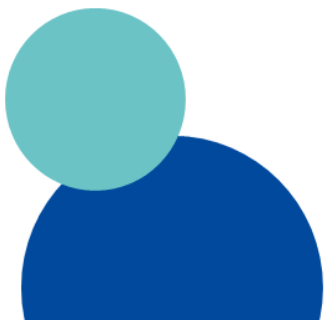Annexe 1

Waverley Borough Council
ICT Strategy 2021-2024

February 2021

Document Information & Governance

Approval & Publication:

Approving Body	Approval route requirement	Publication Type	Publication requirement	Review frequency	Document owner	Next Review Date
Management Board		*Internal*	*Full Council approval required*	*Annual*	Linda Frame	

Version Control Information:

Version	Version Status (Draft, Approved /Published Internally or Externally)	Date	Version Comment	Version Author
V0.1	Draft	03/01/2020	Creation of the document	LN
V0.2	Draft	20/2/2020	First amendment	LN
VO.3	Draft	10/7/2020	Reflecting discussions with the portfolio holder and IT Team	DA
V0.4	Draft	17/7/20	Reviewed further to AR comments	DA
VO.5	Draft	23/7/20	Reviewed further to IT Strategy Group meeting	DA
V0.6	Draft	4/8/20	Refreshed further to SMT on 4/8/20	DA
V0.7	Draft	15/10/15	Incorporating comments from Change Advisory Steering Group and development of Action Plan	DA
V0.8	Draft	20/10/20	Incorporating IT Manager's comments	DA/LF
V0.9	Draft	27/10/20	Incorporating comments from SMT on 27/10/20	DA
V1.0	Draft	12/11/20	Incorporating comments from Executive Briefing on 10/11/20	DA
V1.1	Draft	28/1/21	Reflecting the views made at Overview and Scrutiny Chair's Briefing and Committee meetings (Value for Money and Customer Services)	DA
V1.2	Draft	11/2/21	Reflecting comments made at Executive on 9/2/21	DA

Impact Assessments and Consideration:

Impact Assessment Type	Required / Not Required	Date Completed	Impact Assessments and Considerations Comment	Assessment Owner
Equality Impact Assessment	No			
Health in all Policies	No			
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Yes			
Climate Change	Yes			

ICT Strategy – the next three years – 2020–2023

This Strategy sets out the vision for the Council's ICT service for the next three years. It supports the Corporate Strategy to achieve the Council's objectives with technology being a vital enabler of business change.

Waverley's ICT service provides equipment, software and systems, advice and support to enable the Council to function effectively and to deliver high quality services. It provides the infrastructure to manage and store information securely, carry out complex transactions, support customer services and enable staff to work flexibly.

This strategy recognises that ICT plays a vital role in the success of our organisation and underpins everything we do.

Context - Where are we now?

The ICT service comprises 16.5 FTE and supports the running of 38 business and corporate applications. It also provides telephony and enables website and social media functions. There is a combination of on-site and cloud storage. The Citrix environment with thin client on the desktop allows flexible desk sharing and remote access. The telephony system is a virtual one using Microsoft Skype for Business which provides telephony at a fraction of the cost of more traditional systems. Video-conferencing is a new addition to the suite of facilities with both Zoom and Teams widely available to staff and members.

The total cost of systems, applications and staff exceeds £1.5m pa.

There is a robust system of back-ups for the virtual and physical servers and a disaster recovery site is being moved from a neighbouring local authority to another council building in Farnham. Regular (including Audit and Regulatory) tests are carried out on our networks and the results of these tests form the basis of our future security plans. We use anti-virus software, endpoint protection and data loss prevention (controlling removable media). We have firewalls to protect the environment and these prevent thousands of attempts per day from accessing our network. We carry out regular server patching which protects us against attack.

The risk of cyber-crime is increasing particularly for those organisations holding large amounts of personal data. Information security is of paramount importance and it follows that information management is therefore equally essential.

We belong to the South East Government Warning, Advisory and Reporting Point to provide early warning and best practice advice around the latest cyber security threats. We subscribe to the services provided by the National Cyber Security Centre that carries out web security checks on externally facing sites.

We use Microsoft Office and Outlook for email (having more than 500 microsoft office licenses active)and are in the process of moving to Sharepoint 365 which we use for document management. We use document image processing to manage and archive the large volume of documents in the service areas. We have a number of legacy systems covering Council Tax, Benefits, Housing and Environmental Health. Whilst stable, they are also expensive to maintain and upgrade. We have a hosted website, facebook pages and social media. Our website is being updated to conform to accessibility standards.

The challenges and drivers for change

Local authorities are facing enormous challenges as expectations of the level and quality of service increase at the same time as funding is drastically reducing, this has been exacerbated as a result of the Covid crisis. Nevertheless residents and businesses expect to see the same quality of service they receive from large private sector organisations. They expect to be able to access services from multiple locations and devices and in ways and times that suit them.

Our investment in a low code solution will enable us to provide a single customer account across all services and thereby respond to this customer demand.

Waverley runs a number of complex and vital systems that impact on the lives of our residents. The market place for a number of these systems is small which brings its own challenges. The need for flexibility, innovation and ability to transition to new systems without a large price tag whilst improving the technology skills of the workforce are all important aspects of the ICT challenge going forward.

Strategic Drivers

- Annual cuts and changes in central government funding means that Waverley is facing a funding gap of at least £13m up to 2024 with the cost of Covid still to be factored in. Services need to be delivered more economically.
- Our investment in IT is a spend to save initiative. By acquiring and enhancing technological capability we can increase self service opportunities and this reduces staffing costs and by building our own environment we can switch off costly third party systems.
- Changing demand from customers challenges the way we currently deliver services and the way we interact with our customers. There is greater need for on-line access to services and information and increasing use of social media.
- Underpinning the new Corporate Strategy is the need to be transparent, accessible, responsible and collaborative in the way we operate and deliver services.
- The Emergency Declaration on Climate Change will also influence the decisions we make on technology.
- As we evolve organisationally post Covid there needs to be a clear interface with our Recovery Change and Transformation Project
- Agile Working. The future of the Council Offices accommodation at the Burys is currently under review. Significant numbers of staff will be working remotely on a daily basis as we occupy a smaller physical footprint, our IT offer will need to respond to this new dynamic.
- With cuts to finances and increasing levels of demand there is a need to join up across the public sector, to adopt a coherent multiagency approach to our residents needs.

Stakeholder Drivers

- The size and nature of the workforce and how employees undertake their work is constantly changing in response to customer needs, new technology and funding pressures. In the next few years this change is likely to increase and with it the need for a dynamic and a more highly technology skilled workforce. This links in to the Agile Working work-stream which is part of our (Covid) Recovery Project.
- Public demand for web-based access to services is increasing with information tailored to their needs and the ability to easily transact and pay for services online.

- Social media traffic is increasing and expectation for a rapid response is high. This service area will need to be resourced with additional skills to meet that demand.
- With the drive to reduce paper, which includes agenda papers, Councillors need access to efficient ICT solutions to carry out their work effectively.

Technology Drivers

- Investment in low-code systems will allow us to develop our own solutions to business needs.
- The introduction of new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and Master Data Management (MDM) systems will drive the need for greater systems integration and increased information management.
- Mobile technology deployments, use of 4G and 5G and wireless connectivity.
- The cost of legacy systems.
- Changes in PSN requirements.

ICT vision for the future

To support and enable Waverley to achieve its aims and aspirations in the delivery of high quality public services, accessible to all, through the deployment of technologies and applications and future innovation.

Our roadmap for the future is captured by the following themes:

Citrix

The Citrix environment enables the use of 'thin client' technology to provide cost effective systems. It has the benefit of the easy application of updates and patches and enables hot desking arrangements. The alternative is the use of laptops which are more expensive resource intensive from an ICT support point of view and also in terms of a carbon footprint. However the advantage of laptops is their flexibility in terms of mobile working and working arrangements.

We have determined that there is a compelling case to continue with the i-gel/thin client/citrix arrangement. This arrangement allows agility and offers better data security. It is recognised there will need to be a mixed economy with lap-tops and tablets also featuring according to demands on individual officers and teams.

Lap-tops don't only present hardware management issues but there is also software (e.g. anti-virus) factors to feed in to play. Whilst lap-tops do offer easier access to video conferencing solutions this will become a feature of i-gels within the next 6 months.

Lap-tops are more expensive costing around £450 (including head-sets) for an expected lifespan of 3 years. An i-gel will cost £300 (including citrix) with an expected lifespan of 8-9 years. I-gels do not in themselves offer the same degree of portability however but can still be configured for home use.

In climate change terms i-gels are very much the preferred option with carbon emission levels being around 25% of the lap top equivalent.

Tablets (e.g. i-pad or android devices) can largely be used for mobile working especially since the enhancements provided by the move to Office 365. Citrix provides access to the desktop from any internet connected device which provides flexibility and control.

Telephony

We have been using Skype for Business for the last 8 years as part of the move which also saw a shift from Lotus Notes to Outlook. The telephone service is provided via SIP trunks over the internet. Although in due course we will move from Skype on premise to Teams online, it is recognised that there are other providers who may however not be able to replicate the place in the overall environment Skype is able to occupy.

When the planned move is made to cloud hosted 'Teams' software (hosted Skype for Business) we will be required to use a newer version of the communication security protocol (TLS1.2). The current phones are not compatible with this version. We have recently resolved the issue of voice compression in the Citrix environment by implementing the HDX solution. This separates out the voice traffic and doesn't compress it. We will be able to remove desk phones and move to headset or softphones.

We will also need to factor in the opportunities/challenges presented by the Netcall/Liberty Converse solution we have recently acquired. This will provide full contact centre functionality linked into the Skype for Business environment. It has the potential for replacing all of the existing response groups with a more functional system.

We currently have over 200 mobile phone users across the business. Although allocations will be kept under review as we move to agile working we are not expecting these numbers to reduce significantly for the next few years.

Officers are frequently using telephone based social media messeging as an alternative communication channel to e-mail and this usage is expected to increase, governance and accountability is covered in our IT Acceptable Use policy.

Hosting

There is a strong case to retain the VMware based underlying technology on efficiency grounds alone. As datacentre costs come down there may be a case for increased cloud-hosting, the move out of The Burys may be a good time to consider that. A decision will also be needed as circumstances evolve as to whether to host on premise or move to the cloud. Cost is not the only factor with site connectivity and control also being important factors.

Microsoft

Whilst there are alternatives we believe that they offer no advantages as compared to Microsoft. An Open Source solution is theoretically possible but this presents a high degree of risk and we do not know of any local authorities who have gone for this option, indeed other Surrey Districts are also Microsoft customers. We are confident that Microsoft fits best with our line of business environment especially from an integration perspective.

Licensing costs are high though and other options may arise in the future with new players e.g. Zoom entering the market-place.

Low Code

Last year we went through a protracted procurement process before opting for the Netcall low code solution. This will wrap line of business solutions into contact management. This is a better option than standard CRM products which are not as flexible and are expensive. Low code effectively provides a framework for building applications. An added benefit is that in some scenarios accelerators have been developed, these are partially formed products that we can build on as we look to integrate, stream-line and automate manual processes. There is a growing Netcall community we can work within including private sector organisations who bring, another, welcome perspective to the party. Ultimately we will be able to turn off legacy systems as we replace them with low code solutions.

Our existing on-line forms are good but the back office structure is missing, limiting automation. Low code will also provide us with future-proofing and control over what we produce. We are developing a road-map to set out these plans

We also acquired Liberty converse as our contact centre solution which covers all forms of contact including phone, text and e-mail. The Gov Notify system will allow us to sign up for a zero cost text messaging service. Again the aim is to take out and remove the many disparate small-scale systems we have and replace them with unified corporate products which will also ease the management burden.

Line of Business Applications

Our strategy varies from system to system. It is worth recognising that in most cases the market is limited.

Adelante - This is the cash income system which has been very effective to date. There may soon be a move to a hosted environment which will simplify payment card issues, although the recent sale of Adelante may impact on this.

Agresso - This is the Finance system and we will be guided by the service requirements as to any future change.

Building Control/Planning - Moving on to the new Horizon system. In time this will extend also to Land Charges and the Gazetteer.

Elections - Express. This performs well and we have no proposals to change.

Environmental Health - Upgrade planned to the replacement Northgate product.

Environmental Services - Currently using Civica contact manager which will be replaced by a low code solution. Whitespace is used by Biffa and we will be looking to improve the interface via integration.

HR/Payroll - Itrent and Midland HR. Again there are no proposals to change.

Licensing - Northgate to be replaced by a low code solution.

Orchard - Looking at a soft market test or a low code solution given that Orchard has been taken over which may result in a new direction.

Planning - Moving on to the new Horizon system. In time this will extend also to Land Charges and the Gazetteer.

Revs and Bens   - We use Civica's Open Revenues product. There are very few providers in the market and the situation is complicated by the requirement to respond to frequent legislative changes. Should Benefits be taken over by Central Government (as envisaged under Universal Credit) that would change the landscape as revenues is a more straightforward process. A business case would be difficult to make because of the investment required at present.

Document Management

We are proposing to continue to use Sharepoint for anything not directly linked to a line of business application and have moved this into the Office 365 online environment. We will use Civica W2 for documents related to line of business applications with direct links between them and although we may move to the cloud in future at this time that is not cost effective. A move to sharepoint on line may facilitate enhanced member access also.

Our hybrid mail solution is transforming our postal arrangements and in time this will extend to the vast majority of incoming and outgoing post.

Working Patterns

We will continue the theme of the current strategy to improve and enhance mobile working and we are also now seeking to enable more people to work from home. There are a number of work-streams underway to facilitate that (e.g. i-gel configuration, raspberry pi development, citrix voice compression).

Cyber

We are active members of the South East Regional Group and benefited from an LGA grant last year. Mimecast is still considered to be a sound investment. We also received funding for technical cyber training which we will follow up on. We are rigorous in our approach to back-ups via sequel server, log based, including 365 and of VM ware. We have recently moved to an off-site cloud backup solution.

Data

The MDM integration has alerted us to gaps in some service areas when it comes to understanding and using data. We will be putting forward a business case for an Information Manager to address that.

Training

We have invested in a Training Officer which is a permanent post within the establishment. This will be supplemented as and when necessary given the importance of clear guidance to users when changes are made to our systems.

Governance

Overall governance responsibility lies with the IT Strategy Group. Implementation of the Strategy Action Plan/Annual Work Programme will rest with the Change Advisory Steering Group.

Action Plan 2020-2023

Action	Purpose	Timescale	Cost	Lead Officer
Implement new Citrix environment and Edge Browser (replacing Internet Explorer)	This will allow the Office 365 Client to be installed on the Desktop thus ensuring that applications such as Teams and Sharepoint work much more seamlessly. Edge will also work much better with a range of applications than with Internet Explorer	June 2021	£20k (part of this year's capital programme)	Linda Frame
Implement HDX voice facility in Citrix	This will allow the gradual replacement of desk phones and assist working from home	Complete	£0. The Team are doing this themselves	Jamie Hill
Consider cloud hosting options for individual applications where it is cost effective to do so	Achieve better value for money	Ongoing as renewals come up	There will either be saving or the increase will be lower than the renewal cost	Linda Frame
Maximise the use of on line Teams/Sharepoint products	To get the most out of environment we will need a focused training programme	Ongoing throughout the life of the strategy	£0. This will be delivered by existing staff	James Rudge
Reorganise Data in GIS Systems	Our GIS/mapping systems have evolved rather than been designed. They would benefit from dedicated expertise to reorganise the way data is stored and presented through the GIS system to ensure we are reaping the maximum benefits.	March 2022	Market still to be tested	Linda Frame
Improve Cyber Security	Enhance security	April 2021	The most effective way	Linda Frame

systems including the implementation and monitoring of the Cyglass product	capability by adopting good practice		to do this would be to recruit a cyber specialist. Cost would be in the region of £50k per annum.	
Equip staff and councillors to work remotely in line with projected future office requirements	This will include the provision particulary of lap-tops and large tablets where an i-gel is not an appropriate solution	April 2021	£50k per annum	Howard Denhart
Explore options to replace Adelante	The new Adelante system has not been delivered. Possibly due to a change in ownership so alternatives will need to be explored	July 2021	£15k	Linda Frame
Maximise the effectiveness of Liberty Create	Additional development days from the supplier would deliver this	April 2021	£30k	Linda Frame
Carry out Option Appraisal for alternatives to the Orchard solution	The longevity of the Orchard product is in doubt and performance has not been good recently	February 2021	Initial option appraisal to Management Board can be delivered at zero cost	Linda Frame
Ensure the GDPR document disposal requirements are being met	This will require a review of asset register, assessment of compliance and monitoring of disposals	April 2021	Within the workload of the Data Protection Officer	Dan Bainbridge
Consider alternatives to the current McAfee Anti Virus and encryption software.	We have been running the current McAfee solution for some years. It is expensive and cumbersome to manage particularly on servers.	February 2021		Jamie Hill