



**Cabinet**  
14<sup>th</sup> June 2021

**Report from the Strategic Director  
of Customer and Digital Services**

## **Brent Technology Roadmap Capital Investment**

<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b>	Key
<b>Open or Part/Fully Exempt:</b> <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
<b>No. of Appendices:</b>	One Appendix A - Brent Technical Roadmap Executive Summary
<b>Background Papers:</b>	None
<b>Contact Officer(s):</b> <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Sally Chin Head of ICT and Applications Support Tel: 020 8937 1432 <a href="mailto:sally.chin@brent.gov.uk">sally.chin@brent.gov.uk</a>

### **1.0. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1. In 2020/21 a planning exercise was undertaken to understand the future IT requirements for the Council over the next 5 years. This resulted in a 5 year Capital Investment programme and Technology Roadmap, covering the 2020-2025 period.
- 1.2. The resulting Technology roadmap is very comprehensive and included a breakdown across the 5 years, with each proposed scheme analysed with 3 options; the highest potential cost, the medium cost and the lowest cost. The highest cost includes a solution which would give a very high quality product and the lowest cost is the most basic/"functional" solution.
- 1.3. The summary results of the above detailed analysis is shown in Appendix 1, the Brent Technical Executive Summary.
- 1.4. The costs included in this paper are for the medium-based options for the remaining 4 years of the roadmap (FY2021/22 to FY2024/25). Further detailed considerations will be made for each project at the time of preparation of the project initiation document. The individual projects of the overall Programme will be reported to and tracked at the

Customer and Digital Board and within the Capital Programme through the Corporate Landlord Board.

## **2.0. Recommendations(s) for Cabinet**

That Cabinet:

- 2.1.** Approves the business case for the Brent Technology Roadmap, to be taken forward to Cabinet.
- 2.2.** Agrees that each subsequent scheme and where appropriate each project, will be subject to regular status reports which will be submitted to the Executive Director of Customer & Digital Services at the Customer and Digital Board and Capital Programme Board, in consultation with the Deputy Leader.

## **3.0. Detail**

### **3.1. Objectives**

The objective of earmarking a nominated capital fund for technology investments is to ensure that the Council remains current and the IT systems and infrastructure are reliable, resilient and robust, enabling officers to carry out their duties effectively and efficiently.

The investment will equip the Shared Technology Services (STS) with the tools to enable a modern approach to managing and monitoring our datacentres, networks and devices to ensure efficiency in operations and secure protections are in place.

Following a number of very high profile cyber attacks it is particularly important that the STS have the ability to provide resilient and robust IT which is as safe as possible from security vulnerabilities. To ensure that the risk is as low as possible it is important that there is a significant investment in the IT infrastructure across the 3 partner councils.

The attached Executive Summary has considered the future IT landscape, the STS consider that the plan included therein represents the best possible approach for the Council. Investment in this roadmap supports the delivery of the five borough plan themes: every opportunity to succeed; a future fit for everyone; an economy fit for all; a cleaner, more considerate Brent; a borough where we can all feel safe, secure, happy and healthy; and strong foundations. Specifically the technology roadmap will directly contribute to delivering outcomes of enabling residents to get online and making every pound count, which are key elements of the strong foundations theme. Investing in secure, resilient and available IT enables council employees who use corporate technology to deliver departmental objectives effectively.

The overall cost of the Programme is c £35m shared with Brent, Lewisham and Southwark. Lewisham are contributing £10.1m and Southwark are contributing £14.2m to the IT Roadmap.

## 3.2. Options Appraisal

The STS considered a number of options for each individual project, which makes up the overall Programme. As the Programme is developed in detail, the options will be reappraised to ensure that they remain the best solution for the organisation. The investment will provide a secure, stable and resilient IT infrastructure for the Council.

Five key categories make up the IT roadmap:

- Datacentre Improvements
- Campus networking improvements
- End user modernisation
- Cyber protection
- Service improvements

### **Datacentre Improvements:**

There are a number of key components of the datacentre improvement works. There is an immediate need to implement a new backup and disaster recovery solution. The replacement solution will protect the IT infrastructure and the council's data from malicious attack, such as the one recently experienced by another London Borough.

In the event of an IT failure, the council will be in a position to recover quickly by implementing changes in the way the data is stored. Upgrading the internet capacity and bandwidth ensures that future increases in demand are met. Early implementation of some of elements of this work has brought benefits to the council. As evidenced by the ability for all users to work at home. There is a currently a trend to move services to the cloud, including Oracle and MS products. As this increases there is a growing need to purchase and implement tools to control usage costs in this environment.

### **Network Improvements:**

The connectivity and access controls between the data centres and each council site will need updating; scheduled for 2023 to 2024. More immediate are plans to update the Wi Fi access in the large and medium sites, this will bring faster and more secure access to users. Where necessary network equipment will be replaced in smaller sites in addition to reviewing and upgrading network connectivity across the estate. Software that will better manage our networks will be implemented across the IT infrastructure.

### **End user Modernisation**

Work has begun on proof of concepts upgrading the AV equipment in some meeting rooms, this will continue across the Civic Centre in collaboration with the return to work group and colleagues across the organisation.

Mobile devices and laptops will need to be replaced over the next 4 to 5 years. As more people will be working at home it is important that the offer to users will enable them to continue to do this efficiently and effectively.

The current telephony contract will expire during 2023 and the replacement solution will need to be decided.

### **Cyber Protection**

There have been a number of well-publicised malicious cyber-attacks, targeted at Local Government and other public sector organisations. Information from various security bodies suggest that this trend will continue and in all likelihood develop into an increased threat. It is essential that providers of IT related services maintain up to date, secure, robust and resilient IT infrastructure to combat the threat of malicious cyber-attack.

The STS will put a number of protections in place, which range from improvements to the firewalls, email and web protections, managing access controls and the patching regime.

Investing in new technology will have an added benefit of avoiding the additional costs of maintaining obsolete kit. Thus future expensive maintenance, in terms of patching and applying updates which would be needed to ensure that the technology stays supportable and secure is avoided.

Doing nothing was not considered an option as it would expose the council to significant risk around operational effectiveness, i.e. users being able to do their job and also to the threat of cyber attack. A cyber attack could result in the whole council being unable to operate for many weeks, possibly months, as experienced by a number of other councils recently.

### **3.3 Benefits to council**

The investment will result in the following high level benefits:

- **Reduction in cost of services**  
The technology landscape is always evolving, with a constant high number of new entrants into the market, which results in higher competition and costs being driven down. In addition to costs, relatively moving downwards, it is essential to consider cost avoidance. Maintaining old, obsolete kit brings with it costs of ensuring that the equipment remains usable and secure from attack. As both software and hardware ages the risk of failure and malicious activity grows exponentially as patches, (software updates) are continually having to be applied until the vendor of the software no longer provides these updates; leaving the organisations who continue to use the software unsupported. In terms of aging hardware, there becomes an ever increasing risk of parts failing and replacements being unavailable.
- **Improvements in service experience**  
The user experience is becoming more of a focus for suppliers with an emphasis in new technologies to be user friendly and intuitive. This includes adapting to hybrid approaches to meetings, with some participants in the same physical

location and some on video calls at the same time. The next laptop refresh will not become due until towards the end of the IT roadmap and at that time a range of devices will form part of the offer to meet the needs of the different types of users and use case scenarios, for the most cost effective and secure options. This will enable us to work more efficiently and effectively providing staff with the right tools and departments to realign resources to provide better services, and, deliver financial benefits and generate income

- **Enhanced security protection**  
A prerequisite of all products across the technology industry is that they must be secure from cyber-attack. This is becoming more and more of an inbuilt feature. Together with greater sophisticated tools for monitoring and prevention being more readily available. However, it is important that the tools and knowledge of key staff are constantly kept under review as attackers are also becoming more sophisticated and well resourced.
- **Service resilience and availability**  
The modern technology that is being developed is designed to be resilient and highly available, this is one of the key requirements of all applications and technological solutions. To ensure that these requirements are met there is a need for ongoing investment, ensuring that the Council's IT remains current, up to date and resilient. Increased resilience and availability for this infrastructure directly leads to our key customer facing and staff systems being more reliable and available when needed, and improves our protection and/or recovery capabilities against any malicious attack.

### **3.4 Alignment with strategic objectives**

As outlined in the preceding paragraphs the objective of this investment is to ensure that the council can continue to operate efficiently, effectively and safely. This aligns with the objective within the Borough Plan of building strong foundations for the future. Specifically the technology roadmap will directly contribute to delivering outcomes of enabling residents to get online and making every pound count, which are key elements of the strong foundations theme.

### **3.5 Timescales**

The Programme is scheduled for the next 4 years. It is a five-year roadmap which commenced in 2020/21. £0.5m was brought forward and approved in December 2020 to enable an urgent piece of work to ensure resilience and cyber security was in place.

### **3.6 Procurement**

The appropriate procurement governance and rules will be followed for each phase of the Programme and where individual projects or purchases require.

### **3.7 Risks**

As outlined in the previous paragraphs, the risks of not investing in the IT Roadmap are considerable to the council's operations. It is imperative that the IT infrastructure is up to date and well maintained to ensure that employees, Councillors and residents have full, safe access to the council's IT services which form the foundations which enable virtually almost every Council employee to be able to do their job effectively and efficiently.

During the lifetime of the IT Roadmap programme each new project will be subject to close scrutiny and will require a project initiation approval process at Customer and Digital Board. This will include a re-appraisal as to whether the proposal remains the best option for the Council and delivers value for money.

#### 4.0. Financial Implications

The table below sets out the known requirements for capital IT investments over the next 4 years.

**Table 1 - Total required investment by scheme**

<b>Description of Benefit (Major Category)</b>	<b>Financial/ non-financial benefit?</b>	<b>Estimated benefit amount? £m</b>	<b>One-off or recurring?</b>
<b>Data centre Improvement</b>	<b>Resilient IT</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>One off</b>
<b>Campus networking refresh</b>	<b>Reliable/Robust IT</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>One off</b>
<b>End User Modernisation</b>	<b>Worker efficiency</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>One off</b>
<b>Cyber Protection</b>	<b>Cyber security</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>One off</b>
<b>Service Improvement</b>	<b>Efficiencies in service provision</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>One off</b>
<b>Total Investment 1 to 5 years</b>		<b>10.3</b>	

4.1. The spend profile for the key investment areas over the next 4 years are as follows:

**Table 2 – estimated investment**

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	Total
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Data centre Improvement	1.4	1.0	1.0	0.4	3.8
Campus networking refresh	0.4	0.6	0.2	0.0	1.2
End User Modernisation	0.3	0.2	0.2	3.0	3.7
Cyber Protection	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.2	1.1
Service Improvement	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.0	0.5
<b>Total Investment 1 to 4 years</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>10.3</b>

4.2. The revenue costs associated with the capital spend detailed in the IT Roadmap results in savings over the life of the Programme, as detailed in the table below.

**Table 3 – Revenue Implications**

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Revenue Increases	27	188	27	27	269
Revenue Decreases	-332	-332	-332	-332	1,328
<b>Net Saving</b>	<b>-305</b>	<b>-144</b>	<b>-305</b>	<b>-305</b>	<b>1,059</b>

**5.0. Legal Implications**

None.

**6.0. Equality Implications**

None.

**7.0. Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders**

The Brent Technology Roadmap forms part of the overall Shared Technology Services (STS) Technology Roadmap for the three partner councils, and has been reviewed by STS Operational Management Group, STS Joint Management Board and STS Joint Committee.

**8.0. Human Resources/Property Implications (if appropriate)**

Not applicable.

**Report sign off:**

***Peter Gadsdon***

Strategic Director of Customer and  
Digital Services