Report of the Director of Customer & Business Support Services

Portfolio of the Executive Leader, Finance & Performance

ICT Services Report

Summary

1. The purpose of this report is to provide a full overview to the Executive on the roles, aspirations and challenges facing the ICT service, and its relationship with service efficiency and effectiveness.

2. A service that received very positive feedback during the last Peer review and more recently unprompted comments from other external sources regarding our being one of the quickest and most self sufficient clients that they have worked with in terms of knowledge transfer and capability, and another source reflecting that York ICT is an energised and ambitious team.

   Recommendations

3. That Members note the contents of the report, in particular the achievements, the ongoing and future ICT aspirations, opportunities, developments and challenges.

   Reason: To update the Executive on the work of the ICT service.

Background

The Service – An Introduction.

4. The ICT service performs four significant functions:

   ➢ Lead and manage the delivery of the York's Digital programme to build upon and exploit York's developing

connectivity landscape that will place York as one of the best connected cities in Europe, assisting with the economic growth of the city

➢ Provide and support a wide range of enabling technologies for the Council and Partner Organisations that are essential to underpin the current and changing service delivery models, delivering efficient and effective services. A good example of where we have created the platform/technologies to facilitate efficiency and in particular improved productivity within the Council and its Services is the flexible and remote working ICT infrastructure that helped to enable an employee to desk ratio of 5:3 that reduced accommodation costs for the Council, that is viewed as being way ahead of most, and is supported by the recently introduced replacement mobile working solution.

➢ Design, build or commission mobile / web applications that are customer centric, light reusable and agile, whilst identifying ongoing opportunities to ensure existing ICT technologies are exploited to improve services and efficiency wherever possible.

➢ Proactively seek opportunities to commercialise our products and developments, seeking sales or commissioning work outside of our authority to other Local Authorities or businesses, thereby generating income and reducing the net cost of the service to the Council.

5.   Whilst these functions are distinct, they are also very much inter-related and benefit from the expertise of the wider team to contribute to all associated areas of work and projects.

6.   In simple terms, our work could be considered as the 'visible front end' and 'under the bonnet' work that is also often referred to as going on 'behind the scenes'. Both are equally important and cannot exist in isolation of one another.

7.   Collectively, the department has a strategy and approach which adheres to our three key principles – Open, Simple and Digital and aims to:

- ➤ Continue to secure a blend of private and public sector funding to create the fourth utility across the City (Broadband access, connectivity and enabling services)

- ➤ Design and deploy a resilient and agile ICT infrastructure with highly-connected staff across all devices

- ➤ Continue to develop great public digital and commercial experiences as some of our inspirations such as Toronto Open 311, Transport for London, Manchester City Council, Amazon and Netflix

- ➤ Promote and maintain customer / community lead service design, and owned content and data

8. As part of our diverse role it is essential that we remain up to date with emerging technologies, methodologies and approaches that are proven to help deliver efficient and effective results and are all based around sustaining and improving the customer experience both externally and internally.

9. These include implementing methodologies such as Agile and Scrum, which are customer-centric product development processes. These approaches are used by many major software and industry organisations; however, we go beyond the simple utilisation of the methodology and act as advocates and leaders in the cascade of this proven approach. We have begun to communicate the broader advantages of the Agile approach to service areas, with Youth Offending Team (YOT) and School Governors being amongst the early adopters.

Recent achievements and information on our support services

10. Summarised below are some of recent achievements and further details of our support activities.

- ➤ Commenced the successful replacement of some of the key enabling organisation wide applications, such as the mobile working platform (Total Mobile). Another example is the new Council transactional website which is hosted externally on our new content management system

- ➤ Delivered to the needs of the organisation by developing and deploying online applications to order additional

green waste containers. We have also created a system for administering financial transactions, covering both payments and refunds

➢ Designing and developing a new digital signage platform in use within West Offices and Hazel Court to improve staff awareness and communications of internal, regional and wider initiatives, coming events and customer feedback on the Council. We are currently in discussions with ExploreYork to pilot the platform within York's Libraries, ahead of the potential future commercial opportunities

➢ Developing a website for the Approved Garage Scheme. The scheme, launched by the Council's Trading Standards team, enables garages to evidence the quality of their work and customer service levels under a formal framework, giving customers peace of mind and a moderated complaints process should the service not meet their expectations

➢ Developing a business planning application which is currently being piloted within the department ahead of a wider roll out within CBSS scheduled for early 2016. This new solution will streamline a lot of our business planning processes and provide a dashboard view of progress against key actions and tasks

➢ We successfully hosted 'Go Digital', York's first ever Google event[1] in July. The free masterclass was well attended by local businesses, helping them to understand how to use and access Google products to improve their online presence. This also provided a unique opportunity to speak one-to-one with a Google representative. Businesses were able to network with several local and national suppliers on the Connection Vouchers scheme before and after the event

   1. http://www.yorkpress.co.uk/business/news/13410577.
Businesses_invited_to_Go_Digital_with_free_event/

➢ Significantly improving the digital connectivity / fourth access utility landscape within York. This is helping to address some of the impacts of the wider digital divide

that York, like the rest of the UK (and beyond), suffers from through a number of projects including:

- ▸ Providing over 700 SME's in the region with the work and funding to improve and upgrade to high speed broadband, securing almost £900,000 funding from the BDUK Connection Voucher Scheme programme. This work was undertaken within the City and across our administration regional area including Harrogate, Selby and East Riding

- ▸ Ensuring over 19,500 York premises have been upgraded to superfast broadband under Phase 1 of the Superfast North Yorkshire programme. The team has worked hard to secure York's position in Phase 2 of the £13million West Yorkshire Rural Broadband Programme. This will bridge York's increasing 'Digital Divide' by delivering superfast broadband to rural / outer York

- ▸ Following on from the DCMS supported programme that provided connectivity and superfast Wi-Fi to and within 28 public buildings including the Art Gallery, Guildhall, 11 Sheltered Housing Schemes and 15 Community Hubs. We have recently extended this connectivity into the heart of communities by providing free superfast Wi-Fi connectivity in our nine Children's Centres. This has made a direct contribution towards helping families and the wider community with their well-being, skills and further learning

- ▸ Securing a grant of £29,000 from the Arts Council to upgrade the free Wi-Fi solution in York's fourteen Explore Libraries. This has widened the provision to the community whilst extending and improving the use of the buildings. It has also demonstrated the Council's commitment to improving digital provision across the City.

➢ In order to secure maximum flexibility and secure VFM in the very turbulent local government environment, we moved from a traditional licence purchase model with Microsoft to a subscription model. The benefits of this are that we are able to true up or down our figures annually

to ensure that the authority only spends money on licences that it requires as well as providing a no cost grace period should we require a short term burst in our licence requirements for testing out new services as an example. In the rapidly moving ICT world, we also have access to Microsoft technology enhancements at no additional cost as they are provided as part of the subscription agreement. ICT led and delivered the work to tender for these services and we secured a £94k saving over 3 years when compared to competitor quotations.

➢ Ensuring that the infrastructure controls and security measures are in place to achieve the multiple annual codes of compliancy audits for connecting to hosted services on the Public Services Network (PSN). This includes GCSx email; TellUsOnce; Joint Asset Recovery Database (JARD); and Customer Information Services such as Blue Badge. This is a very strong example of both the visible and under the bonnet work we undertake every year to remain compliant and is a key enabler for the likes of Services being able to collect credit and debit card payments securely, and enables us to provide the required approved connection to NHS N3 network.

➢ Providing and supporting the wide range of enabling technologies for the Council and partner organisations that are essential to underpin the current and changing service delivery models which include:

> Effective management of a large virtual infrastructure (we are one of the leading adopters in the country of this robust, flexible, cost effective and green ICT delivery model)

> The support of over 3,500 ICT customers that generate over 24,000 service requests a year

> Ensuring safe distribution and receipt of just over 12 million emails, and the successful blocking of nearly 2 million spam emails each year

> Supporting and maintaining over 4,500 devices including mobile devices, thin terminals and

> pcs/laptops to enable and sustain flexible, mobile and remote working

> ‣ Undertaking the many system upgrades each year (often during the weekend and evening) to mitigate against any impacts on the customer base.

> ➢ In addition to the provision of internal and partner services, we have also developed a platform to commence and sustain trading company activities through an ICT service portfolio / service offering. With the associated and supporting ICT Charter / Service Level Agreements in parallel with developing agile commercial models, this has provided services to Vital, Work with York, York Explore, Be Independent and Benenden Health.

Our Road map

11.   A continuing theme within our strategy and approach is iterative and constant development, meaning that the products listed above and below will continue to evolve based on feedback, user requirements and enhancements in technology.

12.   Our current road map includes:

> ➢ A phased and staged launch of the Oracle Right Now product. This will support the introduction of online transactions for customers as well as a greater social media presence. This includes 'My Account' functionality to replace existing 'Do-It-Online' functions. This allows our customers to register for available services and improves direct channels of customer communications/interactions. The Council's Scrutiny Committee is involved in determining the priority of services to be transitioned with some of the first services being Waste, Public Realm and Highways

> ➢ We will be working with Service areas to improve their processes and the supporting systems in areas such as Parking (which includes online transactions), Children and Adults Social Care (through systems upgrades, integrations and process improvements), parks, allotments and trees (through the introduction of new

systems where there were none previously), including the mobilisation of these teams

➤ Expanding the use and benefits of the Corporate Mobile Working solution into other service areas. These include Social Care starting within Children's post the launch of their replacement case management system, discrete areas of Adult Social Care such as Mental Health, and also with Human Resources. We are looking to extend this enabling solution across all the Service areas to help enable improvements in both Customer experience and Service delivery

➤ Establishing a shared service arrangement with Harrogate Borough Council (HBC) that would focus initially on ICT shared management

➤ Continuing the myriad under the bonnet work that goes on unseen to ensure that all customers receive secure, resilient and responsive enabling ICT services that meet their developing needs, legislative requirements and Council aspirations.

➤ Implementation of a 'cloud first' strategy where any new or replacement system will by default be hosted in the cloud unless exceptional circumstances arise

➤ Continue with our work to match the appropriate technologies and delivery models to meet the combined essential ingredients of providing a great customer experience within logistical and budgetary opportunities and challenges, and this will include:

  ‣ Continuing and expanding our approach to secure tactical commission based services with key strategic partners

  ‣ The continued and expansion of our 'cloud first' strategy where any new or replacement system will by default be hosted in the cloud unless exceptional circumstances arise

➤ Promoting our services to other Councils and the private sector through the appropriate channel including City of York Trading Company. Some of the current opportunities include launching a new internally developed and deployed health and safety application.

This exploits a gap in the market and thus allows commercialisation of the product

➢ Support and help to inform the UNESCO project that is aimed at bringing various partners, brands and initiatives under an overarching banner. Key people from the wider Councils ICT strategy leadership have been meeting with the representatives of these various projects to make sure they have a full understanding of the opportunities which the Council's, partners and cities provide in terms of technological, data and digital infrastructure. This will help future projects to be well informed and cohesive.

➢ Developing a new Adult Safeguarding website which will fully replace the existing site. This will improve the usability and 'look and feel'. We are delivering a new backend system which will make it significantly easier for the Adult Safeguarding team to maintain the website

➢ Jointly running a project with the Youth Offending Team and FutureGov to drive improvements in engagement between the team and the young people they work with. This will be achieved through the use of digital technology, based on earlier user discovery work completed by FutureGov and ICT. The project is also being structured to allow maximum knowledge transfer between FutureGov and ICT in customer-driven design

➢ Developing a customer-centric discovery and design process, using the knowledge and skills acquired in the FutureGov joint working project. We will be piloting this in key service areas starting with Services to Schools and this will form the basis of our approach to digital product development going forward, ensuring the end customer is fully engaged in the process and directly informs development and testing

➢ Following on from the successful delivery of our 'Super Connected Cities' programme which significantly improved the digital connectivity / fourth access utility landscape within York. Our focus is now maximising the opportunities this enabling landscape presents us through the following:

- ▸ Facilitating Code Clubs within our Schools. Following a successful pilot at Ousebank School and the recent event at York Explore, we are running a trial of Code Clubs at Millthorpe School for both Children and Adult groups. Our ambition, that will require support from the cities higher education and commercial sectors, is to establish a coding club within all our schools. This view is supported by the levels of interest that we are receiving from many of our other schools

- ▸ Revamping the Digital York Board to ensure maximum value from board meetings and establishing a clear direction of travel for ongoing and future City-Wide digital activity

- ▸ Planning York's first ever Digital Summit which will be focused around 'Harnessing the potential of the Digital City' next year

- ▸ Signposting towards Digital Inclusion initiatives through Explore or other Council departments. This is to ensure citizens have the skills, access and motivation required to exploit the extraordinary connectivity throughout the City of York

- ▸ Continuing to promote York as a Digital City with the UK's first accredited Child-Friendly Wi-Fi in our City Centre. The availability of free Wi-Fi in all our public buildings. This includes Explore Libraries, Community Hubs, Sheltered Homes, Children's Centres as well as free and within our public parks.

➢ Continuing to improve our use of social communication channels to provide clear customer updates on new developments, to celebrate successes, recognise outstanding work, and to share knowledge on customer-driven digital development. Key channels include the internal CYC ICT blog, the external 'techforyork' blog (http://techforyork.com) and Twitter

➢ Continue to support and help enable York's open data platform and as this is one of the key enablers at a city level, some of the back ground to this platform has been:

- Digital in York isn't just about providing the right connectivity, mobile working or the variety of channels for customers and businesses to work with us; but is also about creating the right technological enablers for a variety of other areas of business to thrive, with www.yorkopendata.org being an example.

- In 2014, City of York Council created its own open data initiative to make the information and data that the Council holds available to the city, in a format that it gives the opportunity for the cities data to be used in an innovative way by individuals and companies to create products and understanding about the city. Modern technologies societies exist on data and the value of opening up data has been identified by the UK Government and European Commission as having the potential to unlock substantial added value into the economy and so with requests for raw data from partners, residents and businesses starting to grow, the Council has decided to take advantage of the national funds being made available for open data progress

- York Open Data was launched on 23rd March, funded by the Breakthrough Fund and InnovateUK, and is based on Open Source technology (called CKAN), and its development was commissioned to a local ICT company who provided both low set up and ongoing costs

- Since its launch, over 370 datasets have been made available and cover all areas of Council business from economics and social care, through to school admission and the environment. York's approach on publishing data has been slightly different to other cities, in that rather than just re-publishing data which is already elsewhere, we have concentrated on providing local, high quality, repetitive and the highest standards of machine readable data. We are not a "trail-blazer", in that other UK and American cities also have open data platforms but have learnt from the progress of other local authorities in what data is useful in a public environment, and tried to create a platform where

the data, not the end product of this information, is provided.

▸ Through the business efficiency consolidation of the various Council performance sections, in to the Business Intelligence hub, and the closer links with ICT strategy and solution architecture, the Council has been creating infrastructure to provide data regularly and repeatedly so residents and businesses have the confidence to use the information. This has allowed for the open data platform to become the Councils home for the transparency code, external performance information and a number of other statutory datasets, which means that the majority of the datasets on the platform are not static and are updated at least once a quarter

▸ The requests for data, need for transparency and possible opportunities to reduce the number of data-led FOI's, has led the Council to produce a roadmap of data which it makes available on the platform. There has been some outside scrutiny and check and balance on the direction of the platform with; NESTA recently rating York within its grouping of the top 5 local authorities in the UK for an open data platform and making data-sets available; and the platform being shown as an example of best practice at the October Bloomberg World Mayors conference. The Council has also been approached by a number of local authorities within the region about either buying the platform, or using the geographic area, post any devolution or shared service agreement

Future Challenges

13. Not withstanding some of the great work that we are able to accomplish within the teams, it is not without its challenges. The greatest of which is the ability to recruit and retain talented staff and partially linked to this is the ability to train and develop our existing staff.

14. Contributory factors include; the perception of Local Government as a forward thinking, modern and secure place of

work - particularly in ICT. Our proximity to Leeds (and other larger cities) with the ability to offer a wider variety of opportunities, is a challenge to both recruitment and retention activities.

15. We are compiling a report which will illustrate the difficulties we are experiencing in attracting and maintaining staff. Alongside this we are proactively exploring alternative methods of both recruitment and retention with some successes in schemes such as apprenticeships.

16. The ongoing budget reductions targeted for ICT over the next four years will be expected to be delivered at a time when more Services are looking towards ICT and technologies to help deliver their own budget reductions and this will be demanding to achieve. This will lead to some very difficult decisions having to be made regarding the levels of support and investment and where priorities in terms of ICT service provision lie as the demand will be increasing whilst capacity is decreasing.

Implications

17. **Financial** (Contact – Director of CBSS)

- **Human Resources (HR)** Contained with the report.

- **Equalities -** All technology based projects will include an equalities assessment undertaken by the Service or ICT based on the project itself.

- **Legal -** Legal colleagues will be part of any associated project based procurement activity when appropriate.

- **Information Technology (ICT) -** Included within the report

- **Property –** ICT will continue to consult with Property colleagues and take into consideration any impacts on the environmental controls within West Offices for future proposals to expand our ICT hosting service offer.

- **Privacy -** All technology based projects will include a privacy impact assessment undertaken by the Service or ICT based on the nature of project.

Contact Details

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	Report Approved	√	**Date**	3 December 2015
Specialist Implications Officer(s) None				
Wards Affected: All			√	
For further information please contact the authors of the report				

Annexes – None

Glossary of abbreviations/acronyms used in the report:
BDUK – Broadband Delivery UK
CBSS – Customer & Support Services
DCMS – Department for Culture, Media and Sport
FOI – Freedom of Information
HBC – Harrogate Borough Council
ICT – Information Communications Technology
JARD - Joint Asset Recovery Database
NESTA - National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts
PSN - Public Services Network
SME's - Small and medium-sized enterprises
UNESCO - The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural
Organisation
VFM – Value for money
YOT - Youth Offending Team