ANNEX A: Draft report to Cabinet

Report To:	Cabinet
Date:	20th November 2023
Subject:	ICT & Digital Update
Lead Member:	Cllr Chandra Muvvala
Chief Officer:	Sarah Hayward, Executive Director of Strategy & Improvement
Contact Officer:	Simon Sharkey Woods, AD Chief Digital & Information Officer
Ward(s):	N/A
Key Decision:	<u>NO</u>
Exempt:	NO
Decision Subject To Call In:	NO
Appendices:	Appendix A – Milestone charts for the initial and future phases of improvement works

1. Summary and Recommendations

1.1 Linked to the government direction of having properly functioning IT, this report provides an update on the progress of the ICT & Digital modernisation and remediation work approved by Cabinet on the 29th March 2022.

1.2 The report is the first update since the adoption by the Council of the new strategy for ICT & Digital services in March of 2023.

1.3 The report updates on work to-date, the changes to the portfolio of projects based on the learning of the past year, and the plans for the coming six to twelve months.

Recommendations:

1.4 Cabinet is recommended to:

a) Note the update to the modernisation and remediation activities being undertaken by the ICT & Digital Team and the next phase of work, as well as the ongoing risks, issues and challenges as the work continues.

b) Approve the next steps as set out in Appendix A, including the adoption of more automated processes, the upskilling of staff in the use of modern technologies and the building of a more coherent digital offer for residents.

Commissioner Review

1.5 To be added for Cabinet Report.

2. Report

Introduction

2.1 The directions issued on the 1st of December 2021 to Slough under Section 15(5) and (6) of the Local Government Act 1999 stated the need for "An action plan to achieve improvements in relation to the proper functioning of the Authority's IT." The modernisation programme, approved in the Cabinet meeting of March 2022, continues to resolve the legacy issues to achieve the proper functioning of IT.

2.2 Since the commencement of the modernisation programme, the Council has also developed and adopted, an adaptive 3-year ICT and Digital strategy. This new adaptive strategy focuses on capacity, capability, and resilience. It has been written to be flexible enough to cope with rapid changes of focus and priority, and to exploit appropriate technologies as and when they become available. It is also driving changes to the operating model for the provision of ICT and Digital services that will minimise the risk of ever needing this level of intervention again.

2.3 When the modernisation programme was approved the ICT and Digital Team was mandated to regularly update Members on progress. Although this and previous updates are the formal response to that mandate, we also provide a monthly update of the work to the lead Member for ICT and Digital, the Deputy Leader, the Lead Commissioner, and the Strategy and Improvement Directorate management team. The milestone charts in Appendix A are routinely updated and shared in the monthly report. In addition, Cyber Security and Data Protection and the Digital Strategy are on the Council's corporate risk register, which is reported to Audit and Corporate Governance Committee on a quarterly basis.

Update

2.4 Overall, the work to improve ICT and Digital services is progressing. The pace of work is linked to the delicate balance of driving change whilst managing risk. There is also, given the financial position of Slough, significant governance to be complied with to ensure that all investments are understood and underpinned with sound business cases before work gets underway.

2.5 The table below provides an updated summary of completed works since the modernisation programme was initiated. Some of the items in the table below may not be familiar to members and are provided here for transparency. Item 2.6 below more fully describes some of the elements within the table.

Cloud migration of departmental systems	Cyber security and resilience	End use compute	Replacing aged infrastructure
• Agresso Hosting • Capita 1 education • Icon (chip and Pin) • Modern.Gov migration • NEC housing phase 1 • Paygate upgrade • IT Service Management platform • Flare and Lalpac data migration	• National Cyber Security Centre services • Review of Cloud back-up options • Nessus vulnerability scanning • IT healthcheck • Bullware ransomware solution	• 4G coverage • Agresso/Unit 4 support • Retirement of Blue Jeans video conferencing • Concessionary bus pass system • Digistaff robotic process automation • Intune/mobile device management	• Core switch replacement and migration • Crematorium network access • Disk storage replacement (Nimble) • Firewall upgrade • FS Logix (Citrix) • Wi-Fi • Winnersh Cyxtera closure

		- Library and people counters (Curve excluded) - New councillor ICT provision - Office 365 rollout - ScanStation implementation - Telephony replacement	

2.6   Key works to highlight from the table are:

2.6.1 The move of several systems to Cloud hosted versions lowers the need for expensive infrastructure and improves availability. The IT service management system Astro (Freshservice), NEC Housing system, and new hosting provider for Agresso (our finance and HR system) are examples of this.

2.6.2 Significant progress against cyber resilience works and the completion of the IT health check will enable us to target further improvements to keep Slough operating securely.

2.6.3 End user improvements have included the retirement of the Blue Jeans video conferencing service (move to Microsoft Teams), improving the long-standing issue with the O2 mobile telephony signal at Observatory House, improved management of mobile devices, replacement of the legacy telephony system, and a focus on finalising the rollout and adoption of the full Microsoft 365 suite.

2.6.4 Core infrastructure works have included core networking replacement, replacement of end-of-life storage devices, and firewall upgrades.

2.7   The ICT & Digital Team has also been continuing to seek efficiencies with the contracts it is responsible for during the first quarter of 2023/24. The overall impact for the Council (not just on the ICT and Digital budget) has been tracked by the Procurement Team and is expected to be a saving of £1.2m.

2.8   Since the last update report to Cabinet, the ICT and Digital Team has reviewed the original programme of works that were established for the first phase of modernisation and reflected on what has been learnt and what additional activities will support Slough in having an effective ICT and Digital service.

2.9   This review has led to a second phase of work that has an increased focus on the operating model for technology services including having the right controls, processes, and policies in place to support a culture of continuous improvement.

2.10   On the 25th of September, the new Acceptable Use Policy for users of systems provided by the ICT and Digital Team was approved by the Employment Committee of the Council. This is the first policy of its type for some years and makes the expectation on the limits of use of Council provided equipment clearer than ever. At the time of writing, a campaign to educate staff and members on the policy was being established.

2.11   Some key elements of the ongoing work for members to note are:

2.11.1   **Data Centre move** – the Council uses an off-site data centre to host key services and systems. To save over £100k per year and ensure we can lower costs more rapidly in the future, we will be moving to a secure Crown Hosting environment in November. At the time of writing, the current plan was for the move to take place on the 10th, 11th, and 12th of November. This will be the largest scale, highest risk change of the modernisation programme.

2.11.2 **Move to software designed wide area network (SD-WAN)** - we are replacing all the links to Council locations and the way we connect to the internet through this modern connectivity technology. As well as another significant financial saving, the change will enable us to provide greater resilience to Slough services. Deployment of circuits commenced in October.

2.11.3 **Modernising our Wi-Fi service at our locations** – we are working with procurement to acquire a fully managed solution for our office-based Wi-Fi. As well as ensuring the core connectivity service for staff is more reliable, the change will enable us to provide a more reliable public access service. (This was approved at the procurement review board on the 28th Sep 2023).

2.11.4 **Delivery of end user devices for staff** – creating a consistent, reliable build for the devices our staff use every day remains a key priority. We have a plan to issue to a new, robustly controlled standard, before the end of 2023.

2.12 The review of projects being undertaken by the ICT and Digital Team means that the volume of work has increased significantly. The table below provides the current position in terms of projects initiated since the report in March 2022. (As of 29th September 2023).

Total initiated projects since March 2022	Completed	Currently active	Not started
101	27	42	32

2.13 As per 2.5 above, a new phase of work has been created since the last update to Cabinet. The table below highlights some of the most impactful new work and its expected benefits.

Title	Category	Description	Benefit
Sustainable funding for ICT&D	Professional & Sustainable Service	ICT&D working with the Councils budgeting process and our finance business partner to achieve a sustainable level of funding for digital and technology services.	Ability to manage the costs of providing appropriate services without the need for large ad-hoc standalone investments.
New Intranet	End User Technology	The current intranet information resource for staff is out of date and end of life. This work will migrate this information to a Microsoft Teams based resource.	Utilising technology we are already invested in to provide excellent quality information that supports the work of Council staff.
New operating procedures in ICT&D	Professional & Sustainable Service	The establishment and testing of new procedures in the ICT&D team to ensure consistent, reliable, service delivery.	Improved efficiency and lower cost.
Refresh of our Digital Services platform	End User Technology	A reset of the way we manage and resource the key digital platform for the Council.	Improved, coherent digital services that encourage more residents to use this channel instead of the more expensive in-person or telephone contacts.
Testing & release management	Professional & ustainable Service	Ensuring all new or upgraded services are implemented and tested properly.	Greater impact of new or upgraded services leading to a better return on investment for the Council

3. Implications of the Recommendation

Financial implications

3.1　The original £4.6m funding provided for phase one of the modernisation programme, approved in March 2022, is expected to be fully spent. From this point forward any new works identified will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. The analysis of any proposed work will include an understanding of the full financial implications for the Council, including the ongoing revenue commitment and the envisaged benefits from any new or changed, system or service.

3.2　The ICT&D team are engaged with the normal budgeting processes of the Council and will provide information about options for investment through that process. At the time of writing several investment options have been suggested but these must be balanced alongside all requests from across the Council and alongside the reality that Slough needs to save significant money. The team will provide the information required to help senior leaders balance the benefit, risks and needs of residents through the priorities that are set.

3.3　Although some of the proposed works are likely to drive efficiencies and will therefore have a clear return-on-investment, some are more about security and stabilisation where the investment is about lowering risk.

Legal implications

3.4　Use of technology brings significant opportunities but also legal risks. Many authorities are utilising technology in innovative ways to reduce the cost-of-service delivery, allow increased self-service, collect, and monitor data to inform decisions and replace the need for manual entry. The Council has legal duties in relation to data security and this requires the Council to consider security at a system and user level. At a system level, security must be designed and implemented at the outset and the Council needs to have robust processes in place to provide resilience in the event of system failure. At a user level, it is necessary to create a cyber security culture, ensuring that all staff understand their role to protect the Council's data. The Council must ensure it learns from previous incidents and from incidents elsewhere in the public sector. Recent serious security failures at other councils and public bodies have included ransomware attacks and release of highly confidential information. Redcar and Cleveland Council has estimated that a cyber-attack in 2020 has cost the authority more than £7million to resolve. Hackney Council's cyber-attack in 2020 was estimated to have cost £12.2million, led to extremely sensitive information being published on the dark web and delays in service delivery to vulnerable residents. The incident has been the subject of lengthy investigations by the National Crime Agency and the Information Commissioner. A serious data breach by the Police Service for Northern Ireland, following mishandling of a freedom of information request, led to details of 10,000 staff being disclosed and initial recovery costs are estimated at £24 to £37million, not taking account of costs of any legal claims for breach of data security.

3.5　The impact of successful delivery of the ICT improvement work will be to reduce the risk of service failure across the council, lower the potential for cyber-attacks, and improve our stance in respect of data security.

Risk Management Implications

3.6   The ongoing works to improve ICT and Digital services at the Council will continue to carry a level of risk. Two of the corporate risks relate to ICT. However, the risk of major failures of critical services will reduce as some of the key activities progress. The items listed in 2.7 will have a significant positive impact on the levels of risk at the Council.

3.7   The ICT and Digital Team has a monthly cycle of risk reporting and maintains regular contact with the Councils risk management team to ensure the overall risk load is well communicated and understood.

Environmental Implications

3.8   The work to significantly improve the approach to IT service management will have an impact on managing hardware that will mean we use equipment more efficiently. This should prevent waste and ensure we have the smallest possible footprint in terms of the use of physical devices.

3.9   The continuing focus on the use of Cloud/internet-based services will also lower the carbon footprint of what we do as we will be sharing resources with others rather than building infrastructure for ourselves that is only partially utilised.

Equality Implications

3.10   There are no known equality implications because of this strategy. However, the failure of ICT systems is likely to impact certain groups of residents to a greater extent than others, due to these groups being more reliant on Council services. For instance, in Hackney Council following its cyber-attack there were delays to delivery of social care assessments and care packages, a backlog of home repairs and an initial lack of access to children's social care records.

4. **Background Papers**

    ICT&D Strategy (March 2023)

Appendix A: Milestone Charts for all planned works:

Projects in delivery

	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	>Mar-24

End User Technology
- ◆ Always on VPN (**Apr '24**)
- ◆ Laptop autobuild (**Jan '24**)
- ◆ Corporate and contact centre telephony
- ◆ Application tracking system (**Mid Nov '23**)
- ◆ Curve Public area refresh
- ◆ Digistaff robotic process automation
- ◆ Mobile data and telephony services
- ◆ AV Connectivity in Observatory House

Replacing Aged Infrastructure
- ◆ W360 document management upgrade
- ◆ Legacy server decommissioning (**Dec '23**)
- ◆ Data centre relocation
- ◆ Azure Landing Zone
- ◆ SD-WAN Site roll -out
- ◆ O365 optimisation and adoption

Cyber Security and Resilience
- ◆ Active Directory Policies and Controls (**Oct 23**)
- ◆ Multi-factor authentication (**Mar '24**)
- ◆ PSN Renewal
- ◆ Disaster Recovery as a Service/Back -up (**Apr '24**)
- ◆ Security information and event management (SIEM) solution (**Apr '24**)
- ◆ Retiral and updating of legacy OS

Cloud Migration of LoB Applications
- ◆ APAS (**Dec '23**)
- ◆ Electronic document management system
- ◆ IT Service Management Phase 1
- ◆ Incheck – resident visitor monitoring
- ◆ Flare and Lalpac data migration
- ◆ Azure Landing Zone
- ◆ Civica hosted distribution upgrade
- ◆ Arcus (Flare and Lalpac Replacement)
- ◆ NEC Housing Phase 2

◆ Complete   ◆ No significant issues   ◆ Some issues but under management control   ◆ Significant issues that may cause further delay

New Projects in discovery/very early delivery

	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	>Mar-24

End User Technology
- Funding refresh (**Sep 23**) ◆
- Data management ◆
- 4th Floor re-organisation ◆
- Intranet approach and solution ◆
- Civica Automated bank Reconciliation ◆
- Digital platform upgrade (Jadu) ◆
- Digital platform Renewal (Jadu) ◆
- Scan Station Expansion ◆
- Crematorium online book/pay ◆
- Waste Management Routing (Jul '24) ◆

Replacing Aged Infrastructure
- PoC AV in OH (**Nov 23**) ◆
- System Monitoring ◆
- Firewall Replacement ◆
- Cloud Email Getaway ◆
- Civica Icon ◆
- Citrix Retirement (cloud) ◆
- Replacement VPN ◆
- Wi-Fi – All buildings ◆
- Infrastructure Admin ◆

Cyber Security
- Secure email approach/ solution ◆

Cloud Migration of LoB Applications
- EDMS SharePoint ◆
- Capita 1 Education (tbc) ◆
- Liquid Logic SaaS (tbc) ◆

Professional and sustainable service
- Programme and Project Management Approach ◆
- Asset management - hardware ◆
- Establishing a TDA ◆
- Release management ◆
- Application Testing Strategy ◆
- Council Disaster Recovery Approach ◆
- BYOD Policy and Approach ◆
- Skills and Change Adoption ◆
- Incident management ◆
- ICT&D Business Continuity ◆
- Continuous Improvement Programme ◆
- Joiners/Movers/Leavers Process reset ◆
- Asset management SW ◆
- IG changes ◆

◆ Complete   ◆ No significant issues   ◆ Some issues but under management control   ◆ Significant issues that may cause further delay

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