



**REPORT TO: EDUCATION, COMMUNITIES AND ORGANISATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE 18 NOVEMBER 2020**

SUBJECT: ICT STRATEGY AND PLAN 2020-23

**BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (EDUCATION, COMMUNITIES AND
ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT)**

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of the progress made against the ICT strategy and plan and to consider the refreshed ICT strategy and plan for the period 2020-2023.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to the Education, Communities and Organisational Development Committee following a decision of Moray Council on 17 June 2020 to agree a simplified committee structure as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the case of this committee the combining of the delegated responsibilities of Children and Young People Services, Governance, Strategy and Performance, (para 9 of the minute refers).

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) consider and note the progress made against the 2019 ICT plan;**
- (ii) note the impact of COVID-19 on the programme delivery; and**
- (iii) approve the refreshed ICT strategy that prioritises activity for 2020-2022.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council's ICT Strategy and plan respond to the priorities of the Council and set out the work required to support and achieve those priorities.
- 3.2 The ICT Strategy aims to ensure that efficient and effective technology enables services to meet current and future service requirements in delivering the Council's priorities. The annual ICT plan is developed to set out how the business needs of services are met and to ensure that the council's ICT

systems and infrastructure are properly maintained in order to be fit for purpose both now and in the future.

- 3.3 The Strategy supports the Council to continue to seek efficiencies in both the delivery of services and the opportunities for improvement and modernisation through transformation with a strong customer focus.

4. PROGRESS ON 2019 ICT PLAN

- 4.1 While progress continued to be made on the actions required between the last progress report in October 2019 and March 2020, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic impacted significantly on the ICT section, both with regard to enabling homeworking for large numbers of the workforce and in supporting the provision of services remotely and digitally. This entailed scaling up the capacity for remote working at pace in terms of both the provision of homeworking equipment and the infrastructure to support increased numbers of remote access to the Council's network. Despite this, progress on the 2019 plan included completion of the next stage of the schools infrastructure roll out, completion of the majority of the Microsoft Windows 10 upgrade, Microsoft Agreement renewal and good progress on a range of infrastructure work such as Firewall hardware and software upgrades, corporate storage, corporate and education Local Area Network upgrades, support for schools new builds and ELC project. Secure access to interchange from outside the council's network and development and testing of externally accessible phone book, new dashboards to provide visual representation of management information, compliance with accessibility standards have also all progressed well.
- 4.2 While some progress has been maintained, the impact of responding to the requirements arising from the pandemic has had a consequent impact on several areas of planned development work. These include shared access to systems for integrated health and social care, review of ICT security policy and business continuity arrangements, investigation into 'cloud' services, potential for 'Internet of Things', use of Artificial Intelligence and Chatbot technology. These are carried forward for inclusion in the 2020 action plan.

5. 2020-2023 ICT STRATEGY AND PLAN

- 5.1 As noted above, in March 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic overtook normal business. The ICT teams have continued to work at full capacity, albeit with two thirds of the teams working remotely, throughout the lockdown. However much of the work continues to be dominated by the requirement to respond to the impact of the pandemic and this is reflected in the action plan. This is in the form of the implementation of Microsoft Teams as part of Office 365 to provide a seamless integrated video-conferencing and collaborative facility, eForms as requested by services and support for the increased laptop estate and review and reconfiguration of the desktop estate to support and enable the different technological profile of the remote workforce. Additionally the backlog of work carried forward is included in the action plan. These are noted in the attached ICT Strategy (**Appendix A**) and ICT Action Plan (**Appendix B**).

6. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))

The contents of this report are in accordance with the priorities set out in the Corporate Plan and set out how we will make best use of our technological resources to support the Council to meet current and future challenges.

(b) Policy and Legal

None.

(c) Financial implications

There are no immediate financial implications. However, the increase in ICT devices and infrastructure as a result of remote working during the covid pandemic will require to be maintained and replaced, therefore, in the medium term consideration of a rolling programme of maintenance will be required, which will have to be accommodated in the council's financial planning.

(d) Risk Implications

The ICT strategy and plan are based on assessment of the issues and risks anticipated in relation to the council's technological requirements and identify actions to address these. The actions in the ICT plan have been prioritised and if necessary activity will be reduced or ceased on those actions ranked lowest. Given the focus on transformation through responding to the Best Value Audit Report, COVID-19, budget related changes, modernisation and improvement it will be challenging for the ICT service to deliver on all of the work identified and so there is a risk of slippage that could have an impact on services. Any issues and proposed remediation will be identified for consideration CMT-SMT.

It is of note that the number of mobile devices in use across the council has increased to 1200 – 140% increase over the course of the pandemic which will require additional ICT support on an ongoing basis. There are far more employees working at home without ready recourse to colleagues who might assist them with routine ICT queries. Therefore, the ICT service desk team are experiencing a significant increase in demand which could impact on performance.

(e) Staffing Implications

There are no staffing implications arising from this report. However, it will be challenging for the ICT service to deliver the actions in the ICT plan and this will be monitored carefully.

As the Council continues to respond to the pandemic, seeks to transform and modernise and prepares its financial plans, it is likely that specific technological issues will emerge. Account will be taken of the whole council strategic management of these technological issues as they emerge by involving the ICT team in the planning of the required changes.

(f) Property

None.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

The ICT team continually monitor accessibility standards ensuring the internal and external websites are compliant. In addition to this, the team have been fundamental in terms of supporting the distribution of ICT homeworking technology to school pupils as part of the Connected Scotland initiative.

(h) Consultations

CMT-SMT have been consulted on the draft documents and their views are incorporated into the proposals. This report has also been circulated to Tracey Sutherland, Committee Services Officer and her comments are included within the body of the report.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The ICT section has enabled efficient and effective service delivery and transformation with a particular focus on facilitating mobile and remote working for large numbers of the workforce. Responding to the pandemic has accelerated progress in some areas and the strategy and plan seek to ensure the gains made are built upon and developed further.

5.2 The Committee is asked to consider and approve the refreshed ICT Strategy (2020-23) and supporting action plan which is reviewed annually in consultation with services.

Author of Report: Frances Garrow, Head of HR, ICT &OD
Background Papers:
Ref: