



**Causeway  
Coast & Glens**  
Borough Council

# Information & Communications Technology

**BUSINESS PLAN**

**2022/2023**

**May 2022**

**DRAFT**

### **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 and Post-Covid related ICT Matters**

For ICT, and indeed the Council and society in general, the year 2021 and the initial months of 2022 continue to be dominated by the Covid-19 pandemic and the associated rollout of ICT kit and infrastructure to allow secure home/hybrid working and for Council meetings to continue.

As we approach June 2022, based on the direction of SLT and Members, as the Civic facilities are being prepared for the increasing return to the workplace in the coming weeks, ICT's aspiration is to facilitate the requirements of this developing work environment as instructed.

For the incoming year, the focus be on the this return to working in Council facilities or continued hybrid working, in some capacity, for most of our staff. As laid out by recent legislation, Council meetings also need to be facilitated in a similar manner until September 2022. Specifically, for the incoming year:

- Return to work for a proportion of formerly home-based staff, as directed by SLT and Members, 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.
- Increased investment in ICT security to reflect the additional security issues of remote working and Council offices'-based working. Steps have already been taken to ascertain cyber-security risk levels to the organization. (Please see appendix 1). The ICT risk analysis, as described on page 15, illustrates the seriousness of this threat.
- Maintenance and increased network capacity 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.
- Continuing the substantive migration of staff MS Office accounts from locally-based Office 2013 to Office 365 (migration of 73% of staff as of May 2022).
- Rollout of smartphones and other mobile devices for other staff where appropriate.
- Continuing provision of Microsoft Teams to enable Members and staff to attend meetings, both remotely and in a hybrid meeting setup.
- Further reviews of the Council Chamber technology, such that the relevant ICT hardware is fully integrated with MS Teams and other associated software packages (enhanced camera configuration as of March 2022).

The next stage is for ICT, with direction from Members, to continue the conversion of short-term Covid related measures into a robust ICT solution for the long term.

## **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, driven largely by the Covid pandemic.

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

- Commenced in November 2021, increased training for all ICT systems users - staff and Members on the threat of cybercrime. (Appendix 1)
- 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
- Enhanced acquisition of security products – firewalls, antivirus products, PEN (penetration) testing – for both the network infrastructure and for end-user kit.
- Recommendation to Members of enhanced policy changes to reflect the seriousness of the cyber threats.

### **Microsoft Office 365 rollout**

As of May 2022, 73% of all office staff previously using MS Office 2013 have had 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 our 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. In March 2022, enhanced camera equipment has been installed, allowing for improved interaction between the camera equipment and the Bosch sound system.

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.

### **New Departmental Systems (Planning & Finance)**

In the incoming six months, two new critical ICT systems impacting upon two of the Council's major departments – the Planning Service and the Finance Section - are being implemented. This change entails installing new ICT systems in each of the areas, affecting both respective set of staff. The role of ICT is to assist both specialisms in ensuring that the systems provide a fit for purpose service for those staff and those related Council areas. ICT personnel will assist in the new solutions becoming operational, with a smooth transition to the new configuration, while keeping in focus the security and integrity implications of the Council's ICT systems.

### **Digital Services Key Plans and Achievements**

- Development and maintenance of Funding Unit application software.
- 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.
- Maintenance and Development of 'Perform' – the performance management software currently being developed to meet ASPE and KPI indicators.
- Maintenance 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.
- Maintenance & Development of our Art Centre websites (Roe Valley & Flowerfield).
- Exceeding local government benchmarking standards for accessibility and quality assurance on our corporate Website.
- Maintenance & 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.
- Fibus 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.

## ICT Strategy

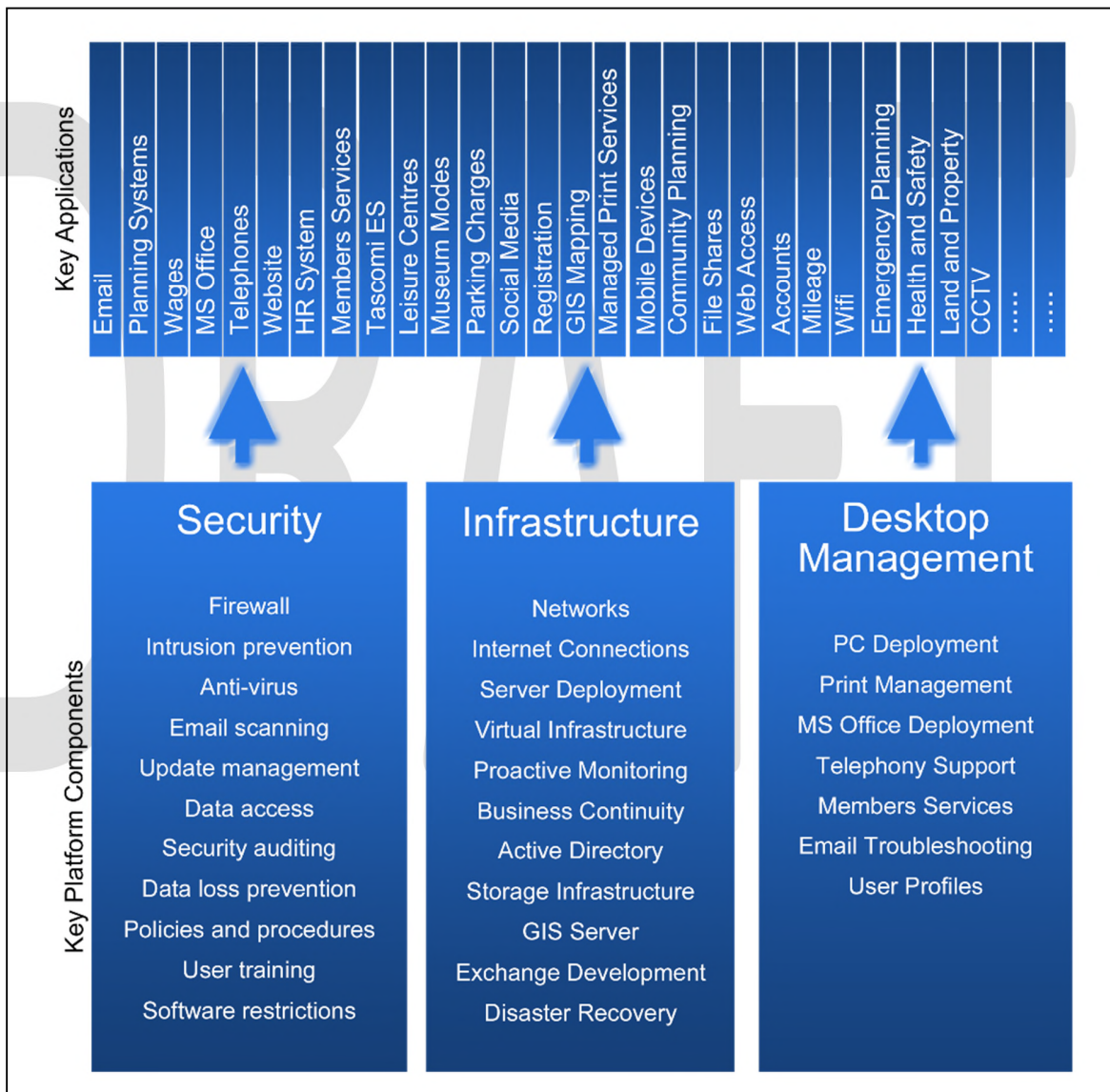
The draft ICT Strategy is currently being prepared by the ICT Service. There will be extensive consultation with both staff and Members to ensure that this Strategy is fit for purpose. It is proposed that the draft Strategy be presented to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee in September 2022.

### Risk Table (RAG -Red/Amber/Green)

Risk Description	Prob of Occurring (1-5)	Risk Impact (1-5)	Risk Ranking
Vulnerability of our Exchange system to multiple threats such as viruses, hardware failure, hacking, power failure, particularly in light of Covid -19, meaning that kit is increasingly being used away from the more secure Council ICT network (associated reputational damage)	5	5	1
Loss of key staff	5	5	2
Vulnerability of our general infrastructure, particularly given our geographical spread (associated reputational damage)	5	5	3
Damage to Finance system, particularly our Payroll system, and with the acquisition of a new system (associated reputational damage)	5	5	4
Vulnerability of our general MS Office data for as above, particularly with the rollout of Office 365 (associated reputational damage)	5	5	5
Hacking of our Website (associated reputational damage)	4	5	6
Vulnerability of Council ICT devices used in both home environments and for mobile working	4	5	7
Damage to telephony system (associated reputational damage)	4	5	8

**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:



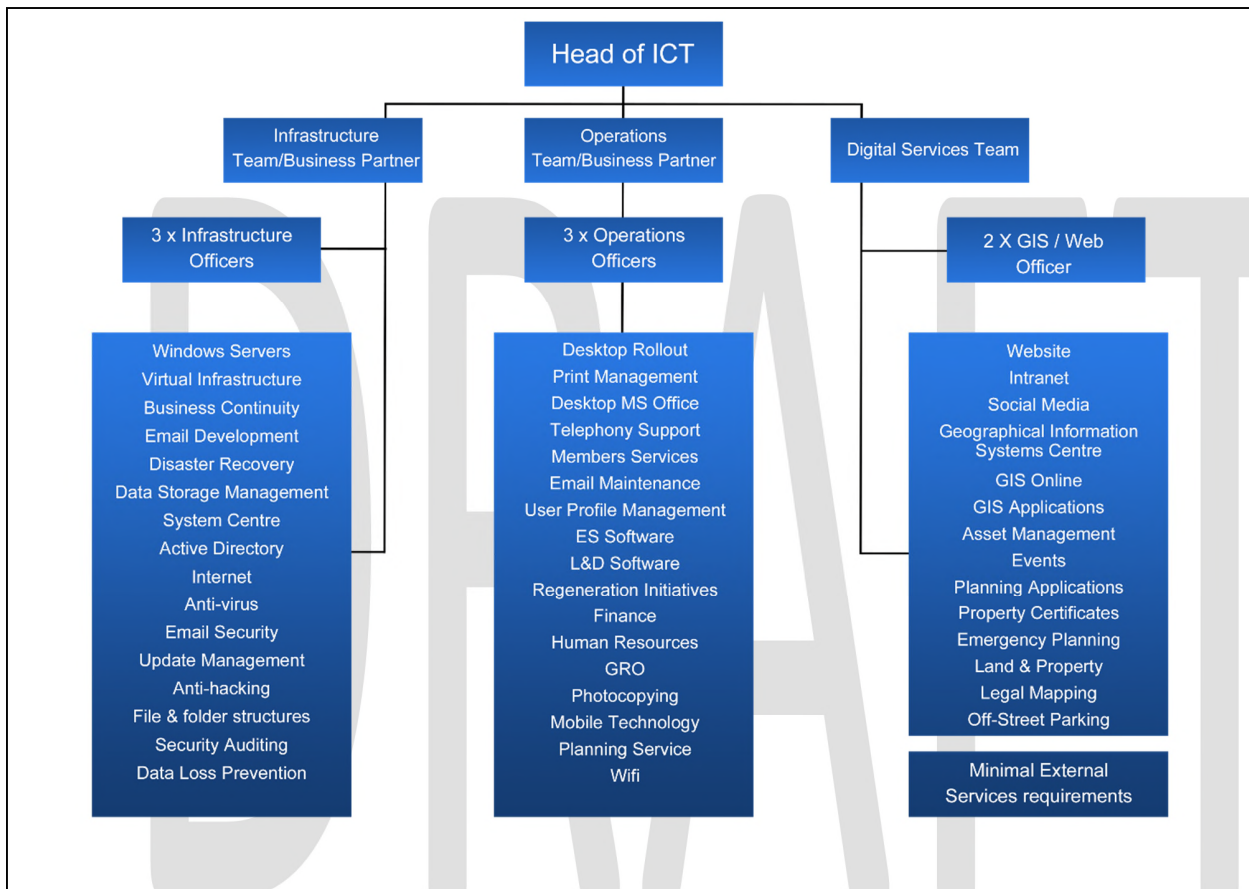


## **Strategic Aims of the ICT Service**

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 return to Civic Accommodation;
- GDPR implementation with relevant partners;
- Enhance mobile device security;
- Enhance Wifi security;
- Enhance network links;
- Enhance support with service desk;
- Flexible/agile working;
- Telephony Strategy;
- Print management Strategy;
- New Finance system;
- New Planning system;
- On-going ICT maintenance and support for all staff and Members.

## **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.

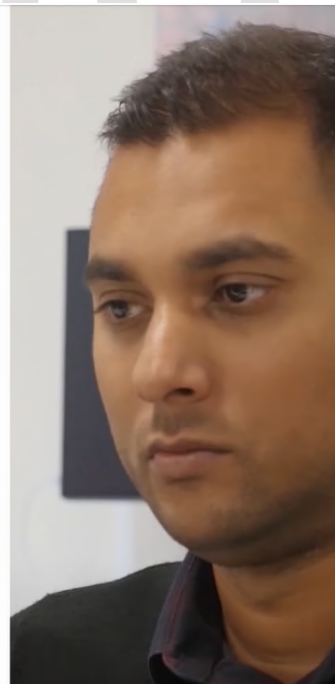
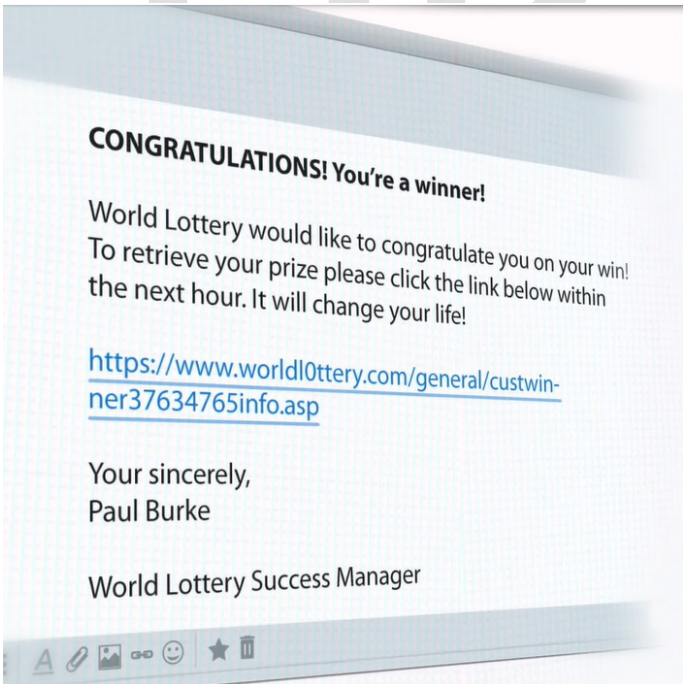
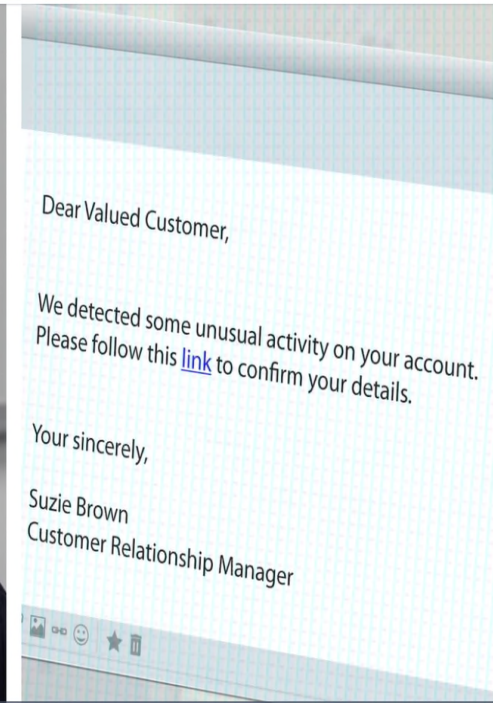
**SWOT Analysis**

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

Appendix 1.

Monthly Cyber Security Training is being conducted for all staff. Please see examples of the content below:





- **TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS WITH SUSPICIOUS EMAIL.**
- **IF A LINK OR AN ATTACHMENT DOESN'T LOOK RIGHT, IT PROBABLY ISN'T.**
- **COMMON SENSE IS THE BEST DEFENCE AGAINST CYBERCRIMINALS.**

Further Phishing Simulations have also been completed with additional simulations scheduled quarterly:

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