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An IS Strategy & Roadmap for Local Government in Northern
Ireland.

(Summary)
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Audit. Tax. Consulting. Corporate Finance.

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Note: this document is intended to provide a brief summary of the IS Strategy for Local Government in Northern Ireland and its accompanying appendices. Whilst all relevant sections are cross-referenced with the corresponding section in the full IS Strategy document, readers should refer to the full document for a full and complete description of the various elements of the IS Strategy.

Acronyms and Key Definitions

CRM	Customer Relationship Management - refers to information systems that are used for the storage of customer information and used for the management of customer transactions.
EDRM	Electronic Document and Records Management - refers to information systems that are used for the storage and retrieval of electronic documents.
ERP	Enterprise Resource Planning, refers to enterprise-wide applications
GIS	Geographical Information System - refers to information systems that are used for the representation of information in a geospatial format.
HR	Human Resources
ICT	Information Communications Technology - refers to all technology that is used within an organisation for the storage, manipulation and communication of that organisations information, for example, all applications, networks, internet, PCs etc.
IS	Information Systems - refers to those applications that are used to store and manipulate an organisation's information
IT	Information Technology - refers to the applications and hardware that is required for the storage and manipulation of information, as oppose to ICT which is also concerned with the communication of information
LAN	Local Area Network
WAN	Wide Area Network
Infrastructure	refers to the communications network, and hardware that is required to be interconnected to support the transfer of information within an organisation
Interoperability	refers to the ability of diverse systems to work together (inter-operate), e.g. exchange information.

IS Strategy Project Definitions

Portfolio: Service Access and Delivery

- **Business Architecture Optimisation:** in order enable the development of best practice and make the best us of information systems, existing processes should be reviewed and common, consistent processes should be developed. This project will review existing service delivery processes and identify opportunities to implement lean, efficient process to improve the quality of service delivery for the citizen.
- **Online Optimisation:** will develop enhanced web functionality to stimulate communication within the community, provide better support, and interact with, relevant online communities and provide a greater range of transactional services to both citizens and staff.
- **Customer Relationship Management (CRM):** will assess the viability of implementing a common CRM application across Local Government in Northern Ireland, albeit with access to local (Cluster level) instances. This project should also explore the relevant access channel options based on the outcome of the Customer Service Strategy project, including the work being undertaken by NI Direct.
- **Mobile Working:** will explore opportunities to implement a robust approach to mobile working for Local Government Elected Members, Council Chief Executives and staff where appropriate.

- **Public Service Centres:** will consider the optimum approach to implementing public services centres within the new Clusters.

Portfolio: Corporate Applications

- **Enterprise Applications:** will consider the validity of implementing an Enterprise Resource Planning, or combination best of breed Financial and HR applications at a Regional level across Northern Ireland.
- **Performance Management:** will consider the optimum approach to implementing a performance management system for Local Government in Northern Ireland.

Portfolio: Capacity Development

- **Collaboration:** will explore opportunities for enhanced collaborative working within Local Government in areas such as Procurement, developing common approaches and sharing of information to enable the development of Best Practice.
- **ICT Organisation Restructuring:** will align the Local Government ICT function with that required to support the delivery of a world class Local Government service delivery model.
- **Talent Management:** will implement a career management and development programme for ICT staff to promote career development and capability development within Local Government.
- **Establish Joint Service Delivery:** will assess opportunities to improve data sharing and common approaches with current and likely future Service Delivery Partners.

Portfolio: Information Architecture

- **Information Rationalisation,** aims to reduce information sources in order to provide a single, holistic view of customers, as well as a definitive understanding of property. This project should involve consideration of (a) possible points of information integration and also (b) process and technology solutions for reducing information duplication and enhancing information sharing (e.g. data warehousing).
- **Establish Joined-up Approach,** will help 'kick start' work by establishing a central project to examine just how Local Government should take the information management aspects of this Strategy forward.
- **Enterprise Information Model,** will consider both structured and unstructured information sources and will need to take into account planned changes to the operating model that will have an implication on information requirements, for example the specific impact of the services transferring from Central Government.
- **Corporate Data Management,** aims to establish a corporate approach for the storage of data across Local Government in Northern Ireland.
- **Management Reporting,** seeks to examine current reporting capabilities and identify opportunities for more effective reporting against key performance indicators;
- **Electronic Document and Records Management (EDRM),** will implement a corporate EDRM solution across the Cluster as a minimum, although a regional solution should be considered. The EDRM system should not only involve the deployment of technology on the desktop but should also encompass the people, process and learning aspects as well;
- **Gazetteer,** aims to rationalise the available gazetteer information in order to contribute to enhanced service provision (e.g. Building Control) as well as help to the single view of the customer; and

- **Geographical Information Systems (GIS)**, aims to identify where opportunities exist to establish enhanced, more tightly integrated GIS capability with a range of other information sources. The objective of this project is to identify where those opportunities exist and to how best to implement such a capability.

Portfolio: Infrastructure

- **Regional Network**, where a project will be undertaken to deliver a common network for Local Government across Northern Ireland.
- **Unified Communications**, will consider the implementation of Voice-over Internet Protocol telephony that will deliver voice communications across the common network and support unified messaging presence awareness and other modern communications media that can support modern, more flexible ways of working.
- **Desktop environment**, will consider the optimum approach to thin client / virtualised desktop computing and the implementation of a common desktop platform at a Regional level.
- **Enterprise Architecture**, where a review of an Enterprise Architecture approach within a Local Government environment is performed to determine whether it will deliver business benefit.
- **Server and Storage environment**, will consolidate the existing server infrastructure and make more efficient use of resources through techniques such as server and storage virtualisation techniques, as well as exploring other ways of implementing 'green and lean' approaches to the management of server storage locations.
- **System rationalisation and data migration**, will identify opportunities for the rationalisation of systems across councils and establish approaches to data migration to new or common application platforms where those opportunities exist.
- **Systems Integration**, will establish common standards and approaches to systems integration and a delivery mechanism for integration.
- **Security and Audit**, will develop a corporate approach and standards to data, systems and access security that will be implemented across Local Government in Northern Ireland.
- **Business Continuity**, a project which ensures that appropriate business continuity and disaster recovery facilities are in place for all existing ICT systems and services, as well as for ongoing and planned projects.
- **Service Management** will identify the key IT service management processes and facilitate the implementation of industry best practice approaches, such as the IT Infrastructure Library framework to improve the effectiveness and efficiency with which IT is provided 'as a service' to Local Government.

NILGA IS STRATEGY ROADMAP SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

This Information Systems (IS) Strategy has been commissioned by the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) and aims to provide an overarching strategy for information systems and technology in the Northern Ireland Local Government Sector over the period 2008-2015.

The IS Strategy has been developed following an extensive consultation with over 200 people and also takes into account good practice at local, national and international level¹.

As part of the Local Government reform programme, the existing 26 councils will be reconfigured to create 11 new local authorities with responsibility for an increased range of functions², which will be transferred to the Local Government sector in 2011. In addition to this transition, Local Government is seeking to modernise the way in which it delivers services to its citizens. The correct use of IS and its supporting infrastructures therefore a central component of meeting the expectation of all stakeholders for efficient and effective working practice.

One of the key pillars in developing this strategy document is the articulation of a shared vision for IS across Local Government in Northern Ireland. This vision has been developed through consultation with sectoral representatives and can be stated as:

Local Government in Northern Ireland will be a world leader in using information, systems and technology to assist in realising its economic, social, environmental and cultural goals, to the benefit of all its citizens.

CURRENT IS ENVIRONMENT

The delivery of this vision through the implementation of the IS Strategy will require significant change across the sector³, given that that data collection exercise⁴ highlighted the following:

- There is a diverse landscape of Information Systems and technologies in use across the finance, HR and line of business applications used by Local Government, which has hindered the development of best practice, process efficiencies and collaboration to date;
- With the exception of Belfast City Council, IT Staff tend to be more generalist than specialist owing to the range of Information Systems and technologies that must be supported with limited resources;
- The extensive range of responsibilities of IT departments across the Councils has sometimes made it difficult for a strategic approach to be adopted in addressing business issues and technology problems. There is significant opportunity for greater involvement of IT in business planning and perceiving technologists as 'partners' as well as 'service providers';
- Whilst some business areas are more developed than others, in general there is little commonality of processes within a business areas across each of the Councils;
- Business areas within the same councils often work 'in siloes';

¹ A full list of consultation is included as Appendix A in the IS Strategy document.

² The full range of functions that will be transferring to Local Government has been included as Appendix C in the IS Strategy document.

³ In addition to the change envisaged with the implementation of the IS Strategy, it is envisaged that there may be additional change with the implementation of the new Council structures, however, at the time of writing this document, details on the operating models of the new Councils were not available.

⁴ Additional information on the data collection exercise is included as Appendix D in the IS Strategy document.

- The use of an inconsistent approach to information capture and recording across business areas makes information exchange (where appropriate) difficult; and
- While some consideration has been given by each council to the future direction of Local Government in Northern Ireland, as yet there is no definitive business target operating model for the new councils.

IS STRATEGY PRINCIPLES

The vision for Local Government, articulated above, is illustrated by Figure (i), and is based on the three following key principles which should guide the future of IS across Local Government:

1. *ICT must be perceived as a business partner rather than simply an utility provider*

- ICT must be seen as a key strategic partner to support the delivery of each Council's business strategy, represented at all stages of the business planning and implementation cycle;
- ICT must be seen as a function that is governed by all of the Directorates and Chief Executives and is aligned to the future business vision and corporate objectives of each council; and
- ICT should be responsible for the implementation of appropriate, secure systems and services using a stable and robust ICT infrastructure, coupled with a strong service ethic, excellent ICT management practices and the delivery of high quality services. The delivery of these elements must be co-ordinated to ensure that systems are available to support the operational needs of business users, enabling them to innovate and deliver service improvements and efficiency savings, thereby enhancing both the value for money and cost effectiveness of the Council.

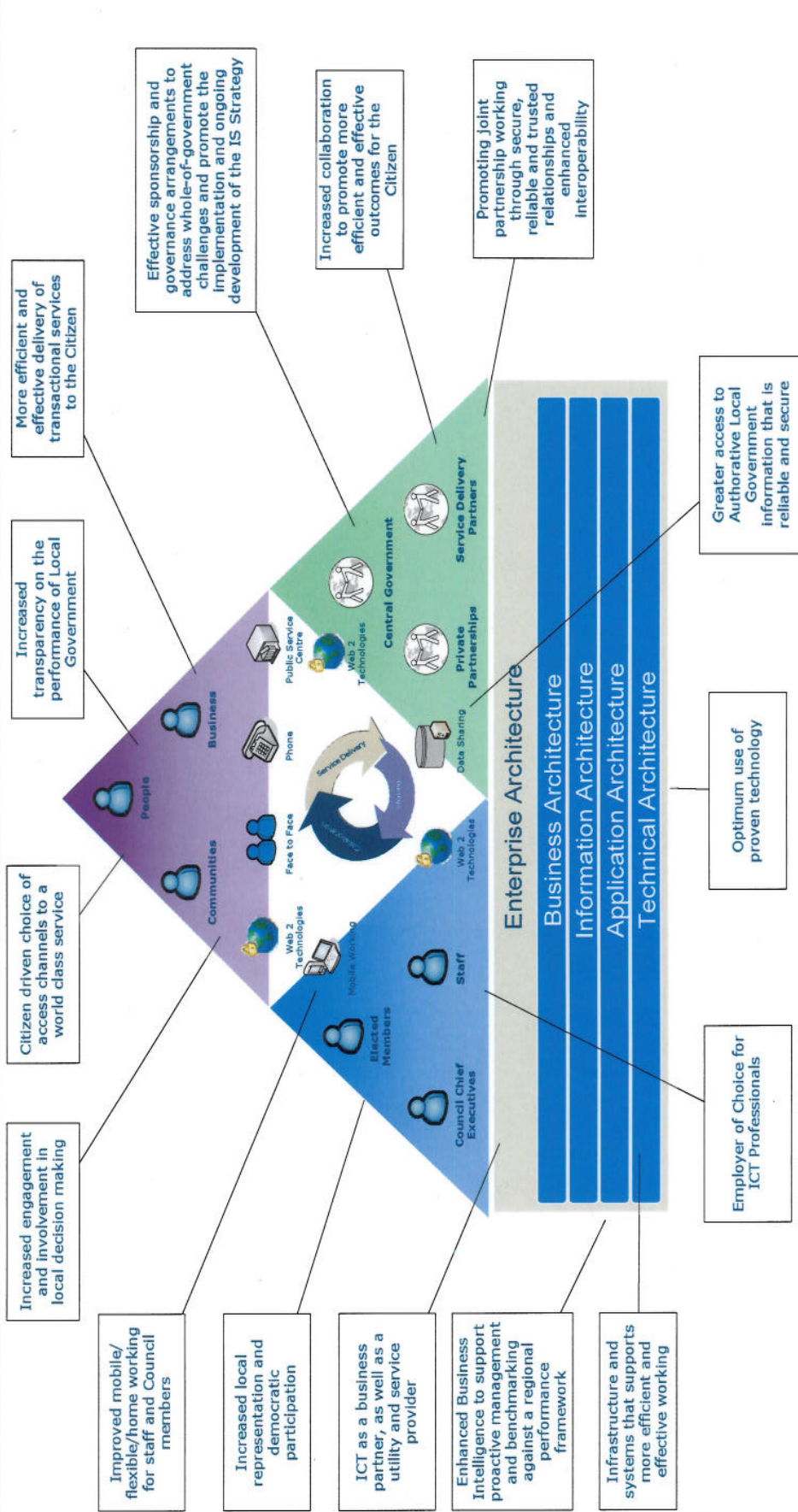
2. *Increased collaboration driving innovation and service improvement*

- an increased level of collaboration at a Cluster and Regional level that identifies and capitalises upon the opportunities for service improvement and efficiencies, for example in ICT areas such as the procurement of systems and services, the approach to user authentication services, the development of business continuity / disaster recovery arrangements, ICT training and the development of innovative technology solutions; and
- using collaboration to share knowledge, innovation and provide enhanced opportunities for specialisation and career development within Local Government ICT.

3. *A common, regional infrastructure delivering optimum efficiency and service*

- a common, regional infrastructure must be implemented to support improvements in service delivery to the citizen through multiple channel access, the adoption of common applications, sharing of information and transfer of functions from Central to Local Government;
- regional systems procurements for a Regional Wide Area Network (WAN) and line of business and core enterprise support systems (HR, Finance, Payroll, eProcurement, etc.) to realise procurement efficiencies, increase system interoperability (i.e. the capacity for individual systems to exchange information) and reduce the overall total cost of ownership whilst providing increased opportunities for practitioners to innovate; and
- migration of the centralised systems and infrastructure associated with the transferring functions from Central Government on an 'As Is' basis, unless a business case can be developed to support a move away from the current centralised systems and infrastructure.

Figure (i)
Overview of the IS Vision



Source: Deloitte

IS STRATEGY KEY THEMES

In summary, the key themes of the IS Strategy are:

- establishing a regional (Northern Ireland wide) network infrastructure to provide a platform to facilitate the transition to the new Clusters and the transferring Central Government functions and to support the delivery of joined up services;
- developing ICT capability across the Local Government sector through investment in ICT, through improved talent management of its people and through the ongoing professionalising of the 'IT organisation' by the continuing adoption of best practice processes;
- that expenditure on systems and projects must deliver efficiencies and service delivery benefits that can be directly linked to improved outcomes for citizens;
- that appropriate support for collaborative procurement opportunities should be provided as part of an overall procurement strategy to facilitate the delivery of the benefits from combined purchasing power and economies of scale, thereby helping to reduce the cost of service provision and potentially providing funding for reinvestment in ICT;
- a 7 year implementation roadmap for the IS Strategy has been developed highlighting those projects, in particular, where greatest benefit for the Local Government sector will be derived from adopting a regional approach;
- early agreement on the revised target operating model for the new councils and the transition arrangements will facilitate earlier realisation of the benefits in improved use of ICT and in service deliver for the citizen;
- improving access to Council services through the provision of a range of access channels both for the citizen and staff, supporting flexible/mobile working and improved customer service;
- increasing the standardisation of systems and processes across service delivery and corporate areas of business. Commonality is an essential core building block that facilitates more rapid development of innovative service delivery and the realisation of efficiencies;
- delivering process efficiency through the appropriate use of best practice business processes and process improvement; systems integration; and process automation and workflow;
- optimum use of proven modern technology, that supports the delivery of effective and efficient services while representing value for money for the citizen; and
- closer working with service delivery partners and providers to deliver more responsive and higher quality services to the citizen.

IS STRATEGY PROJECT PORTFOLIO

Taking account of this vision, the underlying principles and the key themes, the IS Strategy for Local Government has drawn on Local, National and International good practice, to identify a number of projects that should form part of a change programme. In identifying this programme, the key delivery objectives would be to:

- improve the quality, integration, accessibility and responsiveness of services to both internal and external customers;
- reduce costs;
- help support the development of a culture of collaborative working; and
- rationalise and update systems and infrastructure.

Taking account of these objectives, the projects identified have been allocated to the following six portfolios:

- Service Access and Delivery;
- Corporate Applications;
- Capability Development;
- Information Architecture;
- Infrastructure; and
- Professionalising IT.

IS STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAP

Given the environment in which Local Government in NI operates, e.g. infinite resources are not available, the projects identified were assessed and categorised in terms of their impact on the business and their estimated ease of implementation. Additionally, consideration was given to the potential benefits of each project, both qualitative and quantitative, including the ability of the project to assist in the delivery of:

- the transition and transformation agendas;
- a significant impact on a critical business processes;
- compliance with legislative requirements;
- foundation elements of the technical architecture; and
- alignment with national and international initiatives.

The prioritisation is based on the following criteria:

- **Priority 1**, where the project is core to the development of Local Government's information capability. They may also be mandated or strongly encouraged by an external governance body or in support of other key strategic initiatives. Priority 1 projects can be considered as "Must Do" projects;
- **Priority 2**, where the implementation of a project facilitates the delivery of additional business functionality, facilitates the delivery of business benefits, or is required to enhance existing capabilities. Priority 2 projects can be considered as "Should Do" projects; and
- **Priority 3**, where the overall project is of value, but contains significant phases that are perhaps long term investment/benefit projects, possess a higher risk profile, or are considered to be of a desirable nature and of lower priority than either Priority 1 or Priority 2. Priority 3 projects can be considered as "Could Do" projects.

Taking account of the programme objectives, the prioritised projects identified have been allocated to the following five portfolios as show in Figure (ii).

Figure (ii)
IS Strategy Project Portfolio

Initiative	Priority	Regional/Cluster
Online Optimisation	1	Cluster
Business Architecture Optimisation	1	Cluster
CRM	1	Regional
Mobile Working	2	Regional
Public Service Centres	1	Cluster
Enterprise Applications	2	Regional
Performance Management	1	Cluster
Collaboration	1	Regional
IT Organisation Restructuring	1	Cluster
Talent Management	2	Cluster
Establish Joint Service Delivery	2	Regional
Information Rationalisation	2	Regional
Establish Joined-up Approach	1	Regional
Enterprise Information Model	2	Regional
Corporate Data Management	1	Regional
EDRM	2	Regional
Gazetteer	1	Regional
GIS	3	Regional
Business Intelligence	2	Cluster
Regional Network	1	Regional
Unified Communications	1	Regional
Desktop Environment	1	Regional
Enterprise Architecture	1	Regional
Server and Storage Environment	1	Cluster
System Rationalisation and Data Migration	1	Cluster
Systems Integration	1	Regional
Security and Audit	2	Regional
Business Continuity	2	Regional
Service Management	2	Cluster

Portfolio Key

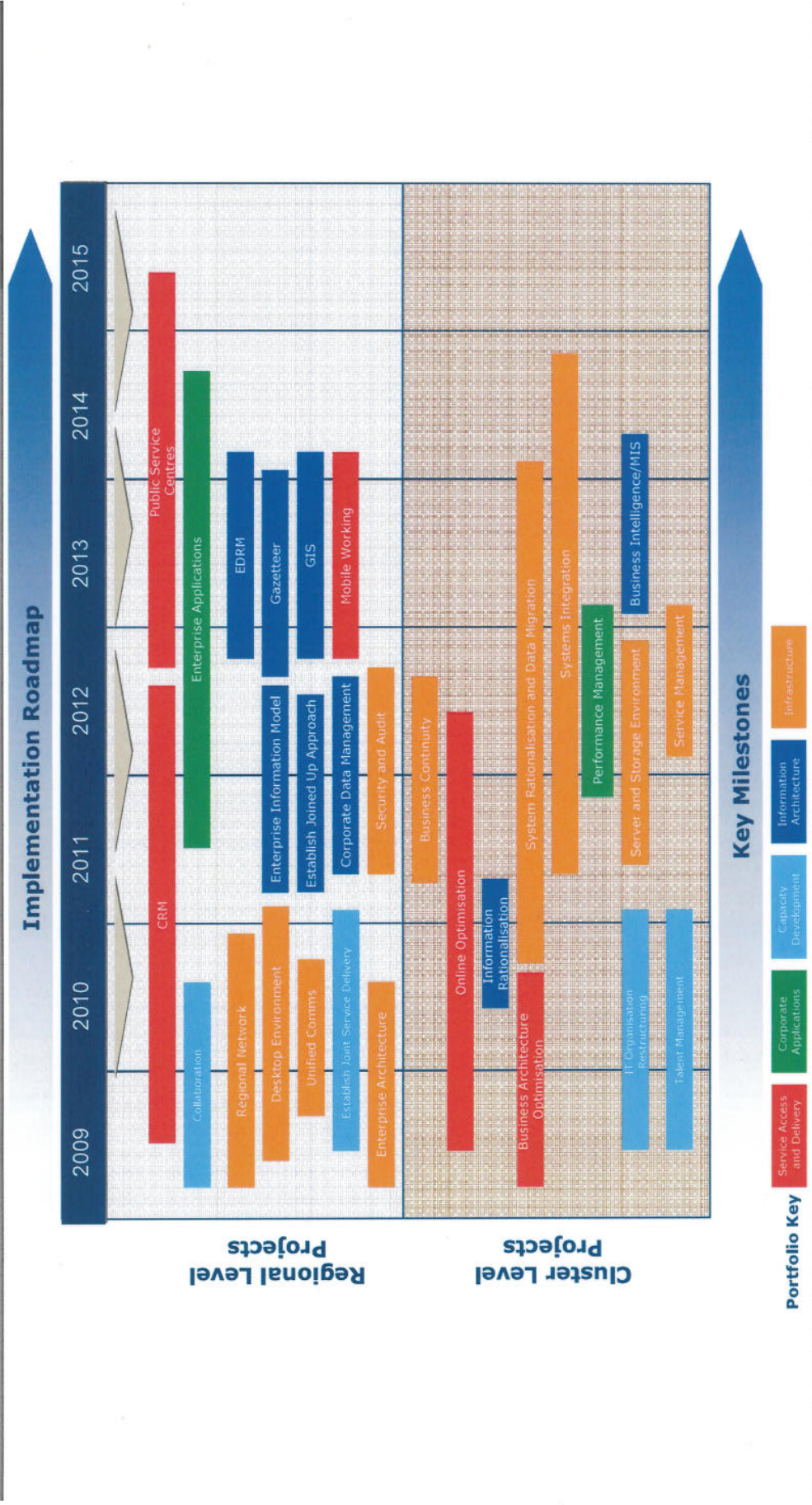
Service Access and Delivery	Corporate Applications	Capacity Development	Information Architecture	Infrastructure
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Please note, projects are sequenced in the order in which it is recommended that they should be undertaken, as identified in the IS Strategy Implementation Roadmap⁵, Figure (iii).

Following identification and prioritisation of the IS Strategy Projects an implementation roadmap has been developed. This is presented in Figure (iii) overleaf and highlights the timing of the major projects included within the 2008 - 2015 Strategy. The Roadmap clearly distinguishes between those projects which should be undertaken at a Regional level versus those that should occur at a Cluster level. The implementation of this Strategy will be a challenging programme of work which will seek to build on the progress already made by individual Councils.

⁵ Please refer to Section 4 of the IS Strategy Roadmap.

Figure (iii)
IS Strategy Implementation Roadmap

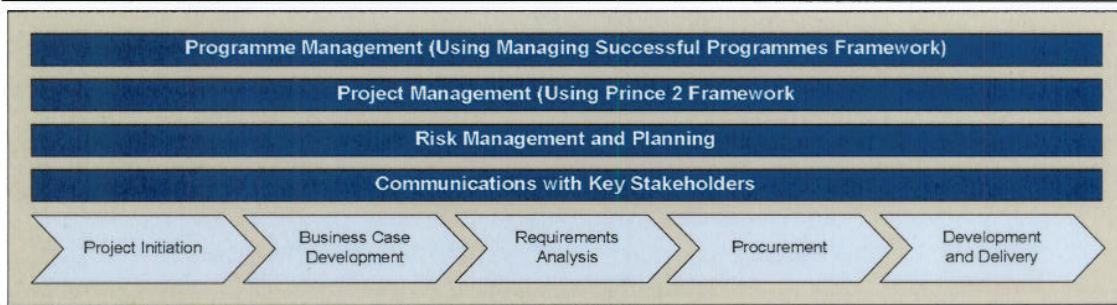


Given the timescale illustrated by Figure (iii), it is essential that the IS Strategy implementation plan is viewed as an overall programme of work and there is not an over-emphasis on the delivery of individual projects. As with all programmes of this size, nature and complexity there will need to be some level of flexibility about the precise method of delivering individual projects as the detailed requirements of the business will alter over the course of the next seven years. Appropriate frameworks should be used to manage the overall programme of change such as that shown in Figure (iv) below.

Additionally, given the financial constraints on Local Government and the need to demonstrate value for money, business cases should be developed for all projects to clearly examine the business need, define the overall scope and the business requirements for each project.

Figure (iv)

Approach to Programme and Project Management



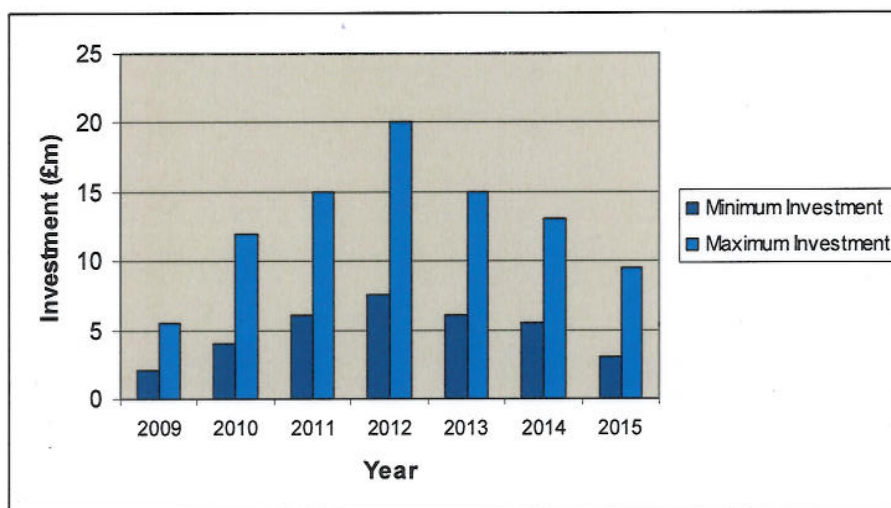
POTENTIAL RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

It is anticipated that significant costs will be incurred over the implementation period, particularly the next four years, if Local Government is to successfully implement this IS Strategy and meet the challenges set for the sector by the Local Government Reform Programme.

Figure (v) provides an indication of the maximum and minimum investment that may be required to implement the IS Strategy, based on estimates of the scale of each project and Deloitte’s experience in such areas. However, as noted above, this will be subject to review and refinement through the preparation of supporting business cases.

Figure (v)

Potential Cost of implementing the Local Government IS Strategy



Source: Deloitte

From the consultation undertaken during the preparation of the IS strategy, it is apparent that it is extremely unlikely that the level of funding which may be required can be met from within existing funding allocations by Local Government, even allowing for the potential savings arising from potential efficiency initiatives, e.g. collaborative procurement, disposal of surplus assets, etc. As such, a range of alternative funding sources will need to be explored. Without such additional funding it will not be possible to implement all of the projects included within this IS Strategy and deliver the step change which is required to support the reconfiguration and modernisation elements of the Local Government Reform Programme.

GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

Agreeing an appropriate approach to governance that will maintain momentum and support the ongoing implementation of the IS Strategy will be a key factor in delivering the IS Vision. Ideally the governance structures should be able to take a whole-of-government view and strengthen the link between Local and Central Government. The governance body should undertake a 'gatekeeper' role to ensure that acceptable levels of progress are achieved by each Council and provide a mechanism for improved working with Central Government Departments and to gain appropriate profile at the Northern Ireland Assembly. There are a number of examples of existing governance bodies that might provide a benchmark for consideration when developing the optimum governance arrangements. Although it is not within the scope of this document to recommend a specific governance arrangement, the following characteristics should be considered when establishing the relevant structure:

- facilitates self-regulation by Local Government;
- has credibility at a sector, Departmental and Ministerial level;
- has appropriate representation from not only Local Government Elected Members and Officers, but also relevant Central Government Departments and other, relevant Non-Departmental Public Bodies to allow a true cross-functional, whole-of-government approach to be taken to the challenges of implementing the IS Strategy – looking for joined-up approaches to implementing change in Local Government that may require collaboration between a range of functions to achieve citizen focused service improvement;
- has links with other relevant professional associations and bodies in the voluntary and non-voluntary sector to ensure an accurate representation of the requirements that Local Government must meet;
- is able to oversee the development of business cases for Regional level projects to secure the necessary resources and taking accountability for the achievement of identified business benefits;
- an ability to lead and co-ordinate the public service change agenda from a Local Government perspective by articulating the outcomes to be achieved and prioritising the allocation of resources at a Regional level;
- has a membership with an appropriate level of technical and business competence and understanding; and
- has at its core, a shared commitment to delivering improved service to the citizens of Northern Ireland.

FUTURE CHANGES AND REVIEW OF THIS IS STRATEGY

The IS Strategy and Vision for Local Government in Northern Ireland must accurately reflect both the business environment within the Local Government sector and the associated information and system requirements, as well as taking account of the impact that trends and developments in the ICT sector may have on supporting additional business change.

As such, the IS Strategy and Vision is dynamic and will need to be updated throughout the period it covers, most notably during the period of consultation following its initial completion by Deloitte MCS Ltd. and thereafter during the transition period as more detailed decisions are made, as well as following key points in the modernisation programme, such as the completion of the Customer Services Strategy which may impact the choice of customer facing channels that citizens expect Local Government to support.