

Report to the Policy & Performance Scrutiny (PPS) (Transformation and Projects Subcommittee)

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Context

The Chief Digital & Information Officer (CDIO) has presented to the PPS Committee regarding the transition from the Shared Digital arrangement. A follow up presentation was requested to focus on the key projects to address the issues with end-of-life components in the IT estate and the plans to remediate them.

As a follow up to this presentation, it was suggested that a sub-committee be formed to check in with progress on a more regular basis. This is the first report for the subcommittee intended to provide a basis for discussion.

Update on the most significant projects

Wide Area Network Upgrade (WAN)

Project to modernise Islington's Wide Area Network links to a more flexible, reliable, and less expensive network – improving IT links between buildings and the internet.

Tier one and two sites are the main working premises from Town Hall to Libraries etc.

Tier 3 sites are ones with casual use or use limited to a few staff members on a regular basis.

With some 120 sites we do have a large number for the size of the Borough.

The status of the roll out is as below – good progress on the major sites.

	Awaiting Site Data	Planning	Delivery of equipment	Service installed	On Hold
Tier 1 and 2 sites		0	1	18	6
Tier 3 Sites	31	11	16	26	4

One of the big challenges to progress is the remediation, and sometimes upgrade, of the 'communications racks' in the smaller sites. They have not been maintained as well as primary sites and in some cases there is insufficient room in the equipment racks to expand as needed.

To get the full benefit of the new WAN, significant parts of the individual building network equipment will require upgrade. This is particularly noticeable in 222 Upper Street where parts of the network are significantly challenged. This is planned.

Roll out of Telephony

The roll out of the new telephony system is well under way with staff moving to using their Laptops with a headset rather than a traditional phone. New handsets will still be provided in many circumstances – i.e. shared phones and staff without PC's.

It is a big cultural change for staff and, given the need to progress quickly given the critical state of the existing exchange, there have been challenges with getting staff to respond to data emails and migrate to the 'softphone'. Nevertheless, progress is being made and we have now moved all outgoing calls off the old 'ISDN' lines on to modern connections that cost one twelfth of the calling costs of ISDN.

One hurdle remaining is to swap the incoming numbers over to the new system. Each group of numbers requires an outage of approximately one hour – the whole process executing in 6 hours. Given the critical nature of some phone number (emergency housing repairs, lift phones), a significant amount of business continuity planning is required to support the change early in the New Year. This will allow us to decommission the very old ISDN system and remove a significant piece of technology debt.

Windows 10 / New Laptop roll out

This project aims to deploy 4,500 Windows 10 devices by January 2020 and replace all existing kit with new laptops by July 2020.

As part of this, the project will rationalise over 1,000 applications used across the council including remediating up to 450 of them for use on Windows 10.

The project is now running successfully in the Open Pilot phase. The 'build' (the standard Windows10 and Office 365 software components together with the policies that control its use) is now finalised and stable – a significant waypoint for the project.

Once the open pilot is complete mass roll out will commence this side of Christmas.

There is however, a limiting factor on the pace of roll out – and that is the rate of 'application packaging'. Each application that staff run on the Laptops has to go through a process called packaging. In this process, the manufacturer's information together with information about our IT environment is combined to create a 'package', which can then be remotely installed on the laptops of staff who need the application. If they log on to a new or different machine, the system detects what they need and installs it all in the background.

This is useful and essential, but gathering all the necessary information is time consuming and currently our bottleneck in accelerating the roll out to staff.

PSN (Public Sector Network) remediation.

To interconnect to other government departments (e.g. DWP), we are required to undertake an annual audit of our environment to ensure the necessary security and other standards are met. A consequence of our technology debt and other factors means we have a number of areas of non-compliance which we need to remediate. To ensure the outcome has focus the activity required to achieve compliance is being bundled under a single project (rather than relying on individual components to be fixed through other remediation projects/activities). The project will be overseen by the Head of Cyber Security and is in planning and is a regular agenda item for the SIRO (Senior Information Risk Owner).

Other Projects

There are some twenty other projects in flight to support our changing environment. Projects that are particularly concerned with remediating technology debt include:

1. SQL 2008 – in planning
2. Windows Server 2008 (R2) replacement – in planning and data gathering

3. Civica Pay – migration of our Card payments system from the Paris system which is end-of-life and is not fully PCI (Payment Card Industry) standards – delayed by vendor issues but in delivery phase.
4. Northgate Public Systems migration to cloud – the migration of the Housing and Revs&Bens system to cloud hosting with current level software. This remediates the end of life hardware platform and the software update enables statutory functions required for next financial year.

Key areas of focus outside these projects.

Staffing

Since the new Digital Services organisational structure came into effect on 1st June, recruitment has been intense with good appointments being made into new positions. The leadership team has been a priority as part of this and new leaders are joining through this period with all positions filled by mid-January. Positions include:

- Business Advisor - 4th November 2019 ✓
- Operations Manager* – 11th November 2019 ✓
- Commercial and Risk Manager - 2nd December 2019 ✓
- Programme Delivery Manager* – 4th December ✓
- Head of Enterprise Planning – 6th January 2020
- Technology Lead* – Mid January 2020

These appointments marked with an asterisk denote roles that have been filled with an interim to date.

Staffing

A strategic focus for the CDIO is to create the ‘Map of Strategies/Roadmaps’.

There has been a period of intense activity over 2019, based on a one-page strategy and Business Plan. This has been “OK” to get started and commence the obvious remedial work – business case by business case. However, more detailed strategies and roadmaps are required to inform staff, directorates and other stakeholders – creating a longer vision horizon and tangible references for staff and colleagues.

The Strategy Map will be the definition and scoping of the (around) ten artefacts required to complete the picture. This will be presented to CMB for agreement before expanding the detail of each document out into a useful reference point.

Whilst many of the documents are ‘pure IT’, some are necessarily a close collaboration between IT and the Directorates. Notable in this category is the Digital Strategy, which necessarily involves business transformation to digitise our processes and ways of working.

In Summary.

As indicated on the 1-page strategy, there remains a strong emphasis on the tactical activity necessary to bring the environment up to date and to be compliant with the necessary government and cybersecurity standards. This activity of 'Core IT Services' and 'Application Renewal & Consolidation' will continue for some time yet. Nevertheless, there is some attention now moving to the more strategic and business-oriented goals through the creation of new strategies to support a coherent, resident-focused direction of travel.

