

Information Strategy 2011 – 14

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The Council's vision for Information Management is a dynamic, responsive, efficient organisation where technology is harnessed to make information accessible and effectively managed as a strategic resource to aid effective decision making, improve the customer experience, and underpinning every part of the Council's activities. The ICT Service aspire to be the leading technology service provider exceeding customer expectations by proactively working with stakeholders to deliver business objectives.

The Information Strategy

Effective technology underpins everything that the Council does and has the potential to improve the use of our key asset — information. But to achieve this, we must use technology and information as a strategic tool.

It is imperative that the Information Strategy aligns with the Council's business goals, whether this is through supporting our ways of working, managing information or as a mechanism for keeping people informed. The Information Strategy is the vehicle for setting out that alignment of priorities and objectives, and emphasises that ICT is

not just about infrastructure, and that the IT function is no longer merely responsible for 'keeping the lights on'. This is more than just acknowledging that the role of IT has changed, it is about a shared vision and vocabulary about goals, processes and use of information that enables effective communication to ensure that quality of service, value for money, and the Council's objectives are effectively delivered. To achieve this, it is also necessary to adopt a more outcome-based approach to service delivery, to clearly demonstrate the value that investment in technology adds to the Council. This strategy must be relevant to all our



customers. A successful Strategy is fundamental to delivering the aims and aspirations of the Council. Maidstone has taken forward initiatives on smarter working, improving efficiency, improving access to information through ICT developments in recent years. This plan sets out our aspirations for the next three years which will be part of a significant overall change programme for the Council.

The Information Strategy Process

The Information Strategy itself is a process, and not merely a document. The Information Strategy, formerly the ICT Strategy, is now published to align with the Service Planning process to ensure that the alignment with business objectives described above is achieved. This is reinforced by quarterly meetings with Assistant Directors and Heads of Service to continuously review the performance of the IT Section, and feeds business plan aims and objectives into

the strategy. For the Information Strategy to be successful it must anticipate the medium term and the future long term needs of the organisation and influence the ways in which it achieves its objectives and priorities. This means engaging with members, officers, partners and with our customers. In the current economic climate, this also means managing our customers' expectations relating to current and future services.

The strategy sets out the way in which the potential through technology will be exploited over the coming years.

This is a strategic document, and as such it does not set out a detailed action plan or program of work. The Corporate Information Management Board is responsible for managing that function, as identified in the governance arrangements for Information Management detailed below.



Our commitment to our customers

The information strategy is a fundamental part of the Council's strategic planning, and as such it is critical that it aligns with our customers' business requirements. For that reason this strategy introduces a series of commitments:

1. We will help you use information and technology to improve the way in which you conduct your business and deliver your service;
2. We will introduce means of allowing you to perform your role without being tied to your desk;
3. We will support and enable your efforts to work in partnership with other organizations;
4. We will improve your control of, access to, and utilization of your IT assets;

5. We will enable and encourage your customers to migrate to other access channels to enable you to streamline your business;
6. We will ensure that the technology you use is resilient, fit for purpose, and replaced as and when required;
7. We will make sure that our staff have the right skills and knowledge to deliver the service, and learn from best practice elsewhere ;
8. We will, where possible, reduce the Council's carbon footprint through the way we procure, use and dispose of technology.

"The Council will have a productive workforce with people in the right place at the right time, delivering cost effective services. Services will be affordable, delivered on time and to an agreed standards in an accessible way" – Strategic Plan 2011 -15

"The quality and cost of our public services depend upon the decisions that many, many people make. The public, professionals, managers and politicians all make decisions that affect public services. If they could all make better use of information about those services in decision making, the services themselves would improve."

*Audit Commission
"In the know" Feb
2008*

Where are we now ?

Maidstone has traditionally invested in technology to support its business aims and priorities. Initiatives on smarter working, improving efficiency, and improving access to information through ICT developments in recent years have continued this trend.

The Council has also been opportunistic, for example by using the office move in 2008 as an chance to introduce a step-change in technical capability.

The Council is therefore well-prepared for the future, as it has in place a solid foundation on which to build future capability.

Over the term of this strategy the Council faces a number of key information and technology challenges:

- The 2010 Spending Review has placed considerable budgetary pressure on Councils over

the next 4 years;

- Public expectation and greater take-up of web-based services;
- Partnership working and shared services;
- Exponential increase in information processed through business transactions;
- Costs of collection, analysis, storage, and recovery of information;
- Legislative and regulatory frameworks imposing increasing compliance requirements;
- The pressure to maintain the delivery of statutory and discretionary services, but at a lower cost;
- Balancing National agenda against local context;
- Making sure we have the right skills to leverage the maximum value from our investment in technology.

Where do we want to be ?

The Council now requires a further step-change in capability. This time the challenge is not so much to introduce new technology, but to leverage maximum benefit from the technologies already in place. Further investment will be required, but it will be targeted on areas where efficiency gains and savings can be realised. The Information Strategy must be clearly focused on outcomes, and linked to the themes outlined in this strategy.

The Council needs to be a lean, dynamic, responsive, efficient organisation where technology is harnessed to make information accessible and effectively managed as a strategic resource. Officers must have the right information on which to base decisions; Customers must be able to transact with the Council

whenever and wherever they choose to; services must be designed around the Customer; services must be cost-effective, delivered on time, to agreed standards, in an accessible way.

The themes of this Strategy create the framework in which to deliver that vision. Effective use of information creates a learning organisation, one where information is valued and shared. This in turn creates an environment where *knowledge management* can thrive, i.e. the organisation's ability to capture the tacit knowledge surrounding business processes and decisions, renders it into explicit knowledge, which can be fed back into the organisation.

Our stakeholders

What we did:

The Council now has 350 officers and Members who are able to log in remotely, and during the recent bad weather we had 132 concurrent users logged in from home.

What we did:

We won the Reach the Summit 'Team of the Year' award for consistent performance.

What we did:

We introduced a Councillor healthcheck service to ensure our members get the most out of their IT equipment.

What we did:

Since 2008 – 9 the IT Section has saved over £100,000 from the budget spent on software maintenance.

What we did:

We implemented changes to the Council's online payments system to allow more online payments 24 x 7, and less calls to the contact centre

It is important in order to deliver this strategy that we are able to identify and manage the expectations of our key stakeholders:

- The public;
- Staff;
- Management;
- Councillors;
- Our partners;
- Central government.

In order to effectively engage with stakeholders, we must be able to identify their requirements:

- What information they need;
- How they want to access it;
- What they want to do with it;
- Assurances as to the accuracy and security of

the information;

- Skills to process the information effectively;
- Whether the information can be shared and with whom;
- How and where we publish the information.



Governance

The Head of ICT Services reports directly to the Director of Change Planning and the Environment, and Information Management is in the portfolio of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services.

The Head of ICT is responsible for a number of centralised corporate budgets (see Finance section below). Allocation of funding from these budgets is delegated to the Corporate Information Management Board (CIMB). The CIMB is responsible for agreeing the program of work, for the allocation of resources, for the sign-off of business cases, and for conducting project reviews. Business Managers may also bid against these budgets for funding subject to a satisfactory business case being presented, and details of the project being included in their Service Plan.

The CIMB membership consists of representative from all sections of the Council, the board comprises:

- The Director of Change Planning and the Environment (Chair);
- The Assistant Director of Environmental and regulatory Services;
- The Assistant Regeneration and Cultural Services;
- The Head of Finance and Customer Services;
- The Head of Business Improvement; and
- The Head of ICT Services.

The imminent corporate restructure will impact on the membership and terms of reference of this group, which will be reviewed accordingly.

Issues around compliance to relevant legislation are dealt with by the Information Compliance Group, which report into the CIMB, and is chaired by the Head of ICT.



The National context

The local e-government program has undergone a series of evolutions over the years:

- The Implementing electronic government agenda evolved into the transformation agenda – t-government – and central funding was withdrawn in favour of local efficiency savings;
- The Varney & Gershon reports have identified themes around transformation, and highlighted citizen-centric business processes, more engagement with the Community, efficiency, and Partnership working as key areas for improvement;
- In 2007 the Government's comprehensive spending review continued to apply pressure to revenue budgets with a minimum of 3% value for money savings per year across local and central government. The application of technology as part of business transformation and procurement initiatives will be crucial to unlocking these savings as subsequent spending reviews will continue the same trend. The current 'credit crunch' puts additional financial pressure on both customer and government alike. In these difficult times it is more important than ever that technology is used efficiently to improve processes, enable channel migration to make greater use of the web and contact centre transactions, and use information systems to enable officers to take full advantage of the Council's information assets and knowledge estate.
- In July 2008 the Communities in Control report told the story of power, influence and control and how people can use existing and new tools to access it. The paper looks at who has power, on whose behalf is it exercised, how is it held to account, and how can it be accessed by local communities;
- Kent is a pilot for the Total Place initiative which looks at how a 'whole area' approach to public services can lead to better services at less cost. It seeks to identify and avoid overlap and duplication between organisations – delivering a step change in both service improvement and efficiency at the local level, as well as across Whitehall. Clearly technology has a role to play in this agenda;
- Customer Insight is increasingly rising up local government priorities, and can be seen as the latest incarnation of 'Customer-Centricity'. In practical terms it entails the use of data about customers to better

In February 2010 the cabinet Office published

the UK ICT Strategy. Supports the existing core public sector goals:

- Improving public service delivery;
- Improving access to public service;
- Increasing the efficiency of public service delivery.

The strategy identifies 3 themes, divided into 14 strands which will help deliver these pan-government objectives:

- Common infrastructure;
- Common capability;
- Common standards.

The Council's Information Strategy needs to be viewed and delivered within the context of these national themes and 14 strands:

- The Public Sector Network
- The Government Cloud (G-Cloud)
- Data Centres
- Government Applications Store (G-AS)
- Shared Services
- Desktop Services
- Architecture and Standards
- Open Source, Open Standards, Reuse
- Greening Government ICT
- Information Security & Assurance
- Professionalising IT enabled change
- Reliable Project Delivery
 - Supply Management
 - International alignment.

The Spending Review 2010 by the new government has introduced huge cuts to all local authorities' budgets. It is crucial that the Council wrings every possible benefit from the use of technology as a strategic tool in order to meet this challenge. The Information Strategy is therefore a key document that ensures that technology underpins the Council's priorities and core themes, supports and enables the Council's efficiency and transformation agenda, and provides a framework for the corporate control and management of its resources.

In March 2011 the Government ICT Strategy was published by the cabinet office (building on the previous UK ICT Strategy) which promised a radical overhaul of public sector use of ICT. The strategy acknowledges the contribution ICT must make to public sector reform, and seeks to enable the creation of a common infrastructure underpinned by a set of common standards to facilitate this change.

What we did:

The IT Section's performance against service availability target agreed in the IT Service Agreement of 99.85%.

What we did:

In May 2010 the Council was successfully audited for Government Connect code of connection compliance.

What we did:

We introduced a workloded starter/leaver process to improve the administration of this critical function.

What we did:

Since 2009 – 10 the IT Section reduced its establishment by 4 FTEs, saving the Council over £100,000.

What we did:

We achieved the best rating in Kent on our annual security penetration test.

The Local context and links to other strategies

The Council's strategic plan 2011—15 states "We want Maidstone borough to be a vibrant, prosperous 21st century urban and rural community at the heart of Kent, where its distinctive character is enhanced to create a safe, healthy, excellent environment with high quality education and employment where all people can realise their aspirations." To support this vision and ensure the objectives for Maidstone are delivered the Council has identified three priority themes that explain the issues we will concentrate on to help deliver the vision for Maidstone in the SCS. We want Maidstone:

- To have a growing economy;
- To be a decent place to live;
- To ensure Corporate and Customer excellence.

A quality ICT Service is vital to the attainment of these priority themes and aspirations as use of information and technology are a crucial element in every service the Council operates, every transaction with a customer, and every link with the Community and Environment.

Underpinning the Council's vision and priorities are our core values - STRIVE; these are internal, corporate values which we as an organisation are committed to. These core values are reinforced by the service provided by the IT Section:

- Superb customer service;
- Teamwork;
- Responsibility to deliver our promises;
- Integrity and high standards of corporate governance;
- Value for money and efficiency; and
- Equality within a diverse organisation.

The work of the IT Section supports these core values, in terms of:

- Major project implementations such as flexible working, business transformation, and Information Management;
- Supporting services through the availability and reliability of quality back office systems;
- Enhancing the quality of data and its processing through the use of GIS, DIP, information management, and CRM;
- Extending Council's services through new channels such as expanding the use of the Internet and text messaging;



- Promoting social inclusion; and
- Facilitating shared services and partnerships.

The Council, in collaboration with its strategic partners, has published its Sustainable Community Strategy which features:

- A thriving leisure and retail economy;
- Kent as a natural place to do business; and
- Key rural service centres.

In December 2010 the Government's spending review introduced significant reductions in the 'sending power' of local Government organisations. The Council's budget strategy and medium term financial planning has therefore stated significant reductions in the budgets available for investment in technology. Over the period of the Council's Budget Strategy 2011-14, budgets relating to ICT will diminish by a minimum of 15%. This will inevitably impose limits on the level of service the IT Section is able to deliver.

In order to help fulfil all these aspirations, the Information Strategy will:

- Make information more accessible;
- Engender a relationship with our customers based upon trust;
- Enable services to be more efficient and effective;
- Reduce the cost and effort of collecting, managing and processing information;
- Improve the quality and reliability of information;
- Raise skill levels so that Officers are able to make better use of information;
- Ensure that the Council's business processes comply with legislative requirements.

What we did:

We issued over 50 Blackberry mobile phones to Officers to facilitate mobile working through the seamless delivery of email and calendar synchronization.

What we did:

We set up an external collaborative working site to allow MKIP partners to securely exchange information & collaborate on documents.

What we did:

We further developed the Hotfoot scheme to accept internet payments.

What we did:

We made GIS available to the emergency planning team to enable better use of electronic maps during an incident. These maps will be invaluable during an incident, for example enabling the display of flood plain data, or to help identify vulnerable people during an evacuation.

What we did:

Our GIS team helped plan the new food waste refuse collections.

Themes of the Information Strategy

The Information strategy incorporates a number of key themes which link to our customer commitments and ensures the strategy's alignment with corporate priorities and business requirements:

- **Business Improvement:**
 - Enable transformation of business processes to improve efficiency and deliver cashable savings;
 - Improve business process integration with Electronic Document and Records Management (EDRMS) to streamline operations;
 - Improve use of geo-demographic datasets through Graphical Information Systems (GIS) and "Mosaic" to provide focused services centred around the customer and able to deliver cashable savings.
- **Flexible working:** leveraging the Council's investment in technology to enable the extension of our flexible working capability through:
 - Mobile working through use of Blackberry mobile phones, tablets, and laptops;
 - Further back-office integration for mobile workers;
 - Further desktop improvement to allow better flexible working.
- **Partnership working:** support existing and future business partnerships:
 - A shared ICT service with our MKIP partners incorporating an ICT Strategy for the Mid Kent Improvement Partnership (MKIP) to enable long term full integration which will allow seamless working across all three partner sites;
 - Gateway: enable closer integration between Gateway partners' back office systems

Outcomes

Through projects delivered under the themes of this strategy, we will:

- Enable up to 10% of staff to work effectively whilst 'in the field';
- Introduce an effective video conferencing/web meeting facility to support remote working, and reduce carbon emissions;
- Deliver a business case for an ICT shared service which will deliver up to 20% savings over a 10 year lifecycle;
- Roll out Windows 7 to all desktop clients to introduce new technologies such as voice dictation and encryption;
- Introduce a shared MKIP email service to

- enable seamless email and calendar synchronisation to partnership workers;
 - Build a MKIP network that will enable seamless partnership working within MKIP, and across Kent;
 - Introduce an Information management framework and 'one true customer image' which will facilitate data sharing and customer-centric services;
 - Facilitate an increase in web transactions of 2% (around 5,000) in 2011-12 as part of the Council's channel shift programme;
 - Roll out EDRMS to a minimum of three key service areas.
- tems and citizen-centric services;
 - **Information Management:** a review of the Council's procedures and capability:
 - A full audit of Council information;
 - roll-out of corporate EDRMS to put all Council data online;
 - improve officer use of information to support effective decision making;
 - Improve regulatory compliance.
 - **Access channel migration:** a systematic review of Council services aimed at encouraging customers to choose access channels which are more cost-effective:
 - Continue development of the website, utilising web 2.0 features allowing customisation and personalisation of services around the customer;
 - Perform extensive customer feedback surveys.
 - **Infrastructure and technology upgrades** to maintain the roadmap for service delivery:
 - Shared infrastructure with MKIP partners;
 - Disaster recovery enhancements to improve resilience;
 - Security upgrades to comply with central government's code of connection;
 - Continue to leverage technology to offer value for money, and deliver quality Council services in a cost-effective manner;
 - **Skills and resources:**
 - Economies of scale through pooled staff resources with MKIP partners;
 - Ensuring we have the right people with the right skills working in the right ways to deliver all of the above.
 - **Green ICT:**
 - To support the Council's efforts towards NI 185 and supporting the carbon management plan.



"ICT is a fundamental tool that every modern state needs – be it for school-leavers applying for a student loan, for a neighbourhood watch group scrutinising local crime figures, or in order to reduce travel costs for public sector workers by increasing the use of video-conferencing or remote working. This strategy will deliver better public services for less cost. ICT can release savings by increasing public sector productivity and efficiency. The savings are critical in order to reduce the structural deficit and continue to fund front-line services."

Government ICT Strategy March 2011.

Green ICT

The vision for the Council's Carbon management Plan states "That Maidstone Borough Council will be an example of environmental excellence and leadership. Its services will be provided in a way that minimizes the amount of carbon emitted and an awareness of Climate Change and energy efficiency will be embedded in everyday practices."

Maidstone Borough Council is committed to addressing the causes of climate change and in November 2008, made a commitment to reduce its carbon footprint by 3% per annum, with the aim of achieving a 20% reduction by 2016 and a 30% reduction by 2021, from a 2006/07 baseline.

In line with current commitments, the aim of the Council's Carbon Management Plan is to reduce CO₂ emissions from its activities by 20% from the 2008/9 baseline by 2015.

The Carbon Management Plan outlines a series of projects that will be delivered over the next 5 years to meet the set targets. These include projects that will directly reduce the amount of energy used by the Council through its operations and those which will be key to embedding Carbon Management into the Council's everyday practices. The Green ICT Strategy forms one of the main projects which will help to embed Carbon Management throughout the organisation.

Technology is a key function for the Council, and underpins the delivery of every service provided to our customers. It enables service delivery, improves the efficiency and quality of Council operations, and provides the foundation to the Council's strategic objectives. But this comes at a price. Office equipment is the fastest growing user of energy in the business community consuming 15% of the total electricity used in offices, and is expected to rise to 30% by 2020¹, with two thirds of this consumption attributable to computer equipment.

Clearly ICT is a major user of energy and natural resources, and as such the procurement, use, and disposal of computer equipment must be handled in a sustainable manner that underlines the Council's role as a leader in the community.

There are a number of strategic objectives that will comprise the Council's approach to green ICT. The Council already has fairly mature green ICT measures in place (as evidenced in Appendix 1) but these have tended to grow out of individual initiatives, rather than as the result of a coherent strategic approach.

1) Sustainable Procurement:

- Ensure green issues and carbon reduction measures feature prominently in the procurement process;

- Measure and monitor carbon emission in the Council's supply chain;

2) Improved operational efficiency:

- Use of low energy technologies;

- Paper and consumable consumption;

- Consider travel and plant issues;

- Usage procedures.

3) Change and Communication.

- The Green ICT agenda is not just about energy efficient IT, it can also be used to generate environmental benefits elsewhere in council operations and the wider commercial world. It is a key enabler for most business improvement programmes, providing better and more efficient services and bringing those services to the public rather than making the public come to us;

- Coupled with the cultural change and more energy efficient working practices, the use of ICT can reduce both building occupancy and travel;

- Communicate to staff to raise awareness of climate change issues, and how they can make a difference.

4) Improved disposal policies:

- Manage equipment lifecycle;

- Recycle kit to extend its lifecycle;

- Ensure disposal is undertaken in accordance with Waste Electrical, and Electronic Equipment directive (WEEE).

5) Adoption of future technologies:

- Cloud computing;

- Mobile working;

- Electronic Document and Records management (EDRMS);

- Video conferencing;

- Processor technology;

- Thin client technology.



"Environmental sustainability is not an option—it is a necessity. We have a compelling and ever more urgent duty of stewardship to take care of the natural environment and resources on which our economic activity and social fabric depends. So the new synthesis we need is that economic growth, social justice and environmental care advance best when they all advance together" Gordon Brown 2006.

"Public service provision is too fragmented and too complex. By engaging and empowering our communities and citizens, and by adopting the culture of people and place rather than organisation and/or department at a central and local level, we can significantly change the way public services are delivered" Bradford Total Place, final report..



Finance

Resource	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15
Revenue *#	442	497	523	549	484	469	455	442	428
Capital sys replacement	250	250	250	184	184	180	180	180	180
I2S			360*						
Capital	130**			150***					
Total	822	747	1133	883	645	649	635	622	608

Information technology budgets 2006 – 2015

Allocation of Capital budgets to support the Information Strategy is managed by the Corporate Information management Board, the terms of reference of which are detailed above. The Council has centralised all the budgets relating to software maintenance, which has enabled significant savings to be realised over the years. A capital systems replacement fund is available for software and hardware projects, and a portion of this funding is available for Managers' projects, if a sound business case is presented to the board.

* Network and telephony upgrades as part of office move

** Virtualisation project which delivered over £250k in savings on hardware

*** Replacement storage facility which will significantly enhance the Council's disaster recovery and business continuity capability

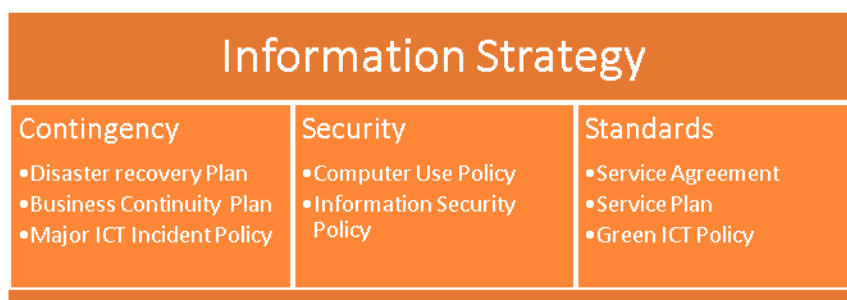
*# excluding salaries

“Traditionally, managers considered their key resources to be money, people, plant, property and time. All of these ‘industrial age’ resources are finite. They are depleted by use. Once used, they are gone. Economists describe these resources as scarce’, i.e. there is competition to get them, and the degree of competition determines the price. When someone has a resource, they guard it and manage it carefully because of its intrinsic value. Information is not like that. It can be used and reused without loss. People can copy, share, and distribute it at marginal cost. Not only are there synergies from combining information, i.e. two bits of information together have more value than the sum of both when separate, but regular use tends to keep it up to date and accurate.”

SOCITM “Information Management: your critical asset” June 2009

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The Council's information Strategy is supported by a number of other policy documents which govern the Council's use of its resources, and the IT Section's responsibilities to its customers.



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Did you know, you can also contact the Council on:



<http://www.maidstone.gov.uk>

The Council's website, where you can transact with the Council online, use interactive maps, pay for services, and get advice and apply for benefits.

facebook

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Maidstone-United-Kingdom/Maidstone-Borough-Council/42641010212>

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Follow us on Twitter to find out what the Council is doing.

You Tube

<http://www.youtube.com/user/maidstonecouncil>

We have our own channel on You Tube, watch Council and other local events and activities.