

Report of the Chief Executive

Shared legal service

1 Purpose of report

The report sets out the arrangements in respect of the shared legal service.

2 Executive summary

The shared legal service between Daventry Kettering and Wellingborough councils operates well and provides value for money.

3 Appendices

None.

4 Proposed action:

4.1 The committee note the report

5 Background/Discussion

5.1 The council first entered into arrangements for a shared legal service in 2006. The other partner was Kettering Borough Council. The motivation for doing so was the difficulty that the council had in recruiting adequate legal staff.

5.2 Under the arrangements Kettering employed all of the staff and provided most support services including Human Resources, Accounting and IT. Each council also provided office space for up to 5 staff in each office. At the start there was an establishment of 8 lawyers to cover 2 councils' legal work, together with an administrator and the Head of Legal Services in Kettering who was involved only in a management capacity

5.3 The shared service, which was known as Connect Law provided most legal services for the council, including in particular all legal work relating to property holdings, Housing litigation, debt collect, planning related legal work, licensing legal advice and attendance at planning and licensing committees. Some complex or highly specialised work was however done by outside lawyers (eg legal representation at complex planning appeals).

- 5.4.1 In 2011 the name was changed to District Law without any substantive change. On 1 April 2013 Daventry District Council joined the service with the aim of providing further cost savings for all 3 councils.
- 5.4.2 The service now has an establishment of 7 lawyers to cover the work of 3 councils. The work done overall remains broadly the same.
- 5.4.3 The cost of the service is split equally between the 3 councils. In the last financial year this was £121,600, a significant saving on the original budget.
- 5.5 The service is managed by a board on which each of the 3 councils is represented by one senior manager. It meets quarterly where it reviews both financial and staff performance as well as overall strategic issues. It is fair to say that the board is satisfied on behalf of all 3 councils that the service is meeting its objectives.

6 Legal Powers

The shared legal service operates under the powers in section 113 of the Local Government Act 1972 for one council to make its staff available to another.

7 Financial, risk and value for money implications

- 7.1 The shared legal service provides a degree of resilience and costs savings compared with the council employing its own legal staff. It is also able to provide most legal services at a much lower cost than by outsourcing to the private sector.

8 Equalities Implications.

None

9 Author and contact officer

John T Campbell, Chief Executive

9 Consultees

Sue Lyons, Head of District Law Consortium
Liz Elliott, Head of Finance
Bridget Lawrence, Head of Resources
Julie Thomas, Interim Head of Planning and Local Development

10 Background papers

Report of the Head of ICT

REVIEW OF THE SHARED ICT SERVICE

1 Purpose of report

This report provides an update to members on arrangements related to the shared Information and Communications Technologies (ICT).

2 Executive summary

The ICT service is currently shared with East Northamptonshire Council in a partnership arrangement, with all staff being employed by East Northants. Over the past year, the Borough Council of Wellingborough (BCW) has benefitted from a significant investment in technology, to update its ageing infrastructure, and pave the way for strategic transformational change in the coming years.

This report highlights the achievements of the last year, the plans for the coming year and some background information on the governance arrangements that ensure Wellingborough receives a high quality service.

3 Appendices

- Appendix 1: IT achievements over the past year
- Appendix 2: Future ICT plans for BCW
- Appendix 3: ICT shared service budgets 2014/15
- Appendix 4: Previous years' budgets
- Appendix 5: Performance indicators

4 Proposed action:

4.1 The committee is invited to RESOLVE to note the report.

5 Background

5.1 The existing ICT Shared service was formed on the 1st April 2008. After consideration of various options, it was decided that the provision of the ICT service would be provided by East Northamptonshire Council rather than Northamptonshire County Council (NCC).

5.2 All existing ICT staff and a member of staff from NCC transferred at that time to the employment of East Northamptonshire Council under TUPE arrangements.

- 5.3 Governance is undertaken through an ICT management board with a shared ICT budget, predominantly for all staffing costs. These costs are divided equally between the two councils. In addition each authority maintain local ICT budgets, predominately for maintenance costs of local systems.

6 Discussion

6.1 Overview of ICT services to BCW

- (a) The last twelve months have provided a major step forwards for BCW with a fundamental revamp of the core technology infrastructure that supports the whole council, and opens up the potential for significant transformational change in the coming year. A wide range of projects have been completed over the last year which are outlined below and detailed at Appendix 1. In summary these are:

- a. Active Directory installation
- b. Windows XP migration/ new PC technology
- c. Security enhancements (to support PSN compliance)
- d. New Planning and Building Control department systems (Uniform)
- e. New council website
- f. Election support and individual electoral registration (IER) rollout
- g. New email filtering and archiving system
- h. Academy (revenue and benefits system) and related major upgrades
- i. Implementation of Trimble GPS system for Planning Officers

6.2 Future ICT plans for BCW

- (a) The list of developments planned for BCW is considerable, and likely to be constrained by the level of financial and ICT resource available, together with the rate at which the organisation is able to embed further change.
- (b) Key projects planned are detailed in Appendix 2, but summarised below:
- a. New email system (migration of GroupWise to Outlook)
 - b. New approach to printing
 - c. New telephone system
 - d. Document management system
 - e. Service to Members
 - f. Changes to Revenues and Benefits organization
 - g. Continued security focus to ensure continued PSN compliance

6.3 ICT service delivery

- (a) In addition to the project work, a considerable amount of effort is consumed in maintaining the day to day operation of the council. This

ranges from the back office maintenance of the computer environments, undertaking daily backups of information, maintaining security levels across the network, combatting the continual risks of virus infection etc, through to support of all council staff via the service desk.

- (b) An average of 1100-1200 phone calls are received by the service desk each month covering both councils, resulting in 300-400 incident requests (faults to fix) and 300-400 service requests (request for new / changed facilities).
- (c) Incident requests are monitored as part of the performance reporting process, with a target of 85% of calls being completed within a target period. The 'target' varies depending on the severity of the incident. On average the service is achieving an 80% fix rate within the service level agreement period, and this is currently being reviewed to determine how the service management processes can be improved to achieve a higher performance level, given a reduced level of support staff. A breakdown of the last year's performance indicators is included at Appendix 5.

6.4 ICT governance

- (a) **Overall partnership arrangements:** ICT services at BCW are provided by a shared service, joint with East Northants council. This service was established in 2008, employing 23 staff to enable costs and systems to be shared across the two councils. Over the last 6 years, a number of steps have been taken to increase the number of common systems in use, and cost savings have been achieved. This has taken place as business opportunities have arisen or as systems have needed to be replaced, so as to minimise expenditure until it was absolutely required. Hence there are a number of areas such as HR and finance where the two organisations remain on different technologies.
- (b) The partnership has also looked to expand the group by bringing in other councils, and discussions have taken place to that end. Considerable work progressed in 2013 with Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC), and a business case prepared. Ultimately HDC decided on a more wide-ranging strategic partnership with South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City, terminating any technical debate.
- (c) Finding additional partners for the future remains a priority, as even with the two councils working together on technology developments, the overhead of maintaining an ICT function is high and would be better shared amongst more organisations.
- (d) Although formal partnerships aren't in place, an informal 'sharing' arrangement exists with local groups such as Corby, Kettering and Huntingdon, and it is possible that one or more of these may develop

into a longer term formal relationship.

- (e) **Governance:** Overall strategic direction and decision making remains with each of the partner councils. Day to day responsibility for service delivery rests with the Head of ICT Services who reports directly to both chief executives. In addition an ICT partnership management group exists, alternately chaired by each Chief Exec which monitors the performance of the service, reviews expenditure against budget etc.
- (f) **Finance:** a summary of the 2014/15 budget, showing expenditure for the shared service up to August is included at Appendix 3.
- (g) A summary of previous years' ICT budgets, showing the financial savings that have been made since the partnership was created is included at Appendix 4

6.5 ICT Workload planning

- (a) The work of the ICT department is currently being reviewed by the new Head of ICT services, and greater focus is being placed on a strategic workplan that is reviewed and agreed by each council. It is recognised that ICT resource is at a premium, and the number of requests far exceed the amount of resource available. A full register of work is currently being compiled and prioritised in agreement with the two councils. The department is also reviewing work estimation processes and time recording in order to obtain better estimates of when work can be undertaken, to give each council a more realistic expectation of when work can be completed.
- (b) Of particular note for BCW is that the balance of resources over the last year has been heavily weighted in its favour, given the volume of projects undertaken. This has resulted in around 70-80% of project resource being devoted to this council. The arrangement was undertaken in agreement with East Northants, due to the urgent need to address the technology infrastructure. However, this balance now needs to be redressed and, for the coming year, East Northants will be receiving the majority of available resources.
- (c) This does not mean that work will stop at WBC, just that there needs to be a clear process of prioritisation, so that the focus of effort is on those projects delivering the greatest benefit to the council.

7 Legal powers

Section 111 of The Local Government Act 1972 gives the council power to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of its functions.

8 Financial and value for money implications

The partnership with East Northants Council has provided cost savings since the partnership began, and further work is being undertaken to realise further savings.

9 Risk analysis

The major risks associated with the council's ICT arrangements are those of security, resilience and disaster recovery. Much work has been undertaken to comply with government security requirements (PSN), as well as improvements planned to backup regimes. Upgrades to equipment in the council's server room are ongoing, as is a long-term review of disaster recovery so that the council could continue to function even if a building was lost or not available.

10 Other implications

There are no implications in relation to: resources; stronger and safer communities; and equalities.

11 Author and contact officer

Phil Grimley, Head of ICT

12 Consultees

Ian Peters, ICT Technical Manager
Bridget Lawrence, Head of Resources
Liz Elliott, Head of Finance
Julie Thomas, Interim Head of Planning and Local Development

13 Background papers

Budget papers
Helpdesk documentation
Minutes of meetings
Project documents

Appendix 1

ICT ACHIEVEMENTS OVER THE PAST YEAR

ACTIVE DIRECTORY

While of little direct impact to users, Microsoft Active Directory is at the heart of an organisation's technology infrastructure, controlling all the user permissions and security policies, providing access to the different components of the computer environment and managing the installation and updating of software.

It also provides a hierarchical structure that enables an organisation to control its technical environment more effectively using such wonderful terms as Domain, Trees and Forests. While this may appear academic and excessive for a small organisation such as BCW, it becomes increasingly important as the organisation moves into a more shared environment with others such as Wellingborough Norse, LGSS, and East Northants Council. The use of Active Directory makes linking networks and systems much easier and faster to achieve and is the industry default ICT platform standard.

From the user perspective, they will have been aware of minor changes to their login procedure, file structures and groups. In the main changes were seamless, as the organisation moved away from the previous network based on Novell. While Novell has worked well for recent years, it did not align with the council's strategic direction of moving towards a Microsoft platform

WINDOWS XP SYSTEM / NEW PC TECHNOLOGY

The withdrawal of support by Microsoft earlier this year for the Windows XP operating system was much publicised in the press, and the cause of significant work for the ICT team.

While the PCs would have continued to work, there were no further security updates being provided which was too great a risk for an organisation to sustain. The continued use of XP would also have meant compliance with the PSN audit (as explained below) could never be met. Organisations which failed to complete the upgrade from XP on time were forced to enter into multi-million pound agreements for additional Microsoft support.

For BCW this means a total of 180 PCs and laptops were replaced over a single weekend. This was the culmination of months of planning and testing activity by the ICT team, along with many users who had supported the User Acceptance Testing (UAT) process. Cleansing and disposal of the old machines remains a considerable task.

PUBLIC SERVICE NETWORK (PSN) COMPLIANCE

Government departments' track record in managing data has been of concern in the past, with numerous stories reaching the media of laptops left on trains, confidential personal records inadvertently being published etc. Most recently East Midlands Ambulance Service 'lost' a device which stored 42,000 patients

personal records. Because of this the Government introduced a new regime in 2012/13 to improve the way in which public information is managed and, more importantly, to create a new 'secure' network across the UK so that government departments can share information securely.

As any such network is only as good as its weakest link, all government agencies wishing to join this network have had to comply with a single (high) level of security compliance. For councils such as BCW this is mandatory, in order to share information with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), which is critical for the work of the Revenue and Benefits service. Inevitably this will spread to other council functions as the government progresses its 'Digital by Default' agenda.

The government announced a 'zero tolerance' approach to compliance with PSN, and a range of independent auditors have been engaged to test compliance around the country. For BCW and East Northants Council this has been a huge undertaking over the last year. East Northants led the way and achieved compliance in November 2013. The learning from the exercise is now being applied to BCW, with the expectation of our submission being made in September 2014. This is right up against the final deadline for PSN compliance, but has been unavoidable due to the other pressing projects being undertaken earlier this year.

The work undertaken to ensure compliance is mainly of a technical nature, but has included the following main areas:

- **Patch Management:** Applying software security patches is an essential part of a secure network. BCW now have two systems which manage and control the deployment of key operating system and software patches across the entire ICT estate.
- **Vulnerability Scanning:** In conjunction with ENC, a pro-active system was purchased in 2013, to constantly scan the network and report on potential security issues. This helps us to achieve PSN compliance and ensure the network is as secure as possible on an ongoing basis.
- **End Point Security:** A system is in place to ensure only authorised devices can be plugged into the network. This ensures the network cannot be compromised by files transferred from users' or suppliers' devices. One practical implication of this compliance work is the government requirement to ensure information remains under the control of the council. This is why there is a policy of not permitting 'auto-forwarding' of emails from the Council email system; it places the council at risk of non-compliance for PSN, as well as facing the wrath of the Information Commissioner.

Unfortunately, achieving PSN compliance isn't a one-off task, as annual renewal is required. Evidence from other councils who are further ahead in this process has demonstrated that, even in a stable environment, the re-auditing process can throw up major new security issues which have to be

addressed in a mandatory four-week period.

This remains one of the major technology risk areas for BCW.

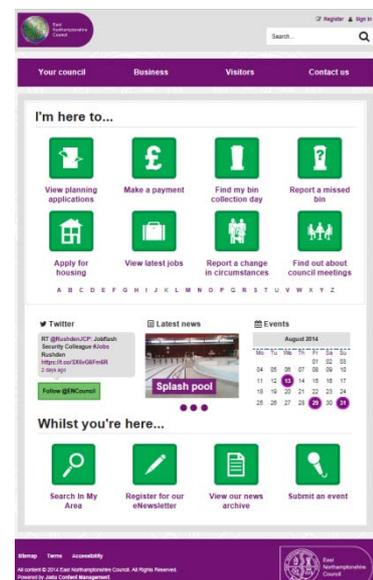
NEW PLANNING AND BUILDING CONTROL DEPARTMENT SYSTEMS

The Northgate systems (SX3, M3 & BS7666 Gazeteer) used by the Planning, Building Control and Environment Health services were supplied by Northgate until early 2014. However, in order to upgrade this system to enable it to continue to work post April 2014, Northgate demanded a six figure sum which the council declined to pay. As a result, a major project took place to migrate all the planning and environmental health activity from Northgate to the IDOX Uniform system (which was already in use at East Northants). This project would typically take 6-9 months to complete, but had to be achieved in just 13 weeks. This was achieved due to the combined efforts of ICT, Northgate and BCW Officers, working closely to ensure the project delivered on time.

Inevitably the launch of the new system experienced some difficulties, but service to the public continued with minimal impact.

NEW COUNCIL WEBSITE

The council website has been completely revamped during recent months, and the new site launched at the end of July. This was a joint project with East Northants, so the underlying technology (JADU) and site design is now consistent across the two councils, saving significant money for both organisations. However, the actual content and 'styling' remains unique to each organization:



ELECTION SUPPORT & IER ROLLOUT

In addition to successfully supporting the local elections in May, the new Individual Election Registration (IER) process has also been introduced, requiring a new technology solution to be implemented over a number of months. This meant working closely with democratic services teams in both councils to ensure systems

were tested sufficiently and functioned correctly, to the point that they went live in July.

ACADEMY AND RELATED SYSTEM MAJOR UPGRADES

In 2014, ICT have undertaken a number of major upgrades to the Academy revenue and benefit system, as well as related systems, such as cash receipting, income management, and the council revenue printing system. All these upgrades involved significant effort and co-ordination, and all form part of the delivery of key Council services.

IMPLEMENTATION OF TRIMBLE GPS SYSTEM FOR PLANNING OFFICERS

A TRIMBLE system was implemented in Planning Policy to enable them to update data while on site, eliminating the need to print out excel spreadsheets, hand write information, then re-type into Excel on return to the office, before converting to GIS format.

Appendix 2

FUTURE ICT PLANS FOR BCW

Currently 83 projects have been identified for completion within the next 12-18 months across both authorities. Of these, 16 are specifically BCW's, 27 are joint projects with ENC and 40 specifically are ENC's. This split reflects the fact that significant work has been undertaken at Wellingborough in the last two years so there will be a focus on East Northants Council's projects in the short term.

The significant work within this work plan for BCW is detailed below.

NEW EMAIL SYSTEM

For some years the council has been operating the Novell Groupwise email system. This is no longer considered strategic when the vast majority of organisations are utilising Microsoft. A project is therefore currently underway to migrate users (and all their email) to Exchange\Outlook. This is scheduled to complete during September, and will be the final part of the jigsaw in updating the core infrastructure at the council.

Once in place, Exchange can be used as the basis of a number of other developments which are loosely grouped under the title of 'unified comms'. This allows the potential integration of email/phone/fax/ instant messaging /video conferencing/ accessibility of information to provide greater flexibility for the workforce. This is also a key step in supporting a mobile working initiative which could allow the council to make savings in its property estate.

NEW APPROACH TO PRINTING

The council is already well advanced in its adoption of large printers (multi-function devices – MFDs), that can print, copy and scan documents in a controlled fashion. They have successfully reduced the large volume of individual printers that pervade other organisations. However, the current printers have reached the end of their lease period, and a new solution is required.

While it would be easy to replace the printers on a like-for-like basis, the proposal is to review the volume of printing the council is undertaking and how this could be better managed in the future, reducing the overall print volume and hence increasing savings to the council.

NEW TELEPHONE SYSTEM

The current telephone system has been in place for a number of years and is generally considered to be 'end of life', not supporting the current ambitions of the council. Work is currently underway to identify future requirements and a number of supplier briefing sessions will be arranged this autumn, to help the organisation think through the strategic implications of a modern telecommunications strategy. This is particularly important as the council increasingly works with other partners to deliver services to the community, and where we still wish to demonstrate a single 'joined-up' service to the customer.

DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

This project was initiated in 2012 by the respective Heads of Planning at BCW and East Northants to improve the storage and accessibility of planning documentation, including the public access element. With the major changes in staff at both councils, and the significant projects which have superseded it, the project was put on hold for a period, but is now being resurrected to ensure that the original expectations are met.

The focus of the project is to introduce a product called SharePoint into both councils, along with an enhanced scanning solution to assist with the reduction in paper records. The project is being driven by East Northants Council, who will have the initial version of the system and, once testing is complete, a duplicate version will be made available to BCW. It is then intended to use this as the basis for much wider user of SharePoint across the council, to control and streamline information processes.

SERVICES TO MEMBERS

In the last few years, the tablet computer has become all-pervasive with a very high level of adoption by the public. Adoption within the business community is also increasing as the number of business focused applications increase.

With the new intake of council members due in 2015, this project is focused on developing a range of services to best meet their requirements, and help the council streamline its governance processes. Systems which could manage the whole council governance process, from agendas through to detailed paperwork for meetings, are being considered, although a business case will be essential – as it is for any new system proposals. This approach is being reviewed, along with a range of tablet computers to enable a more modern technology offering to members, and the provision of wireless networks within the Council Chamber and Committee Room to aid the use of this technology.

Whilst investigations are under way, it is recognised that there will be a range of appetites for such developments amongst members. Work will be undertaken with members to assess how technology might help them to streamline their roles as community representatives.

CHANGES TO REVENUE AND BENEFITS

The council is looking at the potential for sharing the provision of a Revenue and Benefits service. If this goes ahead it will have significant impact on the current range of ICT services, needing to be planned and implemented. It is critical that the current security arrangements around the Revenue and Benefits service are maintained if responsibility passes to a third party, and this will need to be separated from the rest of the technology environment which the existing ICT service will continue to manage.

CONTINUED SECURITY FOCUS TO ENSURE CONTINUED PSN COMPLIANCE

Given that PSN compliance is an annual process for all organisations, this will continue to be a top priority as central government continues to tighten up security arrangements and increasingly promotes its 'Digital by Default' agenda

Appendix 3

ICT SHARED SERVICE BUDGET 2014/15 (showing expenditure to July 2014)

The budgets set out below are those of the shared service. The cost to the Borough Council of Wellingborough is 50% of the total. There are additional ICT costs which are not included in the shared service budgets because they relate only to BCW.

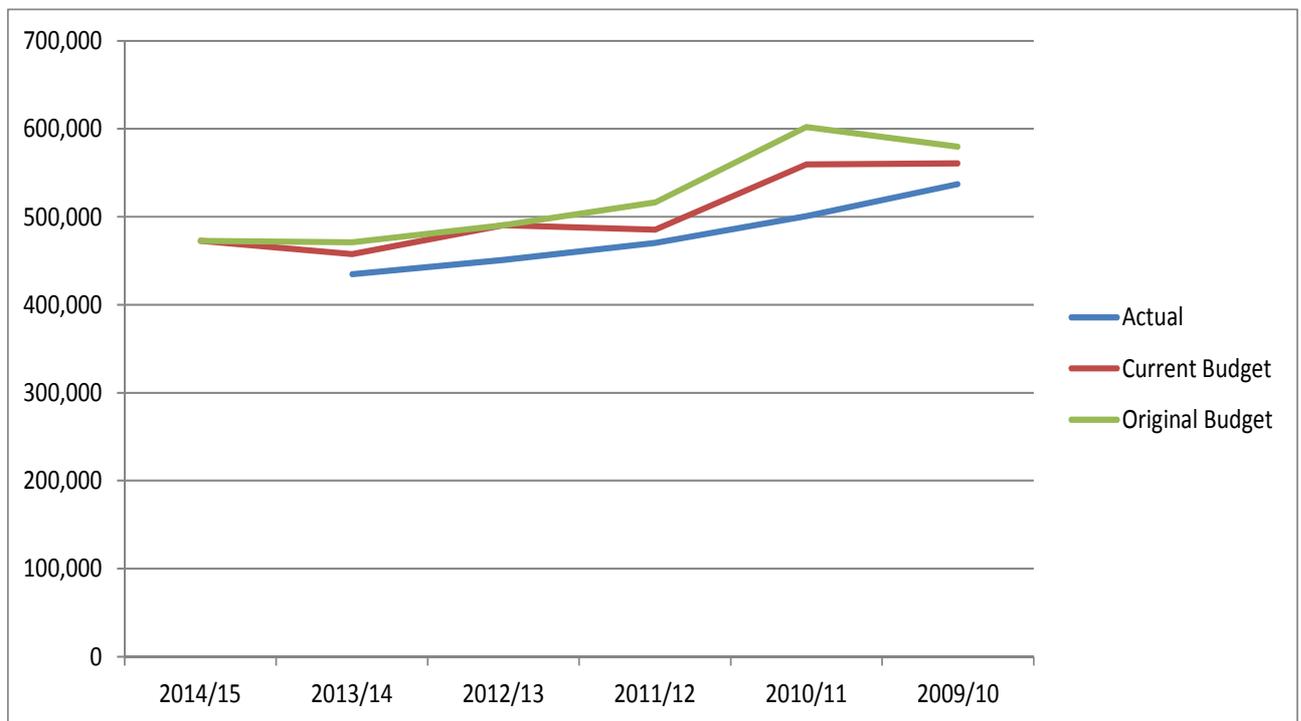
Period: P4 - July 2014)

Detail code	Details	Original Budget 2014/15	Current Budget 2014/15	Actual + Commitment	Projected Outturn 2014/15	Curr Budget VS Projected Outturn Variance
Employee Related Expenses						
	1111 Salaries	£763,970	£771,740	£247,324	£771,740	£0
	1151 Staff Professional Member Fees	£550	£550	£0	£550	£0
	1155 Protective Clothing	£200	£200	£147	£200	£0
	1230 Short Courses / Seminars	£5,500	£5,500	£1,600	£5,500	£0
	1231 Qualification Courses	£8,000	£8,000	£0	£8,000	£0
	1142 Agency Staff	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
	1272 Employers deficit pension contribution	£118,790	£118,790	£39,596	£118,790	£0
		£897,010	£904,780	£288,667	£904,780	£0
Transport Related Expenses						
	3411 Train, bus and taxi fares	500	£500	£467	£590	£90
	3611 Car Allowances	5700	£5,700	£1,805	£6,740	£1,040
		£6,200	£6,200	£2,272	£7,330	£1,130
Supplies & Services						
	4114 Small Tools and Equipment	£300	£300	£0	£300	£0
	4321 Stationery	£500	£500	£32	£500	£0
	4331 Books and Publications	£250	£250	£0	£250	£0
	4415 Professional Consultants	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
	4462 Office Recyclable Waste	£50	£50	£0	£50	£0
	4521 Telephone & Mobile Rentals	£1,200	£1,200	£300	£1,200	£0
	4522 Telephone Calls	£220	£220	£50	£220	£0
	4523 Maintenance of Phones	£730	£730	£327	£730	£0
	4542 Licence and Maintenance Costs	£20,910	£20,910	£8,181	£19,270	(£1,640)
	4526 Internet Related Charges	£17,920	£17,920	£4,441	£17,920	£0
	4533 R & M IT Equipment	£3,000	£3,000	£432	£3,000	£0
	4543 Software Support	£13,000	£13,000	£8,260	£4,130	(£8,870)
	4751 Hospitality	£150	£150	£0	£150	£0
		£58,230	£58,230	£22,023	£47,720	(£10,510)
Total Expenditure:		£961,440	£969,210	£312,962	£959,830	(£9,380)

Appendix 4

BCW Contribution to ICT Shared Service

	Actual	Current Budget	Original Budget
2014/15		£472,690	£472,690
2013/14	£434,810	£457,585	£470,980
2012/13	£451,038	£490,440	£490,440
2011/12	£470,353	£485,200	£516,200
2010/11	£500,926	£559,485	£602,220
2009/10	£537,240	£560,700	£579,790



Appendix 5

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

ICT PERFORMANCE INDICATORS															
Indicator	Measurement method	2013				2014								Target	
		sept	oct	nov	dec	jan	feb	mar	apr	may	jun	july	aug		
NW4	Internal systems available	% of time core systems are available during working hours	99.7	99.7	99.7	99.8	99.9	99.8	99.7	99.7	99.7	99.9	95	99.9	99.90%
NW5	User satisfied or better IT Services	% user satisfaction measured by annual survey							94						82
NW6	Service desk calls resolved within time stated in the SLA	Number of service desk calls (both councils)	363	493	322	267	367	316	433	452	356	435	371	316	--
		% fixed within SLA	79	80	78	80	82	78	78	71	80	79	80	83	85