



Joint Committee (Shared Services)

Report Title	ICT Disaggregation Discovery Proposal
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List of Appendices

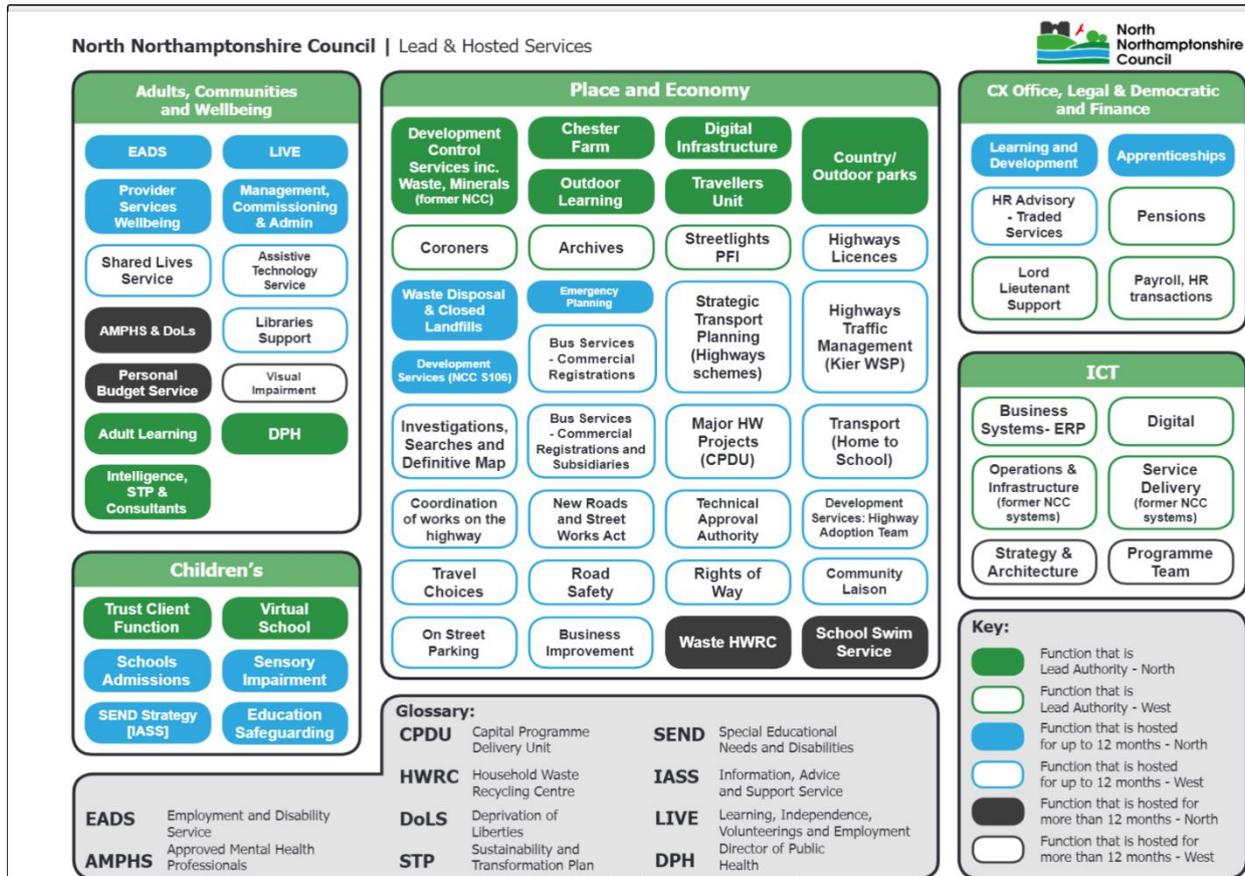
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1. Purpose of Report

To seek approval from members to begin scoping options for a potential partial/full disaggregation options of ICT services shared between North Northamptonshire Council ("NNC") and West Northamptonshire Council ("WNC").

2. Background

2.1. As per the approved Blueprint of April 2021 (see *Figure 1* above), four ICT



services are led by WNC, while two others are hosted for up to two years.

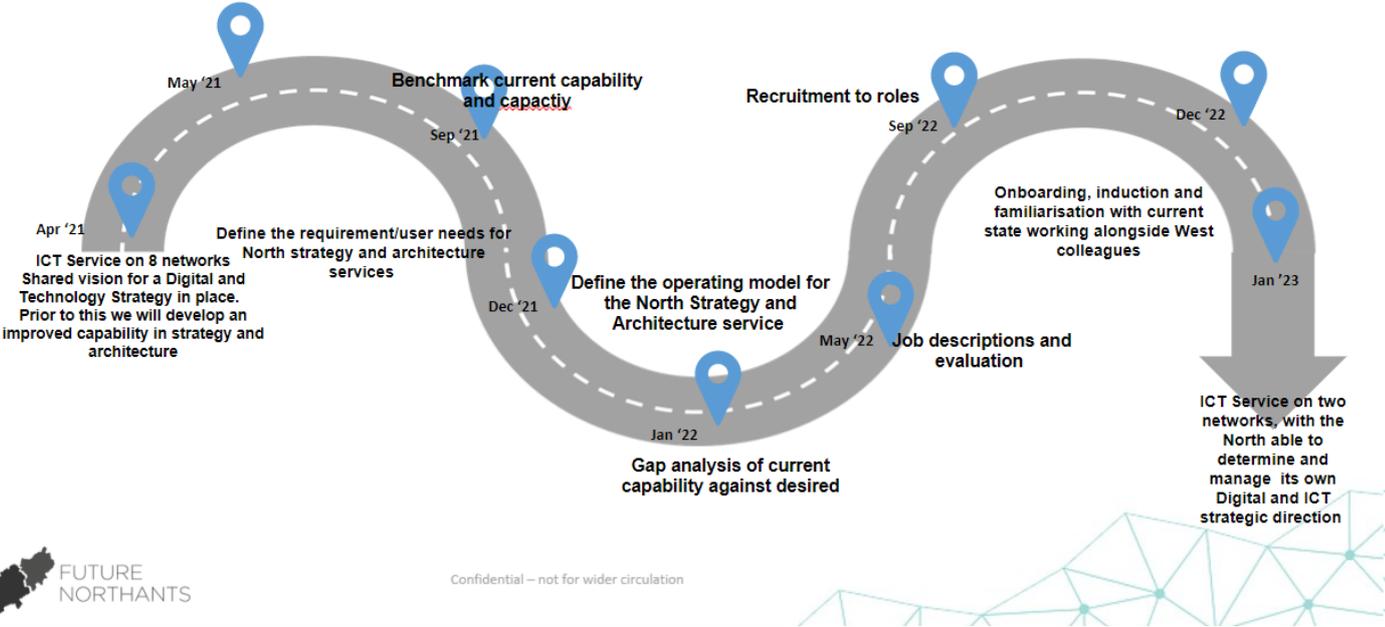
- 2.2. NNC has a budget of £3.41m for ICT that funds its share of WNC's Lead and Host services. This includes funding the split cost for the Children's Trust, and the Business Systems shared arrangement (whereby former NNC, MKC and CCC shared critical business systems under a governance arrangement led by the Lead Authority Board ("LAB")).
- 2.3. Prior to vesting day, the Future Northants programme set a projected Authority timeline for disaggregation of the two Hosted ICT services in the blueprint (Strategy & Architecture; Programme Team), which originally set final disaggregation of those services at Jan 2023, as seen in *Figure 2* above.
- 2.4. The period since vesting day has allowed for a capability review of the ICT services. This has shown that several key areas – most notably systems architecture, project/programme management, and cyber security - are not adequately represented within the Lead and Hosted services as aggregated from the previous sovereign authorities.

Figure 2: Blueprint of services as of April 2021

Figure 1: Original Future Northants timeline for disaggregation of the two hosted ICT services

2.5. Through informal discussions with NNC members, there has emerged a stated desire to explore other delivery options including disaggregation of some or all

JOURNEY TO SPLIT SERVICES (WHERE HOSTED – ICT STRATEGY AND ARCHITECTURE)



of the remaining four Lead services.

3. Detail of Lead and Hosted Services

- 3.1. There are six Lead and Hosted ICT services. The Lead services are *Business Systems, Digital, Operations & Infrastructure* and *Service Delivery*.
- 3.2. Hosted services are set in the Blueprint to be temporarily provided by WNC for up to two years. These are *Strategy & Architecture* and *Programme team*.
- 3.3. **Business Systems** covers the shared service under separate agreement that supplying applications to NNC, WNC, MKC and CCC (i.e. the former LGSS). This arrangement is governed by the Lead Authority Board, whose membership consists of S151 officers from the four authorities.
- 3.4. **Digital** covers web-based service delivery and change including research, product design (including UX) and build (including software development), thus enabling the organisation to work differently to respond to evolving user needs.
- 3.5. **Operations & Infrastructure** covers core physical infrastructure and servers, including telephony. It also covers business systems not under the former LGSS agreement (e.g. Adult and Children social care systems). The teams also undertake projects and maintenance to ensure that business as usual continues.
- 3.6. **Service delivery** ensures functioning IT business processes including service desk (the “front door” for staff/users); incident, problem management and escalation; and IT invoicing/purchasing, procurement and suppliers/contracts.
- 3.7. **Strategy & Architecture** covers holistic design of infrastructure and systems to ensure new solutions fit the overall systems estate (several hundred systems are in daily use); sets the future technology strategy, incorporating research and new developments in the field into our future desired state. Although listed as a service by the Future Northants project, it has no discrete budget no permanent staff in the establishment as of vesting day.
- 3.8. **Programme team** manages the portfolio of projects and ICT work in pipeline, both internal to ICT and from other services. As with *Strategy & Architecture*, it has no discrete budget and no permanent staff in the establishment (currently covered by interim staff).
- 3.9. As per 2.4 above, a capability assessment has concluded that there are a number of missing capabilities in the establishment; and that most of those present are at a low level of maturity. Notwithstanding improvements that can be made by better governance and process, this indicates that the services will require significant investment both to backfill missing capabilities (including critical ones such as cyber security), and to raise the maturity of existing ones to an acceptable level; this is before any costs of disaggregation are added.

4. Options for considering disaggregation

- 4.1. Any disaggregation of both the Lead and Hosted services requires consideration of arrangements for current finance and budgeting, governance, and contract and staffing implications.
- 4.2. The service areas in scope for review are *Digital, Operations & infrastructure, Service Delivery, Strategy & Architecture* and *Programme team*.
- 4.3. The *Business Systems* service is managed via a different mechanism as this is a shared service between NNC, WNC, MKC and CCC. Any changes would go through a separate governance process and are not in scope for this work.
- 4.4. Two Hosted services, *Strategy & Architecture* and *Programme team*, contain no staff resources and no budget. These can be disaggregated quickly if required, albeit with both needing investment in NNC to create the necessary functions.
- 4.5. As part of a scoping options, a range of choices from the status quo through to full disaggregation will be considered and presented.

5. Phases of work

- 5.1. A project of this magnitude will require some dedicated and competent project and technical personnel to assess the work needed in sufficient detail to produce detailed options (including costs and timeframes), and then to execute any options approved. There are therefore three key approvals sought from the joint committee:
 - **Approval for scoping** (*today*): if this document is approved, the Chief Information Officers for WNC and NNC will commence an internal exercise to scope the overall project. This will produce sufficient information to identify what investment is needed to develop detailed project plans. This is expected to take circa 2 months and require no additional investment.
 - **Approval for discovery** (*2 months to develop*): a paper will return to the Joint Committee proposing financial investment to fund a full “discovery phase” – the production of options for various ICT delivery models, with detailed project plans, costs, feasibility, impact assessment and timelines. If approved, this should take circa 4 months.
 - **Approval for delivery** (*4 months to develop*): the full PID detailing options is produced, including sufficient detail to select an option and proceed. At this stage, members will be asked to commit to any project, with detail on costs, times, feasibility, impact assessment and timelines included.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1. It is recommended that the Joint Committee:
 - Note the findings in this proposal;

- Mandate the Chief Information Officers for WNC and NNC to bring back a scoping proposal for investment to move the project into the “discovery” phase, which is expected to take c. 2 months of effort (plus time to put through governance structure of Joint Officer Board and Joint Committee for Shared Services).