

Information & Communications Technology

BUSINESS PLAN

2021/2022

Purpose of this plan

“To provide a modern and integrated Information & Communications Technology (ICT) environment, which sustains and strengthens the Council’s ability to deliver its strategic objectives, facilitating collaboration, and efficient business processes in a challenging budgetary environment. This background will provide staff and Members with appropriate digital services tool to deliver our Corporate Strategy to ratepayers, visitors and the general public.

The Vision for ICT

Our vision is that ICT is a key driver for the development, delivery and transformation of Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council and the services it delivers to citizens. It will provide flexible and scalable solutions that adapt to the dynamic environment the Council operates in. ICT will be a proactive agent for change and will be fundamental to the review of all the Council’s strategies and services. Staff and Members will have the appropriate skills and knowledge to make best use of ICT facilities and systems, whilst adhering to appropriate policies and procedures associated with relevant data protection regulation.

Covid-related ICT Matters

For ICT, as with other areas of Council, the year 2020 had been dominated by the Covid-19 lockdown, and the subsequent rollout of ICT kit and infrastructure to allow secure home working and for Council meetings to continue.

For the incoming year, the focus is likely to involve facilitating the return to working in Council facilities or continued hybrid working, in some capacity, for most of our staff and for Council meetings to be facilitated in whatever form Members wish them to occur.

Exactly how and when staff return to Civic facilities needs to match the direction given by Council. There is an expectation across office workplace environments that a return to the pre-Covid working circumstances, where office work is largely Civic based, is thought unlikely.

Specifically, for the incoming year:

- Return to work for the majority of formerly home-based staff, necessitating the return of laptops to those Civic facilities. The return to Civic facilities needs to be as tightly managed as the original rollout of kit to ensure the cyber security of the ICT network.
- Maintenance of Virtual Private Network (VPN) to allow those staff to access the Council's internal network, from a home environment where this is appropriate, in a secure fashion.
- Increased network capacity to facilitate VPN.
- Migration of staff MS Office accounts from locally-based Office 2013 to Office 365.
- Rollout of smartphones and other mobile devices for other staff where appropriate.
- Increased investment in ICT security to reflect the additional security issues of remote working and Council offices'-based working.
- Continuing provision of Microsoft Teams to enable Members and staff to attend meetings, both remotely and in a hybrid meeting setup.
- Review of the Council Chamber technology, such that the relevant ICT hardware is fully integrated with MS Teams and other associated software packages.
- On-going provision of online booking system for Household Recycling Centres.

The next stage is for ICT, with direction from Members, to convert these short-term measures into a robust ICT solution for the long term.

Other key Issues for incoming year

Cyber security

The already very real threat of to both Council and organizations throughout the world posed by cybercrime has been exacerbated by the widespread practice of homeworking for staff.

The following steps will be taken over the next 12 months:

- Enhanced acquisition of security products – firewalls, antivirus products, PEN (penetration) testing – for both the network infrastructure and for end-user kit.
- Increased training for all ICT systems users- staff and Members - on the threat of cybercrime.
- Recommendation to Members of enhanced policy changes to reflect the seriousness of the cyber threats.
- An awareness campaign for staff and Members of the risks to the whole organization, supported both with initiatives from both other government bodies and from the private sector.

Microsoft Office 365 rollout

As part of a pilot process, 15% of all office staff previously using MS Office 2013 have their version of the data automation product upgraded to MS Office 365. The remainder of users are expected to be upgraded to MS Office 365 in the coming year. Staff rely heavily on accessing their data, and ensuring a smooth and orderly transition to the new configuration requires careful planning. The rollout and associated training for MS Office pose a particular challenge in the Covid-19 environment.

This change in version has been driven by several factors, the following of which are most pertinent to Council:

- Microsoft no longer provide full support for the platform on which MS Office 2013 resides, meaning that the patches and other upgrades are decreasingly occurring. The net effect is that the computer platform becomes increasingly vulnerable to cyber-attack.
- Staff will have easier access to both MS Outlook and documents such as MS Word, Excel and Access. Presently, for users working remotely, they use a Virtual Private Network (VPN) to access computer servers based in Cloonavin. The cloud-based MS Office 365 allows users to directly access their documents online and removes a potential point of weakness in out ICT infrastructure.
- In the past year, Microsoft Teams has proven pivotal in allowing the democratic processes to continue and for staff to continue to provide a service to Council. MS Office is not fully compatible with MS Teams, meaning that staff and Members will have experienced glitches in the connectivity and performance of MS Teams over the past year.

Members Services technological enhancements

Since the inception of the Council in March 2015, Members and relevant staff have had access to a portal within the Council Website for them to view Council agendas, reports and minutes of meetings.

Recently, Council have agreed upon the provision of enhanced technology in the Chamber to match the need for either standard Council meetings, virtual Council meetings or hybrid Council meetings. This has led to the acquisition of improved data projectors and enhanced integration between the Bosch sound system and the MS Teams product.

Concern has been raised about the ease of access to the relevant documentation associated with such meetings. A document exploring how to improve upon this situation will be presented to Members for their consideration.

Digital Services Key Plans and Achievements

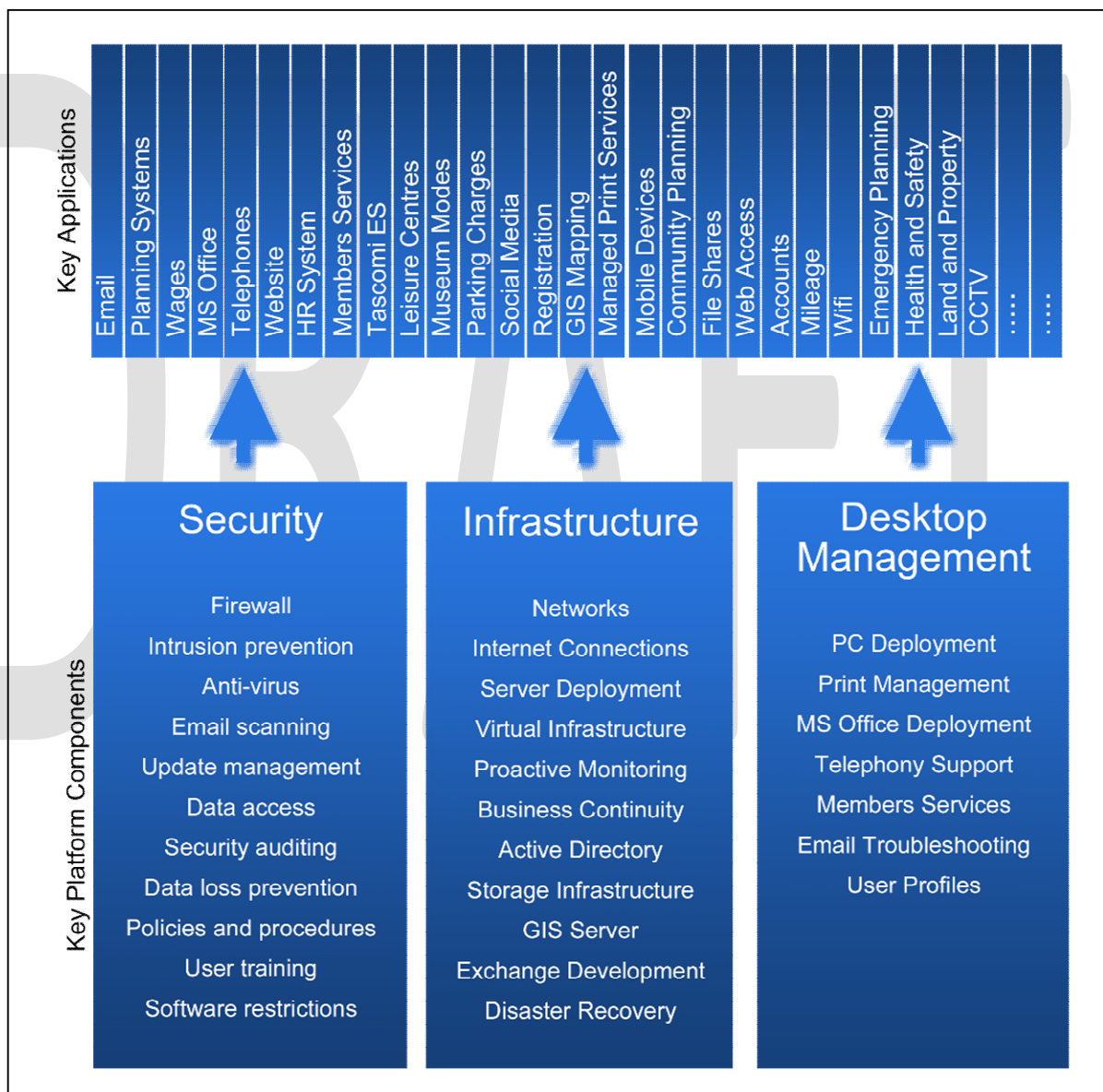
- Improved decision making, workflows and efficiency using digital transformation of service areas.
- Development and sharing of our Land & Property Asset Mapping Application internally.
- Design and development of a dynamic interactive Live Smart story-map initiative.
- Design and Development of Covid 19 Community Response Initiative developed and managed solely using inhouse expertise and ESRI platform both for secure internal decision making and external stakeholders to improve transparency to our citizens during the pandemic.
- Design & Development and digitization of our Leisure and Holiday homes using GIS software.
- Digitalization of our Refuse collection to improve route optimization.
- Design and development and data collection of our risk management for waste collection.
- Design and Development of 'Perform' – the performance management software currently being developed to meet ASPE and KPI indicators.
- Development of our Inhouse GIS Portal improving the access to all staff for secure spatial data that provides our staff with the ability to share data across service areas and improve decision making and collaboration.
- Design & Development of our Art Centre websites (Roe Valley & Flowerfield).
- Exceeding local government benchmarking standards for accessibility and quality assurance on our corporate Website.
- Design Development & Deployment of CCGBC HRC online booking application (and generated income from rollout to other Councils);
- Design Development & Development of CCGBC Hired Vehicles Application for Waste.
- Improving CCGBC transparency and efficiencies by providing access to 32 spatial data layers (largest local government datasets provider) through OpendataNI.

- Open for Business application during the Covid 19 pandemic.
- Public Mapping Application (RoWs, Grants & Funding, Trails).
- Digitalization of tender concretionary trading locations.
- Fibrus broadband mapping of council assets, improving internal collaboration across service areas and external sharing of this asset information to improve broadband access for our citizens.
- SIB Integration spatial analysis for Leisure Centres and greenway business case.
- Garvagh forest digitization, story map and legal mapping.
- Design and Development of internal insurance application and dashboard.
- Digitalization of International Appalachian Trail/Sperrin Way/Moyle Way.
- Health & Safety risk management digitization.
- Spatial digitalization of Coast and Countryside trail furniture Inventory.

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Strategic ICT Themes / Functions

Within a wide range of ICT services and functions, there are a series of key applications, with a further documentation of the prerequisite platform requirements as illustrated below:

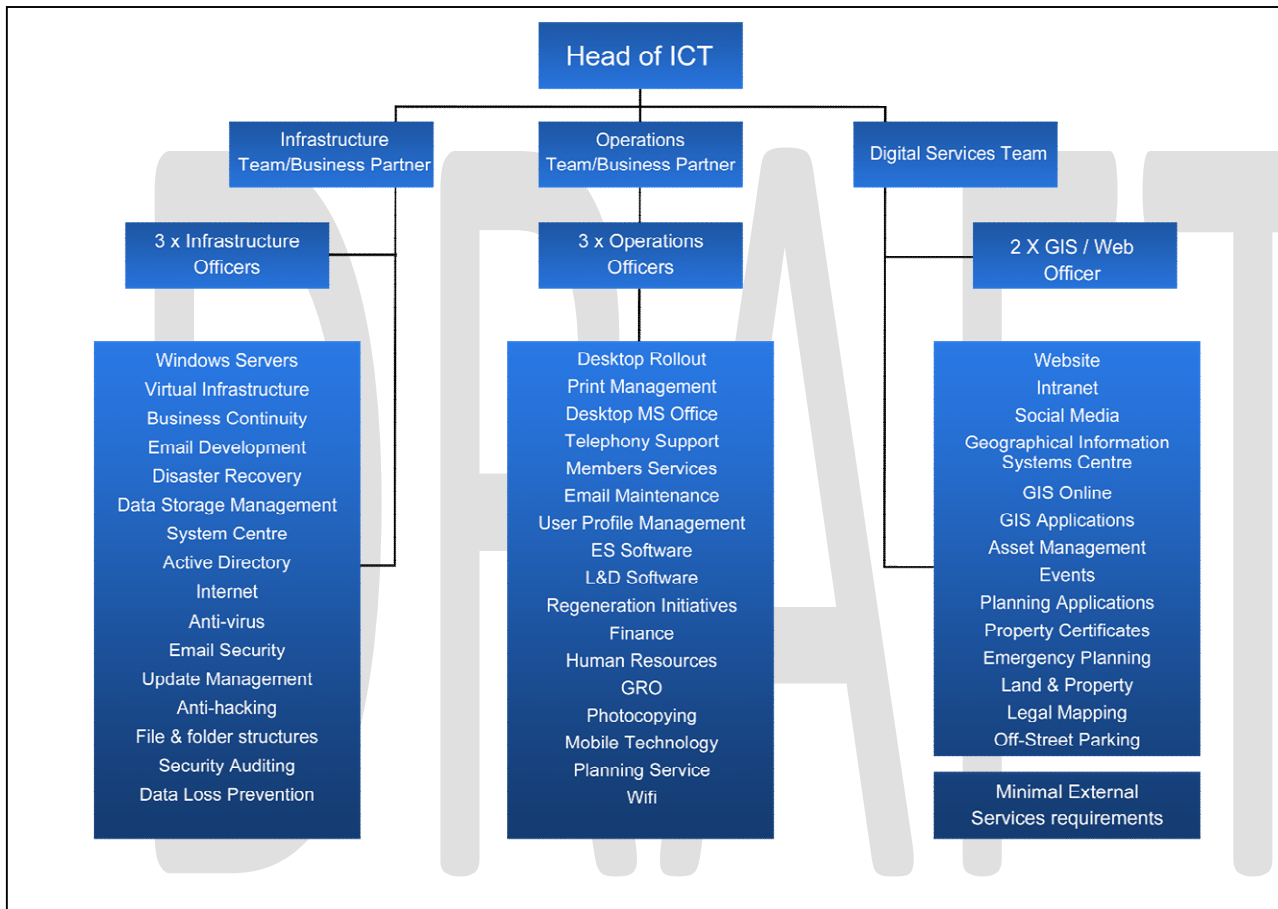


Strategic Aims of the ICT Service

Council aims to enhance service provision via a range of ICT solutions and ensure that service users have access to the information and tools that they need in a timely and appropriate manner. This will be delivered by:

- Engaging with stakeholders to identify further requirements;
- Employing rigorous governance arrangements including adherence to legislation and Council policies;
- Ensuring that there is a well-trained, professional ICT workforce;
- The application of formal project management methodologies and robust performance management;
- The provision of a robust, resilient and secure ICT technical and core systems infrastructure that supports the business requirements of the Council and which is suitably planned and resourced;
- The introduction of technologies to enable flexible working;
- Ensuring that end to end business processes are reviewed and revised to take advantage of technology and workflow, ensuring the automation of processes and information flows wherever possible;
- Identification of innovative technologies to aid the implementation of new working methods, processes and delivery of efficiency gains;
- The raising of awareness of the Council's ICT capabilities by ensuring that new technologies are researched and information disseminated within the Council;
- The integration of ICT systems and the sharing of information across the Council and with other partners and agencies, subject to suitable controls over access and Data Protection adherence;
- Ensuring that good quality data is captured once and where relevant disseminated across the Council;
- The standardisation of processes and IT systems across the council and where possible with partners;
- Facilitating secure communication between all stakeholders via electronic channels, e.g. telephone, e-mail, web and text.

ICT Organisational Structure



Year priorities:

ICT Infrastructure:

- Maintain integrity and reliability of current systems;
- Business Continuity Strategy;
- ICT Security strategy;
- On-going wind-down of remaining legacy council systems and amalgamation into CCG;
- Disaster Recovery strategy;
- Network design and rollout of new linkages;
- Flexible working strategy;
- Design of replacement core infrastructure;
- Digitalization Strategy – how to use ICT to improve communication, collaboration and services;

ICT Operation:

- Facilitate Estates relocations;
- GDPR implementation with relevant partners;
- Enhance mobile device security;
- Rollout of wifi to Civic sites and Caravan sites;
- Enhance network links;
- Enhance support with service desk;
- Flexible working;
- Telephony Strategy;
- Print management Strategy;

Digital Services:

- Cloud development of new online funding and grants application.
- Rollout of GIS software for all Service Areas.
- Performance Management Rollout.
- Development of dashboard for service areas to meet ASPI and internal KPIs.
- Increase and build on Open Data NI layers to improve transparency and software innovation.
- Beach Management Mapping.
- Assist in the development of the business case for Ballycastle to Ballymoney Greenway.
- Collection of core data sets – Infrastructure (bins and signs).
- Public facing applications – find my nearest, story maps, event mapping and dashboards.
- Develop online ‘when is my bin collected?’ functionality.
- Digitization of amenity centres.
- Digitization of the Northern Area Plan and Local Development Plan into public viewing dynamic maps.
- Play Park Inspection application.
- Harbours and marinas asset mapping.
- Estate Maintenance field collection applications.
- Signage Inventory across service areas for CCGBC.
- Continuation of 1st Registration for land and property and incorporate new dataset for land property mapping application.
- Develop a land use layer for Council assets.
- Health & Safety risk management.
- Coast and Countryside trail furniture Inventory.

SWOT Analysis

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proven high resilience in service delivery - Proven cost effectiveness - ICT Staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Well trained o Enthusiastic o Knowledgeable o Systems Knowledge - Focus on modernisation - Local knowledge have delivered initial key stages of transition - Relationships across the Council 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Budgetary restraints - ICT security awareness - Five organisations into one <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Network o Culture o Legacy issues o Security - Geographical spread - User ICT literacy - ICT Staff capacity - Disaster recovery / business continuity
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved public services - Modernisation - Business improvement - Future proofing - Stability - External shared services - Increase income - Regulation - Efficiency - Flexibility - Reduce vulnerability - Shared services 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Security risks of home working - Under-investment in service - User capacity – staff training - Downtime - Loss of business continuity - Reputation to Council - Data loss - Fraud / Litigation - Shared services

Strategic Objective				
Ensure that a stable and secure ICT set of applications are available for staff and Members to engage and deliver services for the ratepayers and the public;				
Link to Corporate Aims and Objectives				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Innovation and Transformation 				
Work Streams / Operational Actions / Outcomes	Responsible Officer	Budget £	Timescale	Performance Indicators
Provide Cloud-based Exchange email, calendar and contact system	Infrastructure Manager	£121,000	On-going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service provided with 99.999% uptime
Facilitate secure WEB access for staff and Members	Infrastructure Manager	£83,000	On-going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service provided with 99.999% uptime
Maintain and improve WEB services for improved on-line digitalization	Digital Services Manager	£26,000	On-going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service provided with 99.999% uptime
Provide Finance Services System	Head of Finance	Separate budget	On-going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs of colleagues are addressed as per agreed service requirements
Provide Human Resources System	Head of ODHR & Operations Manager	Separate budget	On-going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs of colleagues are addressed as per agreed service requirements
Develop Unified Telephony and Mobile Solution	Operations Manager & General Manager (Facilities)	Separate budget	On-going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service provided with 99.999% uptime
Provide other relevant departmental applications	Operations Manager & Heads of Services	Separate budget	On-going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs of colleagues are addressed as per agreed service requirements
Maintain Geographical Information Systems (GIS) to facilitate spatial Asset Management	Digital Services Manager	£23,000	On-going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs of colleagues are addressed as per agreed service requirements

Develop GIS with relevant external stakeholders for meaningful analysis of available statistics to aid Council decision-making	Digital Services Manager	As above	On-going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs of colleagues are addressed as per agreed service requirements
Develop GIS for improved public understanding of Council processes	Digital Services Manager	As above	On-going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan in place to satisfy audit recommendation
Staff restructure	Operations Manager & Heads of Services	Separate budget	On-going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs of colleagues are addressed as per agreed service requirements
Maintain Managed Print Services	Operations Manager	£22,000	On-going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service provided with 99.999% uptime
Members' ICT Provision	Operations Manager	Separate budget	On-going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members' Questionnaire

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Strategic Objective				
Ensure that a stable and secure ICT platform is available for staff and Members to engage and deliver services for the ratepayers and the public, and do so in a manner that is legislatively appropriate; furthermore, a robust Disaster Recovery Plan and Business Continuity Plan augments this solution.				
Link to Corporate Aims and Objectives				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Innovation and Transformation 				
Work Streams / Operational Actions / Outcomes	Responsible Officer	Budget £	Timescale	Performance Indicators
Maintain and develop secure ICT platform	Infrastructure Manager	£96,000	On-going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service provided with 99.999% uptime
Development of ICT Security strategy	Infrastructure Manager	£43,000	On-going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved ICT Security strategy. Independent Security Audit
Disaster Recovery Strategy designed and implemented, initially encompassing WEB access, Exchange provision and Finance systems	Infrastructure Manager	£38,000	On-going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy approved and successful full DR test
Network development across 49 locations	Infrastructure Manager	£85,000	On-going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connect/Upgrade major sites to unified WAN

Strategic Objective				
Ensure that further digitalization and sharing of services facilitates technological advantages for Council;				
Link to Corporate Aims and Objectives				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Innovation and Transformation 				
Work Streams / Operational Actions / Outcomes	Responsible Officer	Budget £	Timescale	Performance Indicators
Provision of ICT Digital Strategy 2021 - 2024	Head Of ICT	To be agreed	August 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed by Council
Avail of further cloud technologies where efficiencies and robustness criteria are met;	Infrastructure Manager	To be agreed	On-going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business partners acknowledge improved efficiencies
Use mobile technology for flexible working by investing in relevant technology;	Infrastructure Manager & Operations Manager	To be agreed	On-going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business partners acknowledge improved efficiencies
Sharing of GIS expertise with external bodies;	Digital Services & Infrastructure Manager	To be agreed	On-going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service provided with 99.999% uptime
Business Improvement across all Council to improve efficiencies and range of Services;	Operations Manager	To be agreed	On-going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business partners acknowledge improved efficiencies
Provision of Customer Relationship Management solutions to improve ratepayers' customer experience;	Operations Manager & Heads of Services	To be agreed	On-going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs of colleagues are addressed as per agreed service requirements
Develop audio visual technologies where appropriate;	Operations Manager	To be agreed	On-going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business partners acknowledge improved efficiencies

Illustrative image to highlight the complexity of the CCGBC ICT Network 2021

