REPORT TO:	Executive Board
DATE:	9 April 2015
REPORTING OFFICER:	Strategic Director, Policy & Resources
PORTFOLIO:	Resources
SUBJECT:	ICT & Support Services Capital Programme
WARDS:	Borough-Wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of the report is to detail to the Executive Board the proposals for the ICT & Support Services Capital Programme, highlighting the programme objectives that support the maintenance and development of the Council's technology infrastructure.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Executive Board notes and approves the details of the programme and is aware of and supports the financial spend profile for 2015/2016.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The continued and long-term investment the Council has made in its ICT infrastructure has played a major part in its drive for greater efficiency. It has enabled the Council, amongst other things to:

- Reduce its estate.
- Introduce automated processes.
- Provide simplified access to information and interactive services to the public.
- Facilitate greater use of agile working.
- Enhance its income from SLAs from third parties, given the infrastructure it has in place.

In addition the Administrative Shared Service has successfully launched the Picow Farm Records Management Service and is now delivering not only scanning and document management services within the Council but extending its capacity within other neighbouring authorities, the CCG and external agencies. The Council has significant statutory duties around records retention and, given the reduction in the number of corporate buildings, it has been necessary to develop this facility. Picow Farm forms a major focus for this years ICT development strategy as it now houses the Council's second Data Centre. The second data centre enhances the Council's resilience from a business continuity perspective and enables it to offer services to others.

3.1 Key Programme Areas for the 2015/2016 ICT Programme

The programme for this year will be split into the 3 distinct areas within the ICT

environment:

- Licensing to support the strategy;
- Server Replacement and Development; and
- Desktop Device Refresh.

3.2 Licensing

As the current server infrastructure matures plans are in place to replace a considerable proportion of the server hardware base, although currently effective this platform will not allow the authority to cost effectively consolidate upon the physical server footprint as the demand for more powerful and faster centralised technology increases.

Through the evolving delivery of change within this environment, investment will be made within the Data Centre network solution and the associated links connecting the two corporate Data Centres. In line with these plans the associated enterprise licensing will be reviewed and upgraded supporting the new infrastructure plans – the licensing mix once the sole domain of Microsoft will continue to be reduced and spread over a number of vendors as per the previous year's strategy due to highly restrictive changes in many of the vendor licensing models. This will limit the reliance upon any one vendor and extract maximum value from the investment made, as licensing forms a major aspect of the ICT investment profile at any one time.

Reducing the licensing implications will also be reflected across the Council's desktop estate as the use of fixed multi user terminals and tablet technologies grows.

3.3 Server Infrastructure

Now that the second Data Centre location is up and running the 14/15 strategy successfully allowed for the delivery of "high availability" storage facilities.

The 2015/16 strategy is to now quickly expand upon this excellent base by delivering a highly available server platform that will control and manage not just the application servers but also deliver the base for the desktop platform, utilising the existing Halton Cloud as its front end.

The proposed server platform will be based upon what is known as UCS Blade technologies allowing considerably more servers to be racked within the same physical footprint as the more traditional server hardware units. This reduces the growing space requirements and, more importantly, the power hungry cooling needs of the Data Centre.

Complimenting this new server platform will be a considerably faster Data Centre networking facility that will enable data to transfer at speeds of 10 Gigabits per second rather than the traditional 4 – 8 Gigabit backbones of today. This increased speed will then allow the two Data Centres to be linked together and replicate data and services in a seamless manner. This puts the Authority in a very strong position in terms of the resilience of what is a crucial service for nearly all the Council's activities.

3.4 Desktop Device Refresh

Following a number of trials over the last 12 months aimed at complimenting the authority's accommodation strategy, plans are in place to rollout corporately the use of the cloud based Virtual desktop and Application deployment solutions. This technology allows the authority to revisit its wider requirement for laptop technologies and look specifically at the wider officer device requirement. Offering devices to suit the individual's working needs reduces the demand for expensive and unnecessary device deployment. This is done through the use of fixed multi user technologies. Once the new desktop technologies are fully deployed existing agile workspaces will be reviewed and equipped with the new devices.

Proposed Financial Spend Profile:

The proposed spend profile for 2015/16 ICT Capital Programme is detailed below:

	£
Licensing:	
Microsoft Desktop Licence EA	200,000
VMare Server and Desktop Licences	200,000
Additional SharePoint Licences	60,000
UAG	70,000
VPN Upgrade	30,000
	560,000
Server:	
UCS Technologies	250,000
Associated Cisco Network Technologies	200,000
Power Upgrade	120,000
	570,000
Device:	
Device Replacement	350,000
	350,000
Total Programme Value	**1,480,000**

As shown above the projected spend profile exceeds the budgetary allowance of £1.1m considerably. Through smart procurement and changes to the way in which the authority accesses its desktop space it is envisaged that all projects will be delivered within the scope of the current budgetary allowance. If this does not prove to be the case, then some re-profiling will take place to ensure spend remains within the budget allocation. As will be noted from the profile above software licensing forms a major part of this year's financial requirement

and plans are in place to maintain the review of how the authority manages this significant investment, to ensure best value is achieved.

The continued development of the two Data Centre facilities will be a key focus over the coming years, with further improvements to the power supply to the site this year held back from 14/15.

4.0   POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1   The provision of a first class ICT service will remain important to the delivery of all services and to the delivery of the Council's Efficiency Programme.

5.0   OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1   The ICT Capital programme will continue to be scrutinised by the ICT Strategy Board, monthly meetings with the Strategic Director Policy and Resources, monthly review with Financial Services and fortnightly meetings with the Portfolio Member for the ICT & Support Service.

6.0   IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1   Children and Young People in Halton

The proposal will support staff in delivering the service efficiently and in modern ways.

6.2   Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton
The proposal will support staff in delivering the service efficiently and in modern ways.

6.3   A Healthy Halton

The proposal will support staff in delivering the service efficiently and in modern ways.

6.4   A Safer Halton

The proposal will support staff in delivering the service efficiently and in modern ways.

6.5   Halton's Urban Renewal

The proposal will support staff in delivering the service efficiently and in modern ways.

7.0   RISK ANALYSIS

7.1   The key risk for the project is ensuring that there is an effective balance between supporting evolving business needs and supporting existing working practices. By implementing the correct technology, alignment with the Accommodation Strategy and effective training programme and project management, this key risk will be mitigated.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1   There are no equality and diversity issues associated with this report.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

9.1   None under the meaning of the Act