Information Strategy 2012 –15

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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 underpin every part of the Council's activities.

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'.

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.

This strategy must also be viewed in the context of the Mid Kent Improvement Partnership (MKIP) ICT shared service, and whilst the Council will continue to

have 'local' business requirements which can be met through investment in technology, it must form part of an overarching MKIP ICT strategy investment and work programme.

All future investment in technology and strategic use of ICT must be considered as an MKIP partner, and not simply as a stand-alone local authority.

The Information Strategy Process

The Information Strategy itself is a process, and not merely a document; it is published to coincide with the outputs of the Service Planning process to ensure that the alignment with business objectives described above is achieved. This is reinforced by service review meetings 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.

This will be an additional challenge when the ICT service is part of a partnership.

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 programme of work. The Corporate Improvement Group (CIG) is responsible for managing that function, as identified in the governance arrangements detailed below.

Our commitment to our internal 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 seamlessly across sites, 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 more cost-effective 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 agreed standards in an accessible way" – Strategic Plan 2011 -15

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 a 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 enhancements.

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;
- Changes to the state benefits system;
- 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 the National agenda against the local context;
- Making sure we have the right skills to leverage the maximum value from our investment in technology.

"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 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 and members 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, rendering it into explicit knowledge, which can be fed back into the organisation and built in to business processes.

Our stakeholders

What we did:

The Council now has 350 officers and Members who are able to log in remotely, and during the bad weather in the winters of 2011 and 2012 we had up to 132 concurrent users logged in from home.

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;
- Businesses;
- 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

What we did:

Performed a major upgrade to the Council's Finance system.

What we did:

During 2011-12 the IT Section has offered up over £100,000 in staff savings as a result of vacant posts.

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). Strategic allocation of funding from these budgets is delegated to the Corporate Improvement Group (CIG). The CIG is responsible for agreeing the programme of work, the allocation of resources, the sign-off of business cases, and 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 CIG membership consists of representative from all sections of the Council, the Board comprises:

- The Chief Executive;
- The Leader of the Council;
- The Assistant Director of Environment & Regulatory Services;
- The Head of Finance and Customer Services;
- The Head of Human Resources;
- The Head of Policy & Performance;
- The Head of Business Improvement; and
- The Head of ICT Services.

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

The National context

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

- The Implementing electronic government agenda evolved into the transformation agenda 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 has been crucial to unlocking these savings as the subsequent 2010 spending review continued 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 it is exercised, how it is held to account, and how it can be accessed by local communities.
- Kent was a pilot for the Total Place initiative which looked at how a 'whole area' approach to public services can lead to better services at less cost. It sought 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 meet their requirements, and design services around their preferences.

In February 2010 the Cabinet Office published the UK ICT Strategy, which 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 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 themes and the 14 underlying 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 has resulted in significant reductions in to all local authorities' budgets. It is crucial that the Council achieves every possible benefit from the use of technology as a strategic tool in order to deliver its priorities within these reduced resources. 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. Ultimately the aim is to drive down the cost of government ICT whilst driving up standards and performance.

What we did:

We were nominated for the 2011/12 STRIVE 'Team of the Year' award and were the Reach the Summit most consistent team in December 2011.

What we did:

The IT Section's performance against service availability target agreed in the IT Service Agreement was 99.65%.

What we did:

In May 2011 the Council was successfully audited for compliance with the Government Connect code of connection compliance.

What we did:

We improved the workflowed starter/leaver process to improve the administration of this critical function.

What we did:

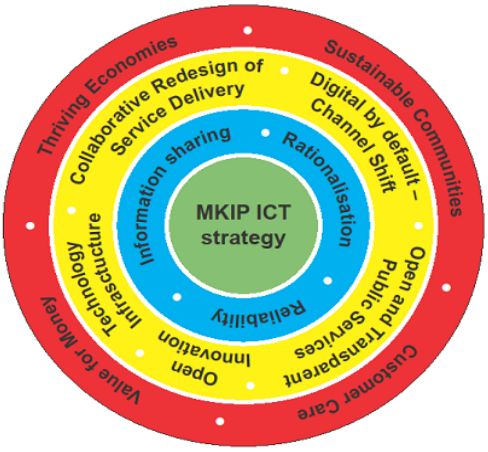
We achieved the best rating in Kent on our annual security penetration test.

Mid Kent Improvement Partnership ICT shared service

On 16th April 2012 a Co-located Cabinet meeting comprising Maidstone, Swale & Tunbridge Wells cabinets approved the following recommendations relating to an ICT shared service, that:

- **Swale Borough Council, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and Maidstone Borough Council enter into a ten year ICT partnership commencing on the 1 April 2013 based on the published collaboration agreement;**
- **A Head of MKIP ICT be appointed to lead the new shared service;**
- **Staff are transferred to a host partner (selected via agreed and published criteria) using TUPE after full consultation;**
- **All ICT revenue budgets are consolidated and administered by the Head of MKIP ICT under delegated authority, in line with each Authority's scheme of delegations;**
- **An ICT capital fund of £300k is created to support the strategy, by each authority providing £100k capital in the first year of operation of the agreement, the future capital funding approved as part of the formal capital bidding process in each authority;**
- **A strategic alliance with Kent County Council be established based on a Memorandum of Understanding.**

It is anticipated that, for the foreseeable future, the Council will require an Information Strategy. Not every service will enter into a partnership or shared service arrangement, and provision will always have to be made to cater for local requirements. But increasingly, the Information Strategy will feed into or reflect the MKIP ICT Strategy.
The strategic vision for MKIP ICT is to provide '*Innovative technology that creates empowered communities and ensures seamless public services'* and its mission is *'excellent ICT solutions that enable business priorities to be delivered'*.



All future local business and strategic requirements for the Council, will need to be addressed in the context of the partnership collaboration agreement and ICT Strategy.
The strategic relationship with KCC will be critical going forward for the MKIP partnership and for Maidstone, particularly in relation to the Kent Customer Care Strategy.
MKIP partners have a number of key strategic documents that clearly state the priorities of each individual authority. Each partner has developed strategic priorities with the delivery of public services to the local community in mind.

Although the terminology and plans associated with each strategy is different, a broad set of priorities can be clearly identified.:
Communities - developing and maintaining sustainable communities that have access to good quality homes in a clean and safe environment.
Economy – ensuring a prosperous, thriving local economy that provides opportunities for citizens and business to take advantage of technology to improve their life chances.
Customer Care – delivering services that meet the needs of our customers, which are accessible to all, open and transparent and providing feedback mechanisms that enable the customer to influence how those services are delivered.
Value for Money – delivering efficient services that are continuously adding value.
The MKIP ICT strategy and associated delivery plan will enable service units to actively use innovative technology solutions to meet these priorities and therefore improve the lives of our customers.

What we did:

We introduced a centralised information system to enable the MKIP Audit partnership to function across the 4 partner authorities.

What we did:

We implemented the MKIP Revenues & Benefits Academy system on 10 servers to facilitate the MKIP revs & Bens partnership .

What we did:

We now host the Revenues & Benefits servers for Maidstone, Swale & Tunbridge Wells Councils.

What we did:

Improved Broadband availability of 2MB+ in the Borough by 5% during 2011.

What we did:

Performed major systems upgrades to the Council's telephone system.

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 services through new channels such as expanding the use of the Internet and text messaging;**

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

In December 2010 the Government's spending review introduced significant reductions in the 'spending 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 response to this, and other drivers, in April 2012 the Council entered into a strategic ICT service with its MKIP Partners. The Information Strategy must therefore mirror the MKIP ICT strategy, whilst aligning & fulfilling the Council's local priorities & business requirements. 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;**
- **Focus on outcomes.**

What we did:

We issued over 80 Blackberry mobile phones to Officers to facilitate mobile working through the seamless delivery of email and calendar synchronization.

What we did:

We procured 10 Samsung tablets to enable trialling of mobile working.

What we did:

We introduced internet payments for the Hotfoot scheme.

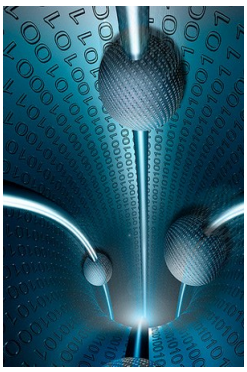
What we did:

We introduced 29 new virtual servers in the MKIP domain to host shared service applications.

What we did:

Our GIS team mapped out broadband availability in the Borough in support of the Council's new priority of improving residents' & Businesses' access to Broadband.

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 and partner priorities and business requirements:

- Collaborative redesign of service delivery:
  - Enable transformation of business processes to improve efficiency and deliver cashable savings;
  - Support news ways of delivering services, such as the new commercial waste contract;
  - Support new partnership opportunities and improve the capability of existing partnerships;
  - Mobile integrated working through use of Blackberry mobile phones, tablets, and laptops;
  - Dematerialised services to help remove the need for travel.
- Open and transparent public services:
  - Use of social media to promote customer engagement;
  - Enable the introduction and delivery of customer-centric services.
- Open Innovation:
  - A full audit of Council information;
  - A review of the Council's management and use of information to streamline business processes, introduce efficiency savings, improve officer use of information to support effective decision making and Improve regulatory compliance.
- Digital by default a systematic review of Council services aimed at encouraging customers to choose access channels which are more cost-effective:
  - Continue development of the website, migration to a new content management system;
  - New online transactions for a variety of services, including Land Charges, Street Naming & Numbering, Building Control and the Crematorium;
  - Broadband—working with partners to improve the provision of 2MB+ broadband in the borough;
  - Telephone automation services.
- Technology Infrastructure:
  - Shared infrastructure with MKIP partners;
  - Disaster recovery enhancements to improve resilience;
  - Maintain existing council systems to a high standard;
  - Continue to leverage technology to offer value for money, and deliver quality Council services in a cost-effective manner.
- E-Commerce:
  - New online services for the Museum, Conference Kent and Parks/Leisure services;
  - Support the commercialisation of council services, such as Internal Audit and payroll.
- Data Quality:
  - 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;
  - Use of LLPG address matching to improve quality of address data, and enable use of Cleanmail to achieve cashable efficiency savings.

"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.

Outcomes

Through projects delivered under the themes of this strategy, and aligning with the MKIP ICT Strategy we will:

- Facilitate seamless partnership working across MKIP by introducing a shared network, and a central MKIP email service which will provide a single email account and calendar to existing and future partnership workers;
- Improve the customers' online experience to support the channel shift programme;
- Enable the council to redesign services around the customer ('Customer Centric'), through the use of Electronic Document and Records Management (EDRMS) and an information management review programme
- Facilitate better information sharing, data quality, and information assurance through the roll-out of EDRMS and the introduction of structured information management systems;
- Improve the resilience of council/MKIP information systems through the Introduction of a failover disaster recovery site;
- Improve customer care initiatives through collaboration with KCC on MKIP projects;
- Improve Council service quality and efficiency through the introduction of technology to facilitate mobile working;
- Improve provision of broadband over 2MB within the borough;
- Improve the management of customer correspondence through the introduction of a single dedicated information system;
- Overhaul the commissioning process for ICT to ensure resources are allocated to priority projects and aligned to MKIP strategic objectives.

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 an num, with the aim of achieving a 20% reduc tion 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 CO_2 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 re duce 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 em bed 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 ser vice delivery, improves the efficiency and quality of Council operations, and provides the foundation to the Council's strategic ob jectives. But this comes at a price. Office equipment is the fastest growing user of en ergy in the business community consuming 15% of the total electricity used in offices, and is expected to rise to 30% by 2020, 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 procure ment, use, and disposal of computer equip ment must be handled in a sustainable man ner 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 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 emissions 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 the 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	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15
Revenue *	523	549	484	469	455	442	428
Capital sys replacement	250	184	184	180	180 100	180	180
I 2 S	360**						
Capital		150***					
Total	1133	883	668	649	735	622	608

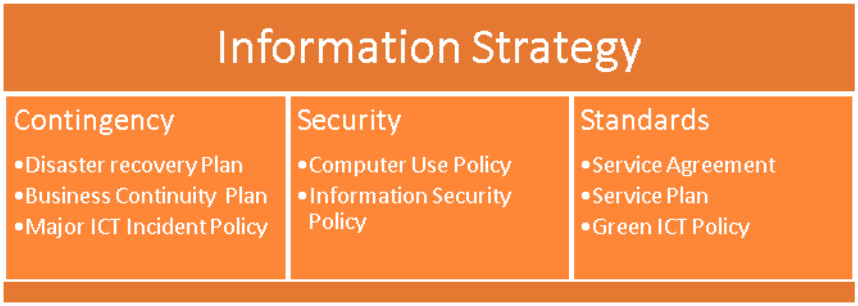
Information technology budgets 2006 – 2015

Allocation of Capital budgets to support the Information Strategy is managed by the Corporate Improvement 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.

*** excluding salaries**
**** Virtualisation project which delivered over £250k in savings on hardware**
***** Replacement storage facility which significantly enhanced the Council's disaster recovery and business continuity capability**

Information Strategy 2012 — 15

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.



"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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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.

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

Contact the Council through your Facebook site.

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

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

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

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