	Overview & Scrutiny Committee 8th February 2007 **Report from the Head of IT**
For Action	Wards Affected: ALL
IT Strategy 2007	

1.0   Summary

1.1   The corporate IT Strategy 2007 outlines the direction of Information and Communications Technology in Brent Council though to 2010. It supports the council's Corporate Strategy and departmental IT requirements. This strategy was agreed by the Executive on 15th January 2007.

1.2   At the last meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee 14th December 2006 Members requested further information on the key aspects of the IT Strategy and proposals for implementation. Tony Ellis the Head of IT will be attending the meeting to provide a presentation and answer questions. A copy of the IT Strategy is attached.

2.0   Recommendations

2.1   Members may wish to make recommendations on plans for implementing the IT Strategy and monitoring its impact.

3.0   Detail

3.1   The strategy supersedes the previous IT and e-Government strategies. It is intended to meet the requirements of the council's Corporate Strategy, the service area departmental IT strategies, central government's Transformational Government strategy, the Varney Report and ongoing technical developments in information technology.

3.2   The key directions for Brent's IT over the next 4 years are seen as:

1. Improving levels of support to all service units through the adoption of standard methods of IT service management and a greater emphasis on

performance management. This will result in improved delivery, availability and reliability of IT services.

2. Integration of customer data to provide a unified view of the citizen (and business) to all service units and front line customer services. This will result in significant improvements in customer service and cost savings across the council. For the first time services will be configured (personalised) around the needs and requirements of the resident.

3. Data quality and data sharing will become key issues and these will be addressed as part of the Information Management strategy.

4. An increased role for employing IT in business transformation to realise potential efficiency savings. This will involve greater use of business analysis, process improvement and change management.

5. A greater emphasis on using IT to assist the efficiency and effectiveness of everyday working practices. This includes improved email/collaboration services, greater use of workflow and document/records management.

6. Development of mobile and remote working. The increasing availability of high capacity broadband and wireless facilities will free staff from being tied to specific work locations and allow much greater flexibility in working patterns and office accommodation.

7. Empowering our residents by providing them with a means of directly accessing information on the services provided to them. This will transform online contact with the public and move from simple information provision to fully transactional and interactive services. These will play a key role in developing more cost effective means of service delivery. Take-up of these services will need to be encouraged and the public will need to have the appropriate skills to make use of them. It is envisaged that the provision of a faster and more "personalised" service provision will have a direct impact on perception and satisfaction with the council.

8. Providing an up-to-date, effective, resilient and secure IT infrastructure which will support all the IT needs of the council.

9. Establishing the infrastructure for enabling shared services, secure electronic communications with partner organisations (in particular with central government departments and the NHS).

10. Ensuring that IT is deployed corporately across the whole of the council so that maximum benefits and efficiencies can be achieved.

11. Reducing the environmental impact of the use of IT in the council - the Green IT Agenda.

3.3 We are committed to becoming a centre of excellence in one key area – the management of information and data.

3.4 The format of the strategy is based on the National E-Service Delivery standards and reflects our organisational commitment to quality and best

practice. The content of the Strategy is aimed at the customers of the IT service rather than the technical community.

4.0 Financial Implications

4.1 The strategy proposes an increase in overall IT Unit costs through additional investment in software & hardware and additional staff in specific areas. These extra costs will be accommodated via existing provision in the e-Government Fund, service level agreement charges or will be self funding through efficiency savings resulting from improved business processes.

5.0 Legal Implications

5.1 The Council has to meet the requirements of the Data Protection and Freedom of Information Acts. Several proposals in the IT Strategy regarding data integration and document/records management will support this legislation.

6.0 Diversity Implications

6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and found no adverse effects from the IT Strategy proposals.

6.2 The council website currently does not meet appropriate levels of accessibility but developments are in progress to address this issue.

7.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications

7.1 The strategy proposes an increase in IT staffing levels in order to provide additional services such as business analysis and process improvement where there has been inadequate provision in the past and additional support for areas such as information security and document management.

7.2 It is planned to relocate IT Unit staff from the current separate locations to a new single location in the future.

Background Papers

Brent e-Government Programme and IEG statements 2002-2006
Brent IT Strategy 2002
Brent e-Government Strategy 2001

These papers are available from the website at www.brent.gov.uk/egov

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