the strategy.

Strong and prosperous communities

In October 2006, the government published the *Strong and prosperous communities* white paper. This requires all local authorities to make major changes to the way they work, and to start working more closely with local communities and people, and to work more closely with each other. This will mean we need to review all of our services, and start delivering them more closely with local people.

Efficiency and modernisation

In recent years, all local authorities have been required to deliver three per cent efficiency gains above and beyond their normal business. Norwich City Council has achieved this, and at the same time has managed to make significant investments in new technology and systems to improve customer responsiveness and service delivery.

Unitary status

A single council for Norwich will bring significant benefits for local people and organisations, and also for the wider county and region. We always believed unitary status would be the best way forward for both the city and the county, and we were delighted at the announcement by the secretary of state for communities and local government in July 2007 that we have secured in principal. The boundary committee for England will now carry out a review starting in October 2007, of our existing boundaries with a view to potentially establishing a greater Norwich authority.

All-out elections will follow in May 2009 and the transfer of all services to the new council will take place in April 2010. This will mean a complete review of everything that the council does.

2. Our improvement journey

In 2003, Norwich City Council was judged as a 'fair' council by the independent audit commission, as part of the comprehensive performance assessment (CPA) of all local authorities.

Since then, it has begun a major improvement journey initially built around the innovative Norwich connect partnership with Steria Ltd. This partnership has invested significant monies into new technology, and the streamlining of customer facing services. This has led to major improvements in customer responsiveness, and significant efficiencies in the region of £2.8m per year.

It has provided a platform for a very new approach to change management, led by a new chief executive. Since her arrival in early 2006, the city council has embarked on a new improvement journey, with a revitalised culture epitomised by team working, collaboration and empowering managers to act. The Norwich improvement programme (NIP) was established to drive corporate improvements, and as part of a major review of our overall structure, a policy and improvement unit has been established and has started to work on developing the council's policy framework.

In addition, the city council has also re-organised its management structure to be able to better respond to current service demands, and the anticipated growth and development of the city. The organisational model groups complementary services into three hubs:

- a strategic hub which provides corporate support to drive the whole council forward
- a city hub to provide services which affect the further physical growth and development of the whole city
- a neighbourhood hub which brings together services which are provided at a local level to communities.

3. Norwich connect contract

In April 2002, Norwich City Council embarked on an ambitious ICT programme consisting of a 15 year PFI supported 'Norwich connect' partnership contract with Steria Ltd. The Norwich connect project represents a holistic approach to serving the information and access needs of the community. It also provides the vehicle for continuously improving and increasing the range of access channels.

The main components of the contract are:

- three year business process re-engineering (BPR) – providing a planned, coherent programme of change with expertise in the review and reconstruction of processes, systems and organisational structures to reduce costs and increase efficiency and effectiveness
- new software for customer relationship management (single customer contact and document storage database); workflow management and interactive web transactions. Software upgrades are contracted at latest release minus one
- managed ICT service – including replacement and refreshment of existing equipment, intranet, internet and software systems. The contract also provides for: a remote help desk; on-site desktop and server support; local legacy application support; and development, and infrastructure development
- new voice and data infrastructure – capable of carrying scanned documents and other images.

Continued service delivery

The Norwich connect contract now provides the foundation on which the city council is able to encourage and enable partners in the Norwich area to develop customer or citizen focused innovative use of ICT. Steria Ltd continues to provide support under the contract by:

- implementing agreed projects to make changes in the way in which the council services are delivered (including ICT provision, all aspects of business process re-engineering and project and programme management)
- recommending and, where agreed, provide other advice, innovation and developments – providing a breadth and depth of technical knowledge in the introduction and implementation of ICT technology applications
- working proactively with the authority to meet its changing requirements and, if required, provide additional services to support further developments.



Business process re-engineering (BPR) – building blocks

The initial implementation of major systems and the associated BPR work has now been successfully completed, and underpins the whole ethos and working methodology of the council. Namely:

- single point of contact for customer
- action of majority of enquiries at first point of contact

- central scanning of incoming post
- full visibility of customer information, related enquiries and progression of service delivery – enabling contact teams, back office and management to share information across council service areas
- workflow of key business processes to provide a consistent, standardised, high level service delivery ensuring that all customers are treated equally within a defined framework – with seamless process flow between front and back office functions
- optimisation and standardisation of legacy systems
- joined up services – no longer working in isolation
- full audit trail and history of customer contact to authority – moving towards detailed analysis at a neighbourhood level with standardised reporting tools
- electronically monitor response times to service requests
- electronically track all customer contact with the council
- electronically monitor staff performance
- visibility of ‘hotspots’ for specific service requests across the city to enable effective targeting of resources.

The BPR element of the Norwich connect contract provided for the knowledge transfer of expertise in the review and reconstruction of processes, systems and organisational structures to reduce costs and increase efficiency and effectiveness. Consequently, a service improvement team was successfully established in January 2006 to facilitate Norwich City Council’s continuing programme of improvements. The team works closely with the strategic directors and heads of service to project manage the identification, solution and delivery of improved working methods. BPR tools used include:

- capture end to end process using interactive workshops with staff at all levels

- map current state to highlight any inefficiencies and multiple handoffs
- propose future state with efficiencies and reduced handoffs
- obtain service area sign-up to the future state process
- develop systems, procedures, service standards, policy, and business rules
- identify staff resourcing and skill requirements
- develop workflow scripting and process maps within Comino.

In addition, a corporate systems support team was established in May 2006 to ensure delivery and continual improvement of systems across the council, and to share learning and best practice across all applications (previously these 'super business users' were based in various service areas with no support). The systems support team also manages the day-to-day aspects of the Norwich connect contract, acting as a liaison point between users and partners.

The service improvement team and the systems support team leader meet on a weekly basis to discuss learning and issues identified. Joint working ensures best practice is disseminated either via future process map/script builds, direct liaison with specific service area, or via e-grapevine communication.

Norwich connect governance

- **Work request board** – all work requests must be submitted via the systems support team, and authorised by a head of service. The work request board (consisting of both systems support and Steria representatives), meets regularly to prioritise these requests using the critical business information submitted by the service areas. Any requests that have a corporate implication, or impact other projects already approved, will be escalated to the ICT strategy board.

- **Change control notices** – work requests with a cost implication are converted into change control notices by Steria using a contracted pricing calculation. The service area must then find appropriate funding for this before it can be authorised by the service improvement manager.
- **ICT strategy board** – (Steria business manager, deputy chief executive, head of finance and representatives from the service improvement team), meets regularly to review work requests with a corporate impact, service delivery and improvement opportunities. This board is guided by the service improvement board, and aims to steer a rolling programme of improvement focusing on corporate key priorities, potential financial savings / generation of income, service improvement and legislative changes.
- **Service review** – this is a contractual monthly performance review. Steria provide monthly reports on projects undertaken, customer feedback, service delivery statistics and planned upgrades, and a progress report on active projects identifying risks. This review is attended by the deputy chief executive, the head of procurement, representatives from the service improvement team, and by Steria service managers.
- **Members** – a quarterly performance report is presented to members at executive, and a summary is reported to scrutiny.
- **Contract board** – attended by senior management from both Norwich City Council and Steria, this board discusses contractual implications surrounding organisational changes and any issues escalated from the service review.

4. What have we achieved?

This section of the ICT strategy looks at what we have already achieved and highlights where we still need to do more.

Customer focus

The Customer contact strategy provides a framework for Norwich City Council to manage, improve and develop customer access for the people of Norwich. It sets out where we are now, and the key strengths and weakness around customer access. It also provides a vision for the future, sets out how this can be achieved, and is fundamentally supported by this ICT strategy.

Central people and property database

Norwich City Council's local land and property gazetteer (LLPG) has been populated from several legacy system databases, and cleansed to provide a complete central people and property database. Our workflow system (Comino) is linked to this LLPG and used to maintain information about all properties and contact details. Contacts to the council are therefore recorded in this one database – and details are visible to customer contact teams to facilitate the service they are able to provide.

First point of contact

As part of the Norwich connect contract, and to fully utilise ICT investments, the organisation has been completely restructured to ensure customers receive a seamless service when they contact the council by either telephone or face-to-face. Three customer contact teams have been established:

- revenues and benefits team – established 1 April 2000
- resident services team – established 10 May 2004
- tenant services team – established 21 February 2006.

Through the Norwich connect programme we have been able to improve the experience of our citizens when they contact the council to try and ensure that they are dealt with at their first point of contact. The Comino contact management, workflow software and central document image processing systems mean that employees dealing with citizens enquiries have:

- direct access to computer systems which provide the information they need with a series of prompts and questions to guide the citizens
- ability to book appointments without referring back to professional and technical staff
- ability to take payments
- ability to provide a seamless service by completing a request for a service or by providing the information themselves
- visibility of the progress of a request for a service, or a case.

In addition, processes have been streamlined in the back office in order to make it more efficient when interacting with the front office. Correspondence and work can be moved around the council electronically, and work in progress can be monitored by supervisors and reallocated if needed. Response times to customer are also monitored and managed to ensure all front line enquiries are handled efficiently and effectively.



Shared learning – customer contact performance focus group

The Norwich connect BPR programme established the principal that customer access should be continually improved in terms of point of contact and rationalisation of systems. To facilitate this, the customer contact service team managers meet on a regular basis with the back office service areas, and on monthly basis with the service improvement team to identify, resolve and action customer service related issues. This is a continual learning process, and aims to incorporate best practice across all service areas.

Shared information

Over the last year, the city council has completely restructured its data storage and created a shared folder structure. The new structure uses a file plan based on the *local government classification scheme* (LGCS), a standard produced by the local government group of the record management society. This is designed to ensure that records can be stored logically and consistently, making it easier to file and retrieve information. It also supports local authorities in the areas of data protection, freedom of information and the local government acts by promoting improved record management practices.

During 2006 data from directorate-based folders was migrated into the new council-wide shared folder structure. Access to data in the folders is open where possible to enable cross-corporate working and sharing of information between services. These are managed by the council's information manager in collaboration with Steria, and with the support of a number of folder structure administrators (FSAs) representing each service area. The information manager and the FSAs promote best practice in accordance with the *Shared folder policy*.

Norwich link

Norwich link on our website provides easy access to a number of useful national and local websites. These are arranged in groups' related to particular circumstances that people may encounter from time to time, such as having a health problem, looking for a job, being the victim of a crime, etc. Norwich link was developed, with funding from the governments *Invest to save budget*, by a group of partner organisations.

Participation

Participation and consultation is encouraged with online response and comment forms made available on the web. In support of the *customer contact strategy*, we intend to further develop and enhance the provision of online public consultation, and to enable this wherever appropriate in development of plans and policies.

We also intend developing and promoting the use of on-line discussion forums. Initially these forums have been for special interest groups – such as cycling in Norwich – but wider public participation forums will be developed.



A city hub – strong and prosperous city

Norwich City Council has re-organised its management structure to be able to better respond to current service demands and the anticipated growth and development of the city. The council has a formal commitment to build a successful economic future for Norwich and secure sustainable growth, and the city hub has been created to provide services which affect the further physical growth and development of the whole city.

Land and property

We are currently upgrading all of our spatial data to be held on a centralised application, and are developing a virtual corporate GIS team to manage our datasets and applications, produce these centrally in consultation with business areas, and thus ensure all data is up-to-date and relevant. This map information is being made available to all staff over the intranet, and the intention is to then develop this further to publish interactive, up-to-date map based information to the public.

E-planning

As part of the e-government initiatives, NCC is implementing planning based IT systems to:

- help improve service standards
- improve service delivery
- make determining of planning applications more transparent.

Comino is used by the planning service as a customer contact tool, back office workflow system and as an electronic document management system (EDMS). All planning data is held in the Uniform system, and there is a link between Uniform and Comino to transfer data regularly during the day. All correspondence and documentation can be viewed by staff from Comino, including front line staff who, as a result are better informed when helping customers.

As part of the Uniform system, the modules currently used to help improve the service include; development control, enforcements, appeals and listed buildings.

In 2005 the planning portal was made available via the internet. This enables anyone to:

- obtain information about planning and building regulations
- apply for planning permission on line
- apply for building regulation consent
- find out about developments in the area
- appeal against decisions
- research government policy.

Public access via the internet is also available for anyone wishing to find out the current status of any local planning application, planning enforcement case and planning appeal. Key documentation is available for anyone wishing to view.

Planning services are committed to improving service delivery using e-technology and are currently developing:

- e-consultation, which will improve communications between NCC and consultees
- Iapp, which will enable electronic use of the revised application form to be completed on line and submitted via the planning portal
- improved spatially mapped data using GIS and expanding it to areas currently not making use of this information.



A neighbourhood hub – safe and healthy neighbourhoods

The city council has a formal commitment to ‘make Norwich safe and secure, building strong and proud local communities’, and the neighbourhood hub has been created to bring together services which are provided at a local level to communities.

Housing landlord services team – mobile citrix access

This service has now been structured to provide neighbourhood housing officers focused on individual areas of the city:

- **housing surgeries** – 16 locations across the city have been set up as surgeries where neighbourhood officers can meet with the public and have direct access into council systems using citrix technology
- **mobile working** – this has been implemented to enable neighbourhood housing officers to perform their duties from any location in the city. With the use of citrix technology, officers can access the workflow and housing systems from the privacy of a tenant’s home to facilitate the completion of application/enquiries etc.

This mobile working opportunity has been extended to the options team, housing arrears team and the benefits recovery team.

Housing property services team – integrated asset management system

This team has been strengthened to make sure we can deliver our programmes to improve the condition of council housing. An asset management module of the housing system has been procured to facilitate the planning and inspections of repair schedules.

Virtual teams – 24 hour anti social behaviour hotline

Virtual teams have been created comprising police officers and police community support officers, neighbourhood housing officers, and community liaison officers to deliver improved services to neighbourhoods. Information from the public is captured on a 24 hour hotline at first point of call and any necessary actions taken immediately. The council have the ability to electronically track all contact with the public, and information can be passed seamlessly from one service to another within the authority enabling officers to build up accurate case histories. Through the use of technology the authority has the ability to easily identify anti-social behaviour (ASB) hotspots and this information is shared with other agencies including the police.

Project nomad – street scene

The innovative street scene project, successfully developed by Norwich as a national ‘proof of concept’ nomad project, enables parking attendants to synchronise their hand-held devices with the council’s parking computer system wirelessly from anywhere in the city.

The solution provides a messaging system, which can be used to inform attendants of any issues as they arise during the day, so that there is no need for daily briefing.

Hand-held devices (PDAs) are used with all the functionality required for parking enforcement, including a digital camera and a link to a portable thermal image printer for production of the penalty charge notice. These devices are supported by the parking computer system. The hand-held device can then be linked by a bluetooth short-range wireless protocol to the attendant’s mobile phone and then via a GPRS link to the council’s parking computer system.

Neighbourhood wardens

Similarly, the neighbourhood wardens use PDA style hand-held computers that enable them to capture data and report environmental problems such as litter, abandoned vehicles and fly tipping using an e-form interface. The e-forms are easy to use with the PDA's touch-screen and stylus. The PDAs connect wirelessly to the council's workflow system via a GPRS link over the mobile phone communication network, and enables a fast response from the back-office environmental teams.

Performance reporting

With so much information captured on the council's workflow system, workloads, response times and status reports can be produced for a wide range of performance management requirements. Managers can review workloads on a real time basis by directly accessing their staff work trays, or by running 'crystal' reports to capture details of the enquiry recorded in the workflow scripts, current active processes, time taken between processes and staff involved with the service. Reports have also been developed to map hotspots of service enquires within the city, capturing information such as abandoned vehicles, fly tipping and needle drops.

This powerful tool is already been used by both members and senior officers, and has huge potential to be further harnessed.

Norfolk partnership

Norwich City Council, and the other seven authorities in the region, has all made significant investments in a range of electronic technologies to improve access to services for customers and deliver the necessary efficiency savings within each organisation.

The norfolk connect partnership aims to bring together all of the authorities to:

- share information, knowledge and experience on their efforts to implement e-government
- agree joint projects that offer mutual benefits and opportunities for better joining up customer services
- prepare joint bids for funding
- create a forum in which the authorities can work to ensure that wherever feasible and sensible the 'customer experience' in norfolk is convenient, reliable, equitable, personalised, efficient and effective and delivered through access channels that offer the customer maximum choice and flexibility.

There has been strong commitment and effort to develop collaborative working on electronic government and customer access programmes across the councils to enable a coherent approach across norfolk. This has been achieved through sharing learning and skills between councils, and joint working on public involvement and consideration of central government initiatives such as *Local direct gov*. Sharing of skills and expertise has also promoted increased progress on some e-gov and customer access projects.

Examples of successfully completed projects include:

- the norfolk portal is the joint search engine that allows the public (and staff over the phone or in face-to-face access points) to find the information they are looking for from any norfolk public sector site quickly and easily
- a package of e-forms – for councils to develop online forms and transactions
- metadata – a common schema for metadata on web pages to improve quality and consistency of web based information

- a joint a-z of services and shared, up-to-date lists of FAQs and agreed pages of services. This enables customers to find information about their service enquiry speedily and efficiently whichever council site they happen to access. It also helps agents working in contact centres and face-to-face access points do likewise.

Training

This is a key part of any successful ICT strategy. Each service area has a fully trained and supported IT champion and we will continue to work towards providing generic workflow training for all new starters as part of their induction process.

The establishment of systems support team has provided an opportunity to identify and implement IT best practise across the authority. Recently, outlook best practice training was provided to all staff, and the opportunity was taken to raise the profile of the *self learning opportunities* available on iSite. In addition, tips and tricks are circulated weekly via our staff electronic newsletter.

Security

ICT is now an integral part of our working lives, and staff are guided by the Norwich City Council's *Code of practice for use of computers and telephones*. The city council also has an information security policy which derives and defines the information management security policy for Norwich connect, in line with BS7799.

Recycling it equipment

Norwich City Council works with the Norwich-Dedza partnership to recycle IT equipment. It has donated redundant PCs and printers, and in partnership with Steria, has sent out staff to Dedza to carry out installation and training.



Where do we want to be?

1. Transformation government vision and objectives

Our vision is of a city council that works closely with partners in the public, private and voluntary sectors to provide services as seamlessly, accessibly, efficiently and effectively as possible. Local people, businesses, and visitors will know how to access services, and will be able to deal with us where and when it is most convenient for them to do so.

As new ways of accessing services and information become more popular, they will be integrated into front line delivery of all services, including the voluntary sector. Electronic services will increasingly be tailored for the individual – not just for the service or for specific groups in the community. Over the next few years, by collaborating with others in harnessing the transformation government agenda, we will be able to significantly improve the quality of life, economic prosperity and the environment.

Our strategy is to make a positive change through transformational government, to all public services in greater Norwich. We will continue to make services for business, citizens and visitors:

- **more 'joined up'** – by linking services across organisations in the region, through improved communications, shared information systems, access points and delivery methods. This includes delivering services jointly with central and local government agencies and departments, and the voluntary sector in particular

- **more accessible** – from home, libraries, community centres – indeed anywhere for the convenience of the public rather than from council offices at the end of a queue. Equal access for all and social inclusiveness are key. Services will be available at times and in ways which suit the public – not constrained by normal office hours or specific technology to access the service (access channels)
- **delivered or supported electronically** – creating more responsive, better value and faster services and information access, for example, through joint contact centres and web sites, and simplifying access to services for "life episodes" such as changing school, setting up a business, or moving home. Seamless delivery and the removal of unnecessary bureaucracy are key aims
- **open and accountable** – providing more information about plans, priorities and performance, encouraging public consultation and supporting councillors in keeping in touch with the people they represent
- **used by 'e-citizens'** – we need to support and encourage members of the public to adopt electronic services where appropriate, especially where this reduces transaction costs and allows us to focus scarce resources on those in our communities who need it most. Though it is hard to know what the public will expect from electronic public services in the future, and we recognise that not everyone will want or be able to access services electronically, careful design and continuing consultation will help avoid costly investment mistakes.

With this vision in mind the strategy has four key objectives:

- to set out those key corporate actions and developments that will enable the city council to meet its target(s) and realise its vision
- to exploit the emerging technologies and key developments to achieve best value
- to outline the resources available over the life of the strategy
- to create a framework that staff and managers can relate to, influence and plan within for local and service area development.

This strategy vision sits alongside the strategic mission of Norwich connect, and it remains essential that adequate and relevant training and support is given to staff.

2. Vision and priorities for Norwich City Council 2007-2010

The city of Norwich partnership (CONP), the statutory local strategic partnership which co-ordinates the local area agreement priorities, has published a *Sustainable community strategy for Norwich* which sets out a shared vision for the whole city and a set of priority themes which all the partners will seek to deliver. In this way, all the organisations in the city are working in a co-ordinated way to tackle the major issues facing the city.

The (proposed) CoNP vision and priorities provide an umbrella strategy for the whole city, and Norwich City Council has the leading role. Our council vision and priorities are therefore specifically designed to ensure we play an active part in delivering the future success of the city, and the health and well-being of local people.

The vision for the medium term

Strong and prosperous city, safe and healthy neighbourhoods, and opportunity for all.

This vision has been turned into Norwich City Council strategic and cross-cutting objectives for 2007-2010:

- provide strong and ambitious leadership to make the city proud of its council
- build a successful economic future for Norwich, securing sustainable growth
- make Norwich safe and secure, building strong and proud local communities
- ensure the city has a clean and healthy environment
- develop the delivery of our services on a neighbourhood basis.

Principles governing the way we will work

As well as being clear about our priorities, Norwich City Council has also agreed a set of principles which will guide the way everyone at the council will work, and setting the standards that our service users and partners can expect when they come into contact with us.

Our guiding principles are:

- **customer care** – we will treat our customers as we would like to be treated ourselves. We will be as open and helpful as possible. We will treat our staff with courtesy, dignity and respect
- **first time, every time** – we will take the time to get it right first time, and avoid time-consuming repeat calls or call backs. Where we get it wrong, we will apologise and make sure it doesn't happen again

- **quality results and quality decisions** – we will improve our services and not tolerate poor service. We will learn from our mistakes, borrow good practice from others, and take responsibility for improvement
- **visible actions** – we will tell people what we are doing and why, when something will happen and when it will not. Information will be made available when people need it, and in a way that they understand, so that they have the time to raise concerns
- **doing with, not doing to** – the council exists to serve the city, our communities and our people. We will work with people to shape our services and we will work with our partners to make the most of our city
- **be proud** – we will lead the way in making Norwich a world class city. We will speak up for Norwich as a city and as a council, celebrating our successes and recognizing our achievements.

Shared services

Services are also to be improved by the sharing of information within and between councils and other organisations (subject to essential safeguards and protocols). Our strategy, in conjunction with our *Community engagement strategy*, is to:

- encourage and participate in collaborative working, such as choice based lettings
- share in ICT developments and applications with other public service organisations, wherever it is appropriate and cost-effective to do so.

3. Finances

The *Medium term financial strategy* provides a financial framework to support the achievement of the council’s strategic objectives, to facilitate a link between the financial requirements of the council’s key resource strategies. It is a strategic framework and provides the financial structure for annual service planning and budget setting. All ICT strategic decisions must therefore be taken with this financial framework in mind.

The financial strategy recognises that the council operates in an environment where it can set its overall priorities and objectives, but these can be impacted on by a broad range of external factors outside the control of the council that may limit or influence those priorities and objectives.



How will we get there?

This part of the strategy looks at how we will transform services, the action we propose to take as a city council, and some of the key developments that will support this process.

1. Leadership and management

Elected members are responsible for setting the overall priorities of the council. The executive committee will take the leading role in determining the overall strategy for the city council, and in setting priorities and in shaping policy and service delivery.

The strategic management framework is the basis on which the council will fulfil its role as community leader and provide services throughout the coming years. This strategy has been developed from that framework, and provides a framework for staff and managers.

Councillor Alan Waters is our member e-champion. Our corporate e-champion is Bridget Buttinger, who chairs the council's ICT strategy board on behalf of the corporate management team (CMT). CMT will review the strategy every six months to ensure that the programme plan is delivered and our objectives and targets remain relevant and valid.

Councillors

All our members have web access to email, and a web site specifically set up for their use. Relevant information including meetings, committee agendas and minutes, and key contact information is published on this site, along with a weekly news bulletin updating members on key issues. The ability to access both emails and this website from anywhere with an internet connection has enabled members to work with the flexibility they require.

However, a recent workshop with members has identified required improvements to facilitate their role in the community, and these are due to be implemented by the end of December 2007. The strategy is first and foremost to capitalise on the facilities available, particularly as a means of increased engagement with the public, and to make it easier for members to find the information they need. At the same time, members will be moving to more flexible ways of working, using on-line calendars of meetings and developing their web site usage.

In addition, a councillor enquiry process has also been developed using the council's workflow system. All relevant information is attached to the process enabling officers to respond in an informed and efficient manner. Enquiries are tracked in a weekly report to chief officers, and a response standard of five days has been established.

Service planning process

Service plans identify the key priorities for moving the service forward, and how these can be supported by ICT. Choices about scarce resources and how the council can harness the ICT capacity will be identified by each head of service and then subjected to rigorous challenge. Ultimately, departmental management teams will establish their priorities, and corporate management team will propose an appropriate growth bid to support the ICT action plan agreed.

2. Norwich connect – building blocks

The BPR principals of Norwich connect now form a firm foundation for future ICT developments within the city council:

- single point of customer contact
- full visibility of customer information and service delivery
- workflow of key business processes
- full audit trail
- joined-up working.

In addition, the contract provides a spring board for continued service delivery and improvement:

Managed service – staff feedback and service improvements

We are working with Steria to constantly improve their service provision. Steria employ a service improvement officer who reviews staff feedback, and works to improve the service offered by the help desk and on-site teams. Focus groups have already been run at the remote office sites to promote the services offered and to gather staff feedback. These were held in conjunction with the Steria service delivery manager and the Norwich City Council systems support team leaders.

Further work is intended to promote the function and support provided by the Norwich City Council and Steria teams.

Infrastructure refresh

The Norwich connect contract includes an infrastructure refresh on a four-five-year cycle. This will be tailored to fit the corporate vision and priorities.

- **Voice and data network** – to provide flexibility, particularly in terms of office location, management of customer contact and business continuity.

- **Servers** – virtualisation, hardware compatibility for new systems, scope for growth in the current environment, centralised back up solution and shared storage facilities.
- **Exchange upgrade and ISA implementation** – improved security layer and flexibility for internet usage, including partnership access.

Software upgrades

This is an on-going cycle providing the city council with the latest release minus one. Steria are committed to increasing the visibility of the release schedule and working with the authority to future proof against priorities for business development such as flexible working, web enabled and self service enablers.

We will continue to work towards optimising the use of upgraded hardware and software, and implement additional software to meet service area requirements.

Data and information management

The centralised people and property database, shared folder structure, corporate GIS, intranet and internet underpin the city council's data and information. A *Knowledge strategy* is currently being developed to optimise the data sharing functionality currently available, and further improve access to information.

This will include a:

- review of the intranet data storage framework
- web based library for photos
- contact database strategy.

Public access – promoting economic vitality

To help the public access information, we believe the most important element of our transformation government strategy is the web. Our strategy is to further develop and promote this city council window to advertise the city's activities and benefits to the wider world. A number of successes already exist in this area, and these will be built upon. A good example is the Norwich link site, which provides a rich source of information about the city – and other web based services such as the planning portal and e-payment linking the public electronically to city council services.

A new communications team is also now in place to more effectively promote the council's activities, not just externally but to its own best advocates – its staff.

A refresh to the Norwich City Council website and intranet is due in the Norwich connect contract, and the service improvement team is working with Steria and the communication team to identify a future proof solution that will give the council the most versatile option to promote its services.

Contractual development

The Norwich connect contract includes 1000 development days per annum. These can be used for software development and to improve the efficiency of underlying processes.

This is a vitally important area. Improving customer access to services, and increasing and sharing the information available to the public, will not of itself improve service quality. The transformation of services can only happen if there is also transformation and continuous improvement of the supporting back-office systems.

3. Skills

The availability of reliable quality ICT facilities is now crucial to the delivery of services, and essential to transformational government and the modernisation of those services. But the facilities are of little value unless everyone knows how to use them, and how to get the most out of them. Our strategy is therefore to build on the easy access learning materials provided through the continued development and support of a corporate self help site with training notes and tips and tricks on iSite.

We also recognise that specialist technical skills are key to the development and support of ICT facilities. We believe these skills need to be closely coupled with business knowledge and aligned with the objectives and values of the organisation, and that scarce skills should not be diluted or fragmented more than necessary. Our strategy is therefore for all its training requirements to be coordinated through the system support team.

4. The performance management and improvement board

This board meets on a monthly basis, and consists of a core membership which includes the chief officer and key senior management. The purpose of this board is to put together and drive a comprehensive improvement programme consisting of separate improvement plans, both corporate and service based, and then to ensure their delivery. The focus will initially be on improvements to corporate systems and will monitor the development and delivery of a suite of improvement plans.

Tasks include:

- identifying improvement plans already in place
- benchmarking the council's performance in terms of CPA, idea model council, service performance, cost and customer satisfaction

- agreeing further areas for inclusion in the programme
- developing the aiming for excellence programme (building on the work of Norwich improvement programme (NIP) phase one)
- monitoring and reviewing progress.

The strategic framework will act as an overall guide.

In addition, champions in each of the service areas have been identified to replace the previous NIP teams. These champions will focus on

- performance
- customer
- communication and consultation
- diversity
- systems.

Finances

Our transformation government strategy has significant resource implications. As a means of ensuring best value and cost effectiveness in the use of resources, it is our strategy that:

- **contractual costs** – Norwich connect will be financed as specified in the finance schedule of the contract. This budget is to be monitored by the service improvement manager
- **new/additional software** – a contract change schedule within the Norwich connect contract identifies the pricing structures for the acquisition of new/additional software and increased maintenance requirements. These costs will be identified as part of the service planning process, and included as part of a growth bid when making the business case for additional functionality.

5. Action plan

Our strategy involves significant development over the next three years, including upgrades to many of our core business systems and processes. The planned upgrade path developed with Steria is published on the intranet.

Enhanced telephony payment services

Investigate the option of implementing the ITS (Paris) automated telephony payment module to integrate with the existing cash solution.

Financial information and management

Full upgrade has recently been completed and the implementation of the procurement module is well underway. E-procurement functions through simplified electronic purchasing from approved supplier catalogues is already utilised, but will be further developed.

Human resources

Employee self-service for review and updating of personal details is already in place, and a service improvement review is underway to expand the recruitment management functions and full supporting facilities for internet-based recruitment advertising and applications.

Neighbourhood services

Investigate the potential (through SharePoint functionality), of enabling neighbourhood groups to have their own web pages and discussion forums, as used in e-councillor services. Pilot within a single neighbourhood on completion of the revised councillor solution.

Public access terminal

Install a public access terminal within a secure entrance to a housing block with broadband connectivity and access to Norwich.gov.uk, Norwichlink.com and SharePoint services. Review as an option to work with CBL.

Contact centre

Currently symposium express in use, with some limitations on functionality to meet the changing requirements. Build on gap analysis carried out by BT, and investigate upgrade to more flexible customer contact system. In addition, pilot 0845 number functionality to research potential of improving queuing times.

Home working

Pilot home working for one of the premises managers to provide the ability to report on issues and provide information to residents. In addition, agree home worker policy and scope for development.

Revenues and benefits

Investigate the use of the gandlake citizens account service to ensure secure access through logon and password management.

Mobile working – environmental health and licensing

Utilise Uniform module to enable the opportunity to share these services, or develop a database for extracted data accessible by mobile device.

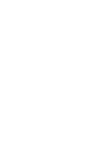
Cost effective access for mobile services

Group agreements together to enable shared free data quota, obtain dedicated link line, and enable diverted internal extension and free mobile to office calls. Continue to standardise for maximum return on investment.

Associated developments

- Business continuity and emergency planning in support of changing customer and business requirements.
- Extension of current support hours.
- Radio and laser links for data transfer.





Norwich City Council – transformation through technology



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