Implementing Electronic Government - Statement 2

Joint Statement by

Conwy County Borough Council

Denbighshire County Council

Flintshire County Council

Gwynedd Council

Isle of Anglesey County Council

Wrexham County Borough Council

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# Table of Contents

## Section One – Vision

- A shared vision for North Wales ................................................................. 3
- e-Government in North Wales – A Statement Of Intent .......................... 3
- e-Government in Context ........................................................................ 3
- Key Principles .......................................................................................... 4
- Partnership Working ................................................................................ 5
- **Wrexham’s Vision** .................................................................................. 6

## Section Two - Priority Outcome and Services

- Priorities identified for IEG1 ...................................................................... 8
- Progress against IEG1 – Partnership Working .......................................... 9
- Proposed Partnership Working .................................................................. 10
- **Wrexham Projects and Initiatives** ......................................................... 12

## Section Three – Self Assessment of the e-Organisation

- Joint Methodology for Assessment ............................................................. 18
- Welsh Assembly Government Performance Indicator ............................ 18
- SOCITM ‘Better Connected’ Survey ......................................................... 18
- Holistic Approach to Assessment ............................................................... 19
- **Wrexham - Local Assessment** ............................................................... 20

## Section Four - Resources

- Funding Options ........................................................................................ 26
- Benefits and Savings ................................................................................ 28
- **Wrexham - Spend Proposals** ................................................................. 29

## Section Five – Risk Assessment

- Vision ......................................................................................................... 31
- Funding ....................................................................................................... 31
- Collaborative Working ............................................................................. 31
- Customers .................................................................................................. 31
- Technology Issues .................................................................................... 32
- Capacity – People and Skills ..................................................................... 32
- Business Processes .................................................................................... 32
- **Wrexham - Risk Assessment** ................................................................. 33
Section One – Vision

A shared vision for North Wales

The six Unitary Authorities in North Wales are working together towards developing and supporting successful, vibrant and sustainable communities. This includes using new technology efficiently, innovatively and co-operatively to improve the service delivery offered by our Councils. Furthermore, aiming to increase democratic involvement and to promote and support the local economy.

We want North Wales to offer a high quality of life for its residents, preserve its traditions, historic character and language, and develop an increasingly successful regional economy. We believe we can contribute to achieving these aims. Our shared work on the e-Government agenda is a valuable driver towards an efficient, effective and imaginative implementation of the process of modernisation across all six North Wales Councils. In so doing, the citizen is placed firmly at the centre of public services throughout the region.

e-Government In North Wales – A Statement Of Intent

The IEG statements submitted in 2002 by all six unitary Authorities in North Wales included the following statement:-

“The Chief Executives of the six Councils of Anglesey, Gwynedd, Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham are committed to work collaboratively to promote e-Government within North Wales.

This will initially take the form of being open in sharing best practice, policies and strategy documents, with the expectation that identifying common themes will lead to joint working. This has been prevalent amongst various service departments for some time, which, through collaboration on particular projects with similar aims, have achieved savings and increased effectiveness. Partnerships with other organisations in the public sector will also be investigated.”

Work has progressed in line with that statement throughout the year. This year has seen further co-operation across these Authorities and this joint statement of intent expands on the shared commitment to which each Council has signed up. This statement introduces areas of practical partnership working aimed at realising those commitments.

e-Government in Context

e-Government is a key element of the Government's modernising agenda, with a clear focus on better services for the public. Obviously Information and Communications Technology (ICT) is a part of this issue, but the challenge of e-Government is much wider. It calls for a willingness to provide services around the customer, rather than the organisation. That is, at a time, location and in a manner suitable for the customer, and not necessarily as the Council is used to. It is clear therefore that e-Government has far-reaching implications. ICT will be a key enabler.

e-Government in Wales is part of a broad agenda for change encapsulated in the improvement agenda driven by the Wales Programme for Improvement. Consequently, as a group of Authorities, the six North Wales Councils see e-Government as a tool for supporting improvement rather than an end in itself. Progress on the e-Government agenda has to be seen
as part and parcel of the setting of local priorities based on individual risk assessments under the Wales Programme for Improvement.

Allowing the public access to services electronically will necessitate change in our organisations. The challenge is to make services more readily accessible to all sections of the community, while undertaking major business organisational change to make this feasible. In essence, e-Government is primarily a service delivery issue, which will require significant cultural and organisational change within each Council and is not simply about ICT.

By definition therefore, the detailed priority accorded to the e-Government agenda by each Council must vary, depending on local circumstances. However, as part of the broader modernising agenda, all six North Wales Councils see e-Government as a clear driver, which impacts on many of the key improvement directions identified by each Council. As a result, progress on the e-Government agenda will go hand in hand with the overall improvement work within each Council, as summarised in the Improvement Plan prepared individually by each Council.

**Key Principles**

Under this statement of intent, the six North Wales Councils, as a group, are committed to several key principles in driving the e-Government agenda forward within the context noted above. In doing so, we are committed to the following key principles.

- **Modernisation**
  As already highlighted, a key principle is that e-Government is not an end in itself but must be seen and implemented as part of each Council’s individual Improvement Plan and within the context of the Community Strategy for each area. As such, the priority accorded the e-Government programme and detailed local priorities within that programme will reflect the broader modernisation agenda within each Council and will, of necessity, vary between Councils in response to local circumstances and objectives.

- **Customer Care**
  All Councils are committed to the goal of high levels of service within a variety of service delivery methods. This will not result in uniformity across Council boundaries but does reflect a joint undertaking to improve the public’s experience in dealing with each Council individually.

- **Customer Focus**
  All six Councils have clearly stated their support for a customer focus in service provision. This entails a multi channel approach, with services packaged in a way, which makes sense to the public, such as the Life Episodes approach to Web site development.

- **Joint Working**
  There is a joint commitment to considering co-operative working on specific projects although this is within the natural constraints of individual Council priorities. Already there has been agreement on individual Councils taking the lead on specific subjects. In addition, there has been, and will continue to be, co-operation on option appraisals for some of the major issues facing all Councils.

- **Staff Training and Development**
  Councils’ abilities to respond positively to the challenge of e-Government depend significantly on “people issues”. It is recognised that different levels of skills are required across all Authorities:-
• Senior Management and Leadership skills, including project and change management.
• Generic skills, including customer care.
• Basic IT Skills, including the role of the European Computer Driving Licence.
• Specialist IT skills to deliver the infrastructure and IT architecture required to facilitate the change required.

• Monitoring of Performance
  All Councils recognise the current weakness in terms of their ability to demonstrate the standards of performance in dealing with enquiries from the public. Consequently, all Councils will be looking (individually or jointly) at systems to measure and demonstrate performance. With this in mind, all the Councils do fully support the development of a more sophisticated and meaningful performance indicator to improve on NAWPI 1.5. See Section 3 of this Statement for further details of this indicator within the context of self-assessment of e-Government.

Partnership Working

Progress on the e-Government agenda within North Wales is being facilitated by the North Wales e-Government Group (NWe-GG). This group, established by the North Wales Chief Executives, seeks to ensure the sharing of good practice and promotes collaboration where possible. The bringing together of individual Councils’ capacity in the e-Government field and the ability to co-operate is seen as a key enabler in progressing the e-Government agenda in North Wales. Joint working will significantly enhance individual Councils’ ability to deal with this challenging agenda. The NWe-GG will actively explore opportunities for joint working where appropriate. Indeed, the preparation of this statement and the collaborative nature of the work involved is an illustration of this.

Within Section Two of this IEG Statement, Proposed Partnership Working lists some of a series of projects which have been or are being driven forward jointly by the 6 North Wales Councils as a practical illustration of that commitment to collaboration.
Wrexham’s Vision

The shared vision described above is entirely consistent with the vision set out in Wrexham Council’s Corporate Strategy Statement 2003-2004. Improvement is a key theme and the Corporate Strategy identifies several important processes for improving the quality of services, including:

- Improving the Quality of Education
- Improving the Quality of the Economy
- Improving the Quality of Care, Health and Well-being
- Improving the Quality of Life
- Improving the Quality of Services

As part of the process for improving the quality of services, the Corporate Strategy recognises that the modernisation and e-Government initiatives will be key enablers in transforming the ways in which customers access our services and the ways in which the Council structures itself to deliver them:

• **Modernising Local Government**

  The Council will continue to implement the agenda for modernising local government. It will take authority-wide action to ensure that its political and operational priorities reflect the requirements of the 1999 and 2000 Local Government Acts and subsequent orders and regulations from the National Assembly.

• **Electronic Government (e-Government)**

  The Council will, in line with the Wales Assembly Government Information Age Strategic Framework for Wales, develop and implement its agreed Implementing Electronic Government (IEG) Statement to meet the Assembly's targets for electronic service delivery. The Council will carry out a feasibility study on contact centre options. It will also develop on-line interactive services using the Council's web-site, improve the integration of information systems within the organisation and tailor service delivery in a way that meets individual needs, to enable all its citizens to access local services electronically.

• **Access**

  The Council recognises the importance of the whole community being able to access the services it provides and will strive to ensure access to services is equitable and appropriate.

Our overall goal for electronic local government remains the same as that stated in the first IEG statement:

"A Council that is citizen and customer centred and uses ICT (information communications technology) to improve its services and enhance its role as democratic leader, to make life better for people."
To achieve this goal we recognise that in the future, citizens will expect to reach the services that they want at times and in places that are convenient to them. This will require a long-term change programme, with step-changes in service delivery along the way. Our success will be characterised by service transformation, and will include the following ideals:

- **Customers calling a single number to reach the service that they require within the Council.** Calls are answered promptly to set standards and the person answering the phone can resolve a majority of the questions raised within one call.

- **Electronic communication is the major route for providing information and communicating with all organisations and individuals dealing with the Council, through channels that suit their circumstances whether at work, at home or on the move.** This increases the access to public information and services to 24 hours a day, 7 days a week over the internet, or extended hours provision through a contact centre.

- **Support Elected Members in their use of information communications technologies to enhance and improve their democratic role.**

- **Access to the Internet is made widely available so that no one is excluded from digital communication.**

- **There is joint-working between public sector and other services so that they respond to the needs of the customer rather than those of organisational and professional structures.** Customer enquiries, or notification of changes, reach those parts of the public sector that need to know with one contact from the customer.

- **Increased democratic involvement at individual and community level, supported by a higher flow of information and consultation through electronic media, enabling greater involvement in decision-making that affects the area.**

- **Best value services delivered that are efficient, effective and continually improving, enhanced by the use of information communications technologies (ICTs).**

- **A Council that values and invests in its staff in terms of skills, particularly ICT skills, and the use of ICT to deliver learning.**

- **The Council is a learning organisation - gaining knowledge from its experience and using this knowledge to inform future actions.**

- **An organisation that values information and knowledge and has decision-making based upon sound evidence.**

- **A vibrant local community and economy that makes best use of ICT to further its aims.**

The vision for this second IEG statement is that these ideals are fully realised and become tangible developments which benefit our customers, our service delivery partners, and our own organisation. While some significant progress has been made the Council recognises that it will require a great deal of further effort allied to a fuller understanding of our customers real needs to be able to fully achieve this vision. The Council is currently considering issues arising from a Customer Access to Service Review and an Option Appraisal exercise and is involved in a wide-ranging and ongoing debate on the approach it should take. These initiatives will inform decision making and will lead to the formulation of priorities and action plans for the delivery of major e-Government projects in the next IEG statement.
Section Two - Priority Outcome and Services

Priorities identified for IEG1

Local e-government is a core part of the drive to improve and modernise local government. It can help transform services, renew local democracy and improve local economic vitality. This section outlines the priority areas to focus upon in order to deliver this transformation.

The Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) and local government in Wales have through the Partnership Council jointly committed themselves to implement a strategy for improving service delivery using ICT. This strategy is based on the identification of common themes, priorities and targets for the three-year period 2002-03 to 2004-05, and beyond. The themes identified prior to submission of the Interim IEG statements (March 2002) are herein reported against and developed.

The Partnership Council recommended a general approach that priority areas should be those which make the most difference to the citizen and service providers (public, private and voluntary). It recommended three priorities that all Councils in Wales could seek to achieve by 2005 supported by concerted programme of Wales-wide action and support. These three priorities were identified as:-

- **Organisational Change**
  In collaboration with partners and other local Authorities, to agree a priority list of back-office functions that could be re-engineered to promote and ensure joining up with other functions and organisations. It is recognised that this will require significant investment and organisational and cultural change. This will enable local Authorities to implement the following two further priorities.

- **Access to Services**
  To seek to transform the quality of access to local services through one-stop-shops or contact centres. These can be accessed from home or through community locations such as libraries, post offices, kiosks, using a variety of channels such as the telephone (including mobile devices), personal computers and digital TV. Authorities will consider setting-up individual, regional or consortia of locally-managed one-stop-shops or contact centres offering one-call fulfilment for most contacts. Local Authorities will consider the possibility and the Best Value benefits of working with neighbouring Authorities.

- **Enhanced Web-based services**
  To enhance their local web sites, either collectively with other Authorities or individually, to greatly increase consultation with the public, provide information, increase the opportunities to make transactions, express opinions, vote and to find out what is happening. All local Authorities aim by 2005 to have web sites that will be classified by the Society of Information Technology Management (SOCITM) as transactional.

The six Unitary Authorities of North Wales are seeking to identify opportunities for joint ventures within these priority areas, wherever practical and possible. Likewise, partnership working with non-Local Authority Agencies is also significant in delivering joined-up services to our citizens.
Progress against IEG1 – Partnership Working

• Organisational Change

The interim IEG statements (March 2002) were based upon an initial assessment of local needs and possibilities. These assessments have shown that whilst the six Councils of North Wales face the same challenges for e-Government they have each started from different points - organisationally, politically and technically. This first year of activity has seen the establishment of the North Wales e-Government Group (NWegG). Initially, this group met to share information and best practice across the region. However, the group has latterly moved into a more practical focus, actively exploring opportunities for joint ventures with the objectives of attaining economies of scale and avoidance of repeating similar activities.

Within each of the North Wales local authorities, there has been the establishment of strategic backing for the e-Government agenda. This has been achieved by the appointment of elected members to e-Government Champion roles, and establishment of high-level panels. At an operational level, most of the Authorities have also funded various posts, including a dedicated e-Government officer and other service-based roles. These organisational changes, in the first year of the IEG strategy, have been an essential foundation for the delivery of this element of the Government’s modernisation agenda.

To date, partnership activities seeking to join up service delivery across the County boundaries have typically been contained within individual service areas, or to reflect third party partner involvements. Examples of joint ventures include:

• Social Services Information Systems
  Care.com is a joint project involving three Councils to design, develop and implement an operational information system for use by the Social Services departments of the partnership. In addition, five of the Councils are part of an All Wales consortium looking at the joint procurement of a social services information system.

• Library Systems
  TalisWeb is a combined online library catalogue involving three Councils, which allows access to the collections (books, videos, CDs etc.) of the partnership members and providing cross-authority library membership including online search, renewal and reservations. LINc y Gogledd is a joint project between the library services of three Councils and the University of Wales, Bangor, which is trying to extend the range of lifelong learning resources available in North West Wales by enabling online requests for inter-library loans.

• Children's Information Service
  A system is being established in partnership between two of the Councils to provide information about all types of service providers for children and parents. The scope of the project is such that it can potentially be extended across the region, to cater for local and cross-boundary searching.

• Project Dragon
  A cross-authority initiative, also involving other agencies such as North Wales Police. The main objective is to share information on crime and disorder statistics and trends and to establish a single source of reference information to assist with strategy and policy development in this area. The intention was to make the information available via a secure Extranet facility but funding from the National Assembly for Wales has ceased and plans have been shelved. The initiative is likely to continue on a reduced basis in North Wales, but without funding it is unlikely that a web based information facility will be developed.
• **Fresh-air.info**  
  A regional web-based portal providing information on Countryside Services including where to go to access country parks, walks, safe cycle routes, ruins and relics. Six neighbouring authorities including three from North Wales have links with the www.fresh-air.info web site portal and provide relevant information. The fresh-air web site also links with a number of other agencies to provide a comprehensive information service on countryside leisure activities. The site is hosted by a local company.

• **Road maintenance systems**  
  The North Wales Councils make up two of the Assembly’s seven national agents for trunk roads and share a management system financed by the Assembly and provided by a company called EXOR, which allows call history and site history recording as well as GIS integration and workflow tracking.

• **Access to Services**  
  The North Wales Authorities recognise that they can all extend and improve their range of access locations and channels as well as broaden the variety of services offered through existing access points. However, any such expansions should be implemented within a strategic policy, aiming to target the needs of their customers. In order to establish the specific customer needs, the Authorities have undertaken their own reviews of local access to services. They have also collaborated in a joint Options Appraisal to determine the potential for transforming customer services through the introduction of contact centre technology.

  This work has reached a key milestone, in that the Authorities have the opportunity to continue with the collaboration. It is unlikely that a single, regional contact centre will be commissioned. However, there is still added value in taking a joint approach to the assessment of the range of solutions currently being marketed and possibly engaging in a joint procurement initiative. By adopting the same technology at a local level now, the Authorities would hold a strong position as a regional user group. The potential for joining up this service in the future would also be more feasible.

• **Enhanced Web-based services**  
  In their IEG1 statements, all the North Wales Authorities identified improvements to their local web sites as being fundamental to achieving their e-Government aims. They have each shown improvements against both the NAWPI 1.5 and SOCITM’s Better Connected benchmarking report. By extending the range of information and transactional services available locally, the Authorities’ content stores become valuable to each other. Regional information and services become possible, thereby breaking down the County boundaries and presenting web-based services centred around the needs of the customer.

**Proposed Partnership Working**

All Councils are keen to pursue the benefits of joint working. Any such ventures are subject to available funding and resources, as appropriate. The areas noted below itemise the potential for joint working which face the Authorities at this time:-

• Joint appraisal and possible joint purchasing of a Customer Relationship Management Solution – enabling the expertise of all Councils to be brought to bear on the consideration of solutions whilst maintaining local decision making. Work in this area could be a model for joint procurement of any IEG solution.
• Consideration of a Regional Portal – enabling integrated access to web-based information across county boundaries. This could include map-based information.

• Consideration of e-Democracy projects, encouraging the engagement of the region's voters in the democratic process.

• Joint investigation of options for the implementation of additional technologies, e.g. Mobile phones or Interactive Digital TV (iDTV) across North Wales. Extending access to electronic services via existing technology, thereby reducing the digital divide.

• Consideration of joint training and staff development opportunities in all areas of e-Government.

• Furthermore, all the North Wales Authorities are individually committed to collaborations with All Wales and WAG schemes. These include the Welsh Purchasing Initiative, the Forum for Citizens' Cards in Wales (FCCW) and the Broadband for Wales programme.
Wrexham - Projects and Initiatives

- Organisational Change

The co-operation between the North Wales authorities in developing this second IEG statement is a practical example of collaboration. The joint Options Appraisal exercise already referred to indicate some of the activity undertaken to promote the ideals of e-Government, in particular collaboration within and outside the authority to encourage joining up with other functions and organisations.

However, the Council recognises that continued progress will require significant investment and organisational and cultural change. The following initiatives provide further examples of work being undertaken in this area by Wrexham Council:

Wales Programme for Improvement

The authority has recognised the importance of modernisation as an agent for change and improvement by including e-Government as a corporate priority within the authority’s Improvement Plan. The authority’s improvement priorities for 2003 – 04 have been grouped under four broad themes which reflect many elements in the modernising initiative:

- **Impact in Communities** – issues that make a real difference to people
- **Listening to Communities** – making sure we listen to the public’s views
- **Planning to Deliver** – how we turn policy and strategy into delivery
- **The Way We Work** – the framework through which we will deliver our priorities

Key departments have also identified e-Government as an important improvement area within their action plans.

Wales Procurement Initiative

A cross-cutting Best Value review of procurement was initiated within the authority in 2002. As part of the review the Council will consider the implications of the Welsh Procurement Initiative (WPI) on current procurement arrangements and practices and has committed to participation in a number of areas including:

- The Wales Pathfinder Project on Purchasing Cards – Wrexham is one of several organisations involved in the pilot phase with a scheme initiated in Spring 2003;
- Construction Line – Wrexham subscribes to this on-line service which provides a pre-tender qualification list of approved construction suppliers;
- The WPI training initiative – Wrexham is actively supporting attempts to improve procurement-related training.

In addition to these WPI initiatives on procurement the Council has in this IEG statement committed to investigate and assess the options for joint procurement of major IEG solutions with the other North Wales authorities. The Council also has plans to modernise its procurement practises by:

- Piloting an e-ordering system for ICT procurement involving a major supplier partner to the Council.
- Continuing with a programme to modernise all major financial applications so that the systems in use can better facilitate e-commerce and e-procurement activity.
National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG) –

The Council recognises that accurate land, address and property information is an essential building block for joined-up working between different services and organisations. Efforts to update our in local land and property information are nearing completion and the final Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) will be submitted to the NLPG in 2003. A number of actions are being progressed to ensure that this information is used to improve working across the organisation and with our partners agencies, these include:

− Adopting a standard Wrexham CBC Street Gazetteer as part of LLPG to integrate with all key applications in order provide address and postcode information to database users;
− Standardising the capture of address related data throughout the organisation by ensuring capture is based on the use of postcodes wherever possible, or GPS co-ordinates where postcodes are not possible;
− Broadening access by making relevant Wrexham CBC GIS data available on the authority’s web site and on WrexNet by deploying systems to allow for browser access.

e-Govt @ Wrexham Fund –

An e-govt @ Wrexham fund has been established with the objective to promote modernisation and service improvements by part funding proposals to deliver projects utilising ICT. To-date four schemes have been approved with a total cost of £117k:

− Submitaplan.com – access to building control applications via the Internet
− Information sharing with the NHS Trust – to support joint assessment of adult care clients
− Wrexham Heritage on-line – improving access to museums and archive information
− Library Catalogue – upgrade library computer systems to allow web based searching of the resource catalogues by the public.

NHS Trust Partnership Working

To facilitate joint working between the Council Social Services department and the North East Wales NHS Trust, working protocols are being developed to ensure that information sharing is undertaken on an appropriate basis and in compliance with the relevant guidance. Investments in secure communication links between the organisations are being progressed. As part of the initiative joint Council and Trust teams have been established and there is a need for staff to share systems and information.

Wrexham Connected Web Site Awards

To promote and support the importance of Internet access to communities, schools and businesses locally, the Council in 2003 as part of it’s annual Science Festival, established the Wrexham Connected Web Site Awards. In partnership with a private sector sponsor awards were given for five categories and over 100 sites entered the competition for:

− Best Small Business Award
− Best Primary School
− Best Secondary School
− Best Community Group
− Best Voluntary Sector
• **Access to Services**

**Customer Access To Services Review**

The Council completed its review of access to services in January 2003 and the findings have been disseminated to senior management. The results will be used to develop strategy for improved customer access to services and to determine priorities for preferred service delivery channels. The findings will particularly help in informing the major decision the Council faces on whether or not to implement a contact centre approach for high volume customer contacts.

**Transforming Customer Services – Options Appraisal**

In late 2002 Wrexham Council in partnership with Conwy, Flintshire and Denbighshire Councils, appointed consultants to undertake a joint Options Appraisal involving all four participating authorities. Detailed consultation and research was conducted to inform the Appraisal and a final report 'Transforming Customer Services – Options Appraisal' was produced in February 2003. The report outlines possible options for a call or contact centre approach to customer access and provides indicative costs for implementation.

In common with the other participating authorities, Wrexham is currently considering the options presented. The key decision for the Council is whether or not to take the call/contact centre approach to customer care and then to decide how best to deliver it. Because the decision has major implications in terms of organisational structures, process re-engineering and cost, the Council is undertaking further consultation with stakeholders before reaching a final decision.

**Broadband Lifelong Learning Network (BLLN)**

The Council implemented its link to the Wales BLLN in May 2003 and now has high speed and volume bandwidth access to the Internet in support of the Lifelong Learning and other community access initiatives. All Libraries and secondary schools have been connected to the BLLN via links from the Council’s Wide Area Network. Plans are in place to link 50% of primary schools to the BLLN by March 2004, with 100% connected by March 2005. The implementation and revenue costs for providing links to the BLLN for all schools are high, and the Council has therefore developed a staged implementation plan.

**People’s Network**

The Council’s Library service was successful in bidding for funds in support of the People’s Network project in order to provide free public internet access from all libraries. Over 100 networked personal computers are being installed in libraries throughout the County Borough including 34 within the central library at Wrexham. In addition to the Internet the public can also access desktop software including word processing, spreadsheet, database, publishing and web design tools. All library staff are trained to ECDL (European Computer Driving Licence) standard and can give users basic support.

**Gateway to Libraries in Wrexham (GaLW)**

A partnership involving Wrexham Council, Yale College, North East Wales Institute of Higher Education, Archimedes Centre, Schools’ Library Service and other partners, to investigate options for opening up access to resources and services within these establishments to all residents, students and workers in the County Borough. A joint web site has been set up at [www.newi.ac.uk/galw](http://www.newi.ac.uk/galw). Through this service, the aim is to provide enhanced opportunities for lifelong learning and leisure activities.

**The Memorial Centre, Brynteg**

A major construction project was completed in 2002 involving an extension to the present library linking it with the adjacent Broughton Memorial Hall. At the heart of the building is a new ICT
suite together with meeting rooms, offices and a crèche facility. The ICT suite is used for independent learning and for a range of training courses. A touch screen kiosk provides information about events and activities at the centre together with other information about the Council. The Centre opened in September 2002 and visitor numbers have increased by 400%.

**Cyber Café in Cefn Mawr**

Funds have been invested in a new cyber café. The Council has been working with the Plas Madoc and Cefn Community to develop the project. The café is equipped with the internet, printing, photocopying and faxing services, while providing snacks meals and drinks. Cefn Mawr Library has also obtained a grant from a local trust fund to support local children and young people with an advice and guidance service in the use of ICT. The project is intended to enthuse children, particularly in the final two years of primary school, in the benefits of ICT in support of their studies. The grant will total £92,500 over 3 years.

**Kiosk Pilots**

The Council has initiated three schemes, which will help inform future strategies for kiosk deployment.

- **BT Internet Kiosk Pilot** – an innovative partnership between BT and the Council has provided free access to the Council’s web site via 3 Internet Kiosks located in the Waterworld leisure complex and in two other street locations within the town centre.

- **Bus Timetable Kiosk** – a single standalone through the window kiosk has been installed in a temporary Bus Information Centre to provide travel information for the public while a major new Bus terminal is built in the town centre.

- **Brynteg Library** - a single standalone kiosk is located at the redeveloped library to provide information about services and events at the centre.

**Wrexham ICT Advice Centre**

With the support of the WDA an ICT advice and guidance service for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) operates from Wrexham Council’s Bersham Enterprise Centre.

- **Enhanced Web-based services**

**Web Development Team**

A dedicated Web team, consisting of two full-time posts, has been in place since September 2001. Web delegates in each directorate help to co-ordinate content as part of their other duties and contribute to the work of a corporate Web Development Group. The authority’s Web site and Intranet have seen rapid and significant development since 2000 and progress has been clearly recognised in the SOICITM ‘Better Connected’ surveys and elsewhere. Workloads for the Web team have increased correspondingly and the Council recognises that a review of staffing arrangements is required to ensure that future development plans are achievable.

**Web Site Development**

The Council’s web site [www.wrexham.gov.uk](http://www.wrexham.gov.uk) has seen continuous improvement since 2000 when a major redevelopment was first undertaken. In 2001 and 2002 the web site won the SOICITM/SPIN Better Connected ‘Best Web Site in Wales award’ and in the 2003 survey achieved ‘Transactional’ status, one of only 10 local authority sites in the UK and the only non English authority to attain this.
As such Wrexham’s web site has achieved one of the major priorities recommended by the Partnership Council and subsequently adopted by the WAG in its guidelines for the interim IEG statement, that:

“All local Authorities aim by 2005 to have web sites that will be classified by the Society of Information Technology Management (SOCITM) as transactional.”

The 2003 Better Connected survey indicated that Wrexham’s web site is in the top 20 of UK local authority sites. In 2003 the site also won the Local Government Association’s ‘Best Cultural Services Web Site’ award. Efforts undertaken to make the site accessible for the blind and partially sighted have also been recognised by the achievement of the RNIB ‘See it Right’ accreditation, the first Local Authority to do so, in 2002.

Many interactive and transactional services are now available on the web site across a number of service areas including Internet payment facilities, problem reporting, on-line application and booking facilities. The number of visitors to the sites has increased from around 13,000 per month in December 2001 to over 55,000 visitors in April 2003.

Future priorities will support the continuing development of the authority’s web site as an important public access portal to the Council’s services and to other web portals provided by central government and other relevant agencies or organisations. The priorities will support the following objectives:

- To continue to develop and improve service based information on the web site
- The development of further transactional facilities allowing the public to conduct business with the Council on-line
- To further develop the web site as a portal to services with provision for personalisation according to user needs
- To facilitate devolved management of web based content in departments
- To be able to re-purpose web based information for delivery to other web derived channels using Government supported standards for XML (Extensible Mark-up Language).

**Electronic Payments**

Back office integration with financial systems has been enabled to allow electronic payments via telephone and the Council’s web site:

- **Web enabled** - On-line payment facilities for invoiced amounts have been implemented on the Council’s web site for Council Tax, Business Rates, Housing Rent, Sundry Debts, North Wales Gas and Dee Valley Water to provide 24 x 7 availability.
- **Automated Telephone Payments** – An automatic payment system is available via digital telephone 24 x 7. The customer dials the number and follows pre-set instructions to make their payment for the services listed above.
- **Mediated Telephone Payments** – During opening hours the Council also operates a staffed telephone payment service whereby the public can speak to a member of staff to pay bills by card.

In the first five months of operation to May 2003, there were 2,978 payment transactions over the Internet and via the automated phone system with a total value of £328k. 82% of payments were made during Cash Office opening hours, and 18% were outside of office hours.

Plans have been developed to implement pre-payment (i.e. non invoiced) facilities on the web site and by telephone to enable the public to make payments in advance for Council services.
Planning Portal/Submitaplan.com
The authority has signed up at entry level 1 for the central Government Planning Portal and will enable electronic submission of planning applications by the public. The authority has also committed to joining the Submitaplan.com initiative, which will allow customers to submit building regulation applications and track progress electronically.

Intranet and Content Management
The Intranet facility is being developed as an important information and business tool for staff in helping them to work more efficiently and to deliver better services by promoting joined-up working and thinking. The Council launched its Intranet facility called ‘WrexNet’ in 2001, since when the range of content and services available to staff has grown steadily.

All office-based staff have access to ‘WrexNet’. Interactive facilities include an on-line telephone directory with a change requests notification facility, a searchable Committee Minutes and Agenda system, and an ICT support notification facility which links to the Information Systems support desk system. A wide range of information is available on ‘WrexNet’ relating to operational matters, policy and strategies, and service guidelines.

A content management system (CMS) has been procured to manage the approvals and publishing process for the Intranet and to assist in devolving more responsibility for content maintenance to the initiating or owning departments. The intention is to deploy this system for Intranet content initially and then to broaden it usage to external web site content.

All content managed by the CMS is stored as XML separately from graphical templates in a central database, which enables the publishing of information to a variety of delivery channels as required. Content is re-purposed, or transformed, to fit the required format of the device or application delivering the content, for example a web browser, mobile phone or personal handheld devices.

Future priorities will support the continuing development of the authority’s WrexNet Intranet facility as an important information and business tool for staff in helping them to work more efficiently and to deliver better services. The priorities will support the following objectives:

- The phased implementation of content management to allow for devolved management of Intranet content by relevant staff in departments in accordance with agreed workflows and policies
- The ongoing development of content including transactional facilities and interactive facilities such as a ability to make appointments/bookings and a Frequently Asked Questions database
- Personalisation of WrexNet by providing access to business information tools via a personalised homepage
- To develop WrexNet as the primary information and transactional tool for the authority in support of any corporate strategies which emerge for improving access to services such as the development of a Contact Centre and the need to integrate technologies such as CRM.
Section Three – Self Assessment of the e-Organisation

Joint Methodology for Assessment

The process of modernisation of services for the six North Wales Authorities must take account of local conditions and priorities. However, the boundaries that constrain the Authorities are often transparent to the region's citizens, who will need and expect continuity and consistency of services, whichever Authority is responsible for providing them. For example, many people work or study in different Authorities' areas to the one that they live in.

The e-Government process requires each Authority to assess its own progress towards reaching its objectives, to enable it and its citizens to understand where the Authority is in relation to its goals.

However, by working together to provide a common approach to self-assessment, and also to provide a combined regional self-assessment, the six Authorities will enable citizens who are users of more than just their home Authority's services to understand the progress that is being made towards modernisation across the region, in a consistent, unambiguous form.

The six North Wales Authorities are approaching e-Government collaboratively, not competitively, and the consistent approach to self-assessment must not simply provide a league table for Authorities to compete for top-ranking. It will provide a benchmark for assessing regional progress towards modernisation, and assist in the development of regional priorities and opportunities for improvement.

Welsh Assembly Government Performance Indicator

To achieve consistency, both self-assessment and joint assessment should address common themes. The WAG’s Performance Indicators (PI) relating to e-Government, NAWPI 1.5, provides a model for assessment in the Welsh context. This PI measures the percentage of interactions with the public that can be delivered electronically, under the following types of interaction:

a) Providing information. (e.g. about public transport, opening hours, services)
b) Receiving payments. (e.g. Council tax, payment for a service)
c) Making payments. (e.g. benefits, creditors)
d) Receiving feedback (e.g. consultation and complaints)
e) Regulation (e.g. issuing licences)
f) Making an application. (e.g. planning approval, grant application)
g) Making a booking. (e.g. appointment, squash court)
h) Paying for goods (e.g. the Authority pays for office supplies)
i) Access to community, professional or business networks (e.g. Weblinks to related sites)
j) Procurement (e.g. the Authority orders goods and services)

SOCITM ‘Better Connected' Survey

Since 1999, the six Authorities have been assessed in terms of progress with web site development as part of the annual 'Better Connected' survey of UK local Authority web sites undertaken by SOCITM. Their surveys provide a comprehensive overview of the state of local government web sites and act as a benchmark for good practice in this important element of e-Government implementation. The survey rates all local Authority web sites according to four functional levels with 'T' (Transactional) being the highest level of attainment to which local Authorities should aspire.
Holistic Approach to Assessment

Both the NAWPI 1.5 and the SOCITM ‘Better Connected’, described above, aim to measure how much electronic service delivery is provided at each Authority, most notably via transactional web sites.

However, these models take no account of the organisational change that the e-Government process necessarily involves. NAWPI 1.5 is considered to be overly complex and ambiguous to collect. Its output is subjective and although it can be said to have encouraged take up of e-Government in some areas, it is not considered suitable for measuring the progress or success of e-Government. To devise a more effective indicator requires a lot of work and widespread consultation. As such, the SOCITM Wales Benchmarking Group has recommended that the Welsh Assembly Government provide sponsorship for the Group to engage with an organisation such as SOCITM Consultancy, to come up with a replacement indicator.

The North Wales Authorities have agreed adopt the themes noted below as guidance to self-assessment. These themes are consistent with and develop further the WAG’s three priority areas identified in Section Two, namely:

- Organisational Change (see Theme 5)
- Access to Services (see Themes 2 and 3)
- Enhanced web-based Services (see Themes 1 and 4)

The themes and a summary of their scope are:

- **Theme 1: Transactions**
  Theme 1 provides a numerical analysis of transactions provided electronically, encompassing the headings in NAWPI 1.5

- **Theme 2: Access Channels**
  This theme assesses access channel (telephone, internet, face to face, etc.) policy reflecting customer preferences, and linking front and back office processes.

- **Theme 3: Enablers**
  Theme 3 provides information on technologies and data management approaches that support e-access channels and provide the link to core business and information systems.

- **Theme 4: e-Business**
  This theme gives details of core business processes being e-enabled.

- **Theme 5: Organisational Development**
  Theme 5 measures how the organisations are being transformed to deliver e-services, taking into account:
  - Progress of the Organisation
  - Change Management
  - Business Process Re-Engineering Schemes
  - Management Structure for e-Government
## Wrexham - Local Assessment

### Theme 1 - Transactions

**NAW PI 1.5 – Electronic Service Delivery (ESD) – March 2003**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAW PI Transaction Type</th>
<th>Number of Services</th>
<th>% e-enabled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Authority) Providing information</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Authority) Receiving payments</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Authority) Making payments</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Authority) Receiving feedback</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Authority) Regulation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Public) Making an application</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Public) Making a booking</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Authority) Paying for goods</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Public) Access to community</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Authority) Procurement</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Overall NAW PI 1.5 score**

38%

**Target NAW PI 1.5 for 2002/03**

30%

### Targets for Electronic Service Delivery (ESD)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAW PI</th>
<th>National Assembly for Wales Performance Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>e-government - the percentage of interactions with the public, by type, which are capable of electronic service delivery</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUR AIM</th>
<th>Target 2003/04</th>
<th>Target 2004/05</th>
<th>Target 2005/06</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Attainment of these targets is dependant upon a number of factors, including some which are external to the authority – see section 5) Risk Assessment.

### Theme 2 - Access Channels

In 2002-03 the Council undertook a Customer Access to Services Review with the objective of:

- Establishing a baseline of customer contact
- Determining the needs and aspirations of customers
- Comparing experiences of customer contact at the Council with those at other organisations
- Making recommendations to improve customer access to services from the Council

The review reported in January 2003 and as an outcome the Council has committed to produce a customer access to services strategy to inform future priorities for customer access channels.

The findings support earlier research undertaken as part of a Best Value review of Telecommunications and indicate that 93% of those who contact the Council expressed a
preference to do so by telephone, with face to face visit (70%), letter (42%), contact with local councillor (22%), and fax (5%) being other preferred methods. Email with a 26% preference rate and Internet with 10% are becoming increasingly appreciated as methods of access but there is some gap in the stated preference and actual usage of these options by the public.

The review found that customers place great importance on their enquiry being dealt with promptly and efficiently; that Council staff are interested in helping them, and that they are not ‘bounced’ from one department to another to resolve their issue. There was also a general aspiration to be able to conduct business outside of normal working hours.

To begin to address customer preferences for access, the Council collaborated with neighbouring authorities in a joint appraisal of options for a call/contact centre approach as outlined in section 2 (‘Transforming Customer Services – Options Appraisal’). In addition to a call centre the options include possible creation of one-stop shops to provide a single point of face to face contact for most Council services. In common with the other participating authorities, Wrexham is currently considering the options presented.

Since 2001 the Council has primarily focussed on enhancing the capabilities of its Internet services. Wrexham's web site is acknowledged as one of the leading local authority sites in the UK as demonstrated by the achievement of ‘transactional status in the SOCITM ‘Better Connected’ survey 2003 and by several other awards. The Council will continue to develop it’s web based information and services as indicated in section 2 of this statement.

The Council will ensure that new access channels are exploited where appropriate and is currently monitoring developments with digital TV, smart cards, mobile text messaging and kiosks. Three pilot kiosk schemes have been initiated and will help inform future strategies for kiosk deployment.

Wrexham is actively involved in the work of the Forum for Citizens’ Cards in Wales (FCCW) which is exploring opportunities for providing in one card, access and entitlements to a number of Council and other services either on an authority by authority basis, on a cross authority/agency basis; or by an All Wales approach. The Council has a number of card schemes already operating though these are not as yet joined up, and only one of them (concessionary travel) currently uses a smart card. An interim assessment of the potential for and viability of a joint citizen’s smart card scheme in Wrexham has been undertaken and will be assessed against other access channels in determining priorities.

Systems, which could assist with improving the Council’s customer and inquiry tracking across all access methods, are currently being investigated.

**Theme 3 - Enablers**

Reference has been made to national initiatives and infrastructure developments such as the Broadband Lifelong Learning Network (BLLN) and the People’s Network which are helping to enable improved community access and participation.

Locally, Wrexham is pursuing a number of other initiatives to enable improved access and service delivery by using technology. These include:

**Back Office integration**

The Council is currently modernising and upgrading many key legacy software applications to allow for back office integration and to provide seamless access to services, for example to enable various transactions via the web site, and to permit on-line payments for a number of services. The Council recognises that further work is needed to integrate systems and in
particular to develop common interfaces to back office systems as would be required in deploying a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system which the Council is currently considering as part of its Options Appraisal exercise.

**Customer Relationship Management (CRM)**

In collaboration with other North Wales authorities Wrexham is investigating possible CRM solutions and will consider joint procurement should this prove to be feasible and beneficial to all concerned. The procurement of any CRM system will be linked to decisions the Council makes resulting from the Options Appraisal exercise, in particular whether or not to take the call/contact centre approach to customer care.

It is recognised that CRM can be used to improve customer and inquiry tracking and to help enable resolution at the first point of contact across several access methods. However, the Council wishes to explore and understand better the implications for different CRM implementation scenarios. In particular the issues that may arise from deploying CRM through a broadly centralised model based around a call/contact centre, and those that may arise from a more devolved implementation across multiple service access points.

**Knowledge Management**

A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) facility has been developed and is available on the Council’s web site for public access. The FAQ facility is also being developed for use on the Council’s Intranet site ‘WrexNet’, as a tool to assist staff in responding to common enquiries from the public. In collaboration with other North Wales authorities Wrexham is also investigating knowledge management systems as a means of capturing public enquiries and requests for information and building up a set of standard answers in a single database system for deployment across all service access points. The potential to link knowledge management with CRM to help deliver improved services to the public is understood by the Council.

**Electronic Records Management (ERM)**

The Council is currently developing a corporate policy on the electronic management of records with the intention of defining clear standards for record management in line with the Public Records Office policy framework. The policy will take full account of the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act, the Data Protection Act and other relevant legislation.

It is recognised that there is a need to improve electronic record management to enable joined-up working and co-operation between departments and with partner agencies. To this end the Council is currently implementing a Content Management System for web and Intranet bound information. The Council will also investigate broader ERM solutions and will look to integrate ERM facilities and procedures into new e-Government systems and business processes as these are developed.

A number of joint working initiatives are being progressed with other agencies and the Council is developing protocols and suitable security standards to allow for appropriate information sharing between organisations.

**Content Management system (CMS)**

A content management system (CMS) has been procured to manage the approvals and publishing process for the Intranet and to assist in devolving more responsibility for content maintenance to the owning departments. The intention is to deploy this system for Intranet content initially and then to broaden its usage to external web site content.
National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG)

It is recognised that provision of an accurate land and property database is critical to enabling joined-up working and in developing integrated systems. The authority has progressed with the data matching exercise and is likely to be amongst the first in Wales to submit to the NLPG. The authority is considering entry to the NLIS (National Land Information Service) initiative on successful completion of the NLPG. As described in section 2 a number of actions are being progressed to ensure that NLPG information is used to improve working across the organisation and with our partners agencies.

e-Government Interoperability Framework (eGif)

The eGif standards will be important in achieving compatibility between systems to allow for appropriate data sharing and to properly enable electronic service delivery via different channels. The authority’s ICT Strategy includes a major objective to ensure that software applications, network systems and computer host platforms in use within the Council will increasingly conform to eGIF standards and allow for ‘back office’ integration between systems and applications both within the authority and with partner organisations.

Wherever possible all new application and system purchases will be required to comply with eGIF interoperability standards. In particular the authority will seek to exploit the potential that XML offers for re-purposing data for multiple re-use and presentation across many delivery channels in line with identified priorities for electronic service delivery.

Theme 4- e-Business

The Council recognises that e-business offers great potential for automating procurement and financial transactions between the Council, the public, suppliers and businesses. E-business can provide efficiency savings and allow services to continue outside of normal working hours. A number of projects and initiatives have been initiated to progress e-business and e-procurement.

Review of Procurement

As part of the whole authority analysis a corporate review of procurement is being undertaken and will consider e-commerce and e-procurement as part of rounded proposals for improving procurement processes.

Welsh Procurement Initiative (WPI)

Wrexham has committed to participation in a number of pilot projects including the Wales Pathfinder Project on Purchasing Cards, Construction Line, and The WPI training initiative.

e-Procurement

A number of pilot projects relating to e-commerce and e-procurement are underway or under consideration. The Council is continuing with a programme to modernise all major financial applications so that the systems in use can better facilitate e-commerce and e-procurement activity. In addition the Council has committed to piloting the use of an e-ordering system for ICT procurement involving a major supplier partner to the Council.

Electronic Payments

The Council has enabled electronic payments via telephone and the Council’s web site to provide 24 x 7 availability. Plans have been developed to implement pre-payment facilities on the web site and by telephone to enable the public to make payments in advance for Council services.
Work Life Balance/Flexible working

A work life balance and flexible working initiative has been launched enabling service departments to develop pilot schemes around the demands of their own service requirements, customer needs and staffing arrangements. Several pilot projects have been launched and these include some home working and extended working arrangements to cater for morning and evening service requirements. The use of ICT in facilitating these arrangements is fundamental.

Intranet – ‘WrexNet’

The Council views the development of its intranet ‘WrexNet’, as a critical e-business mechanism for enabling better sharing of information and resources and in developing a corporate wide approach to modernisation. WrexNet will be developed as an indispensable business tool for staff in helping them to work more efficiently and to deliver better services by promoting joined-up working and thinking.

The implementation of the content management system will begin to devolve responsibility to services areas for content publishing and will help in establishing a sense of ownership and in ensuring that the content posted is relevant to staff needs. WrexNet will be a critical unifying element in any corporate strategies which may emerge for improving access to services such as the development of a Contact Centre and the need to integrate technologies such as CRM.

ICT for Members

Improving access to elected representatives is an important element of the modernising agenda. Electronic systems have the potential to provide the public with enhanced access to their elected representatives. For Members, the technology can help them to be better informed across a range of issues and enable them to communicate more efficiently with Officers and members of the public. The majority of Members have been supplied with a laptop computer and remote log-in technology to facilitate access to the Wrexham CBC network. Key systems such as a searchable Committee Minutes and Agenda database have been developed and are available on the Council’s web site and on WrexNet. The Council will continue to take account of Members' information needs in the development of WrexNet and other information systems.

Theme 5 - Organisational Development

The authority recognises that in order to fully embrace electronic government it must commit to the strategic modernisation of how it conducts its business. This will be progressed by a number of selected projects with the aim of promoting a customer focussed approach and a performance management culture:

Leadership

The Council has an Executive Board Member e-champion, a Lead Director for e-Government and a dedicated e-Government manager post was established in 2002 to co-ordinate strategy development and project initiatives. A corporate e-Government Steering Group chaired by the Chief Executive oversees strategy development and establishes priorities for project implementations.

Wales Programme for Improvement

The authority’s improvement priorities for 2003-04 have been grouped under four broad themes which reflect many elements in the modernising initiative. The importance of modernisation as an agent for change and improvement has been recognised by the inclusion e-Government as a corporate priority.
Change Management
The ‘Transforming Customer Services – Options Appraisal’ exercise identified some of the key challenges facing those authorities who took part in the process in attempting to implement major change initiatives. These include the challenge of:

- empowering the organisation and the individuals within it to cope with and thrive on change
- establishing an unequivocal strategic direction
- fostering a new leadership style based on a persuasive and inclusive vision
- demolishing barriers to resource mobility be this people or financial resource
- building close and durable partnerships.

Each Council is considering the options presented and the implications for change inherent within them and recognise that they will have a wider impact on the organisation than the context of single e-Government project implementation.

The requirement for change has been recognised in the authority’s Wales Programme for Improvement initiative. The improvement priorities for 2003–04 reflect many elements in the modernising initiative, including the way in which make an impact in communities, how we listen to our communities concerns, how we plan to deliver services and the ways in which we work. The Council will pursue improvement actions in all these areas and will embrace change and control mechanisms such as project management methodologies to help bring them about.

Project Management
Cross-cutting reviews such as those for Procurement and Telecommunications have identified project management skills as being essential to the delivery of improvement and modernisation plans. Some services have begun to adopt the PRINCE 2 project management methodology for significant projects and change initiatives. Other services have identified the adoption of project management methodologies as a key action in their WPI improvement plans. The Council has undertaken to ensure that all major ICT and e-Government projects will be project managed within PRINCE 2 methodologies to ensure that a programmed agenda for change can be realised.

e-Skills
The authority will look to identify and map the current skills within the organisation in terms of ICT skills, project management, change management, performance management and process review, to establish where the gaps and shortfalls occur. Targets have been set for achieving European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) competency amongst staff. Plans are being developed within several departments to identify and train relevant staff to Foundation Level in PRINCE 2 methodologies.
Section Four - Resources

Funding Options

Without sufficient resource allocation the electronic government agenda will fail. Each Council will be unable to achieve the improvements to services required by the modernising agenda without considerable additional funding. All North Wales Councils have carried out options appraisals on a number of e-Government projects. It is clear that the cost of transition is high and that there is a requirement for additional funding from WAG. One example of this, and a product of joint working, was the North Wales contact centre options appraisal exercise, which estimated that the set up cost of implementing a contact centre solution would be in the region of £1 million for each Authority.

There are a number of ways the e-Government agenda could be funded by Authorities e.g.:

- Redirect existing budgets
- Exploit the national infrastructure and other pilot initiatives
- Collaborate in joint procurement projects
- Secure initial investment through public-private partnerships
- Realise savings

- Redirect existing budgets

It is accepted that e-Government is not an additional requirement in the long term and that the reorganisation of the way services are delivered will result in new customer led organisations that can adapt to changing customer expectations. It is therefore appropriate that some of the costs be met by mainstream service budgets. However, it must be remembered that e-government is competing for limited funding alongside key service areas such as Education, Social Services, Housing and Roads.

- Exploit the national infrastructure and other pilot initiatives

Welsh Authorities are inhibited by being ineligible to apply for Pathfinder or Invest to Save funding, as in England. This could lead to a lack of incentive for innovation in Wales. This is reinforced by being unable to apply for Beacon status.

In 2002/03 and 2003/04 Welsh Councils have been allocated Supplementary Credit Approval as opposed to a capital grant. In Wales, unlike England, there is also no funding to follow the successful submission of an IEG 2 statement.

However in 2002/03 the North Wales Authorities received £1.04 million from the WAG through the Welsh Life long Learning Network for the provision of broadband links to every school, library and ICT Learning Centre in each County.

The WAG maintains several initiatives around the theme of modernising government in Wales under the banner of the Wales Programme for Improvement. However, these initiatives are funded separately, with the funding taking different forms (capital allocations and Supplementary Credit Approvals) and being allocated by different criteria and across different spending timescales. This leads to lack of clarity within Authorities about how the funding can be joined up to its best advantage, and often leads to fragmented management. As some of the
funding, notably that for e-Government itself, is Supplementary Credit Approval, it prevents the funding from being used to maximum effect by attracting match-funding.

European funding is a possible option but it is difficult to bid for and chances of success are relatively small. The latest framework agreement is known as framework 6 and it favours the more innovative, research based initiatives which do not fit the profile of the North Wales Councils’ e-Government requirements. Furthermore, the six Councils are eligible for different schemes which provide differing levels of support rendering a joint application for North Wales impossible.

- **Collaborate in joint procurement**

As stated in section one, the North Wales Councils are committed to working together to promote joined up solutions, enhance buying power and reduce implementation, training and transaction costs.

- **Secure initial investment through public-private partnerships**

The North Wales Councils are considering alternative methods of financing and the possibility of securing additional funding by working with partners to share cost and risk as well as to deliver services. The Councils may seek a public or private partnership. In order to achieve this it will be necessary to realise savings where feasible.

- **Realise savings**

It is possible to release resources by making improvements in the efficiency and economy of the processes i.e. business process re-engineering. This entails the fundamental reorganisation of work done by current departments and supporting systems and significant initial investment. However, experience in English Authorities shows that savings are only made in the long term; as services go through a transition period, so does the budget.

- **Resource Allocations**

In 2002/03 and 2003/04 Welsh Councils have been allocated Supplementary Credit Approval as opposed to a capital grant. This amount has also been less than their English counterparts. The WAG’s allocation was made according to their statement: “95% of the money available has been distributed based on Authorities’ share of the population across Wales and 5% based on their relative population sparsity (local authority area divided by its population)”. This seeks to make allowance for rural areas and ensure a fairly even distribution of resources across Authorities. The breakdown of which projects this money has contributed towards, together with funding from various other sources is shown in the local section of this Statement.

The Supplementary Credit Approvals are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2002/3 SCA £’000s</th>
<th>2003/4 SCA £’000s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conwy</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denbighshire</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flintshire</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gwynedd</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isle of Anglesey</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrexham</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,003</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,232</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Benefits and Savings

However, future savings depend on the projects implemented by each Council and the level of resource available to them. Where possible collaboration will be considered by the NWe-GG, sponsored by the Society of local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers, (SOLACE), to ensure economies of scale and return on investment.
Wrexham - Spend Proposals

The Council is aware of the fact that e-Government could result in fundamental and far-reaching changes in the way the Council provide some of its services to its residents and that such changes will have significant impact on resources in the short term. As a result, it has been concerned about the adequacy and suitability of Supplementary Credit Approval funding e-Government projects.

The Council has therefore been prudent in its use of the approved SCA during 2002/03, whilst utilising existing budgets to support projects and the development of our web site, until fully costed major projects are evaluated, risk assessed and approved against competitive priorities.

The Council has planned to use the £406k borrowing approval allocated to it from the Assembly by March 2004 as follows:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>£k</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transforming customer services – costs of options appraisal undertaken by SOCITM Consulting jointly for Wrexham, Conwy, Flintshire and Denbighshire councils.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Egov@wrexham</strong> fund – match-funding for small, local electronic service delivery initiatives, e.g.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ “submit a plan”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ information sharing project with North East Wales NHS Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Wrexham heritage on-line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Library catalogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvements to the data voice network to facilitate the electronic joining-up of functions and organisations within Wrexham.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of the authority’s award-winning website to transactional status including</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Pilot kiosks in partnership with BT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ LLPG Gazetteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Interactive GIS mapping</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Council will continue to demonstrate its commitment to delivering the Assembly’s e-government initiative by separately funding its on-going corporate e-government manager and web development team staffing costs from within its core revenue budget. In addition, funds have also been identified to facilitate the rollout of the local broadband lifelong learning network to the Council's schools and libraries.
However, for the Council to build on this IEG statement to develop strategies for e-government which focus upon better integrated, more responsive and higher quality services which are citizen-centred and more easily accessed will require significant additional investment and funding from the Assembly. Initiatives which may be developed range from interactive transaction-based websites to multi-purpose contact and call centres. The required investment includes not only the cost of desktop and server technologies and renewal of local and wide area networks but also integrated software reinvestment in the “front office” (customer relations management and content management) and “back office” (finance, personnel, property and performance management systems).

The Council estimates that the further investment required over the next three to five year period will be £5 million split equally between capital and revenue. The “invest to save” nature of part of this investment needs to be recognised and reflected in national policies and the significant investment already made in Broadband infrastructure and ICT for learning needs to be built on.
Section Five – Risk Assessment

Risks have been generically identified under seven main headings. However, the probability of each occurring and its resulting impact will vary according to local conditions. This section therefore contains a brief overview of the generic risks, followed by the more detailed local risk-assessment tables.

Vision

A clear and strongly supported vision has to be a central part of the modernising agenda. There are a number of possible risks inherent to this crucial element – it is possible that the agenda might receive lower priority at Member level, there might be a lack of engagement by Chief Officers, or a lack of communication of the vision which could contribute to a lack of understanding by staff or partners. It is also possible that the strategy might not be updated sufficiently, and that e-Government might not be fully recognised within other Council plans (such as Wales Programme for Improvement and departmental Service Plans). Finally, there is the risk that there might be unwillingness amongst departments or directorates to change established patterns of work in order to share information more effectively, and it is possible that the process of e-Government may be seen as one of too many competing initiatives.

Funding

Funding is a key element of the drive towards more modern government, especially since it has become clear that service improvements will not necessarily lead to short term financial savings. Currently, it is clear that there are inadequate financial resources for Councils to progress the reality of electronic service delivery. This may impact upon Authorities’ ability to deliver improvements and best value. There may also be a lack of resources within service departments to devote to the implementation of e-Government.

Collaborative Working

Collaborative working offers considerable advantages, but at the same time comes with its own added elements of risk. It is possible that project management skills will come under greater pressure than usual, that communications will be more vulnerable, and that clear direction and shared decisions on working practices will be difficult to achieve. It is also possible that differing political processes and differing project priorities will undermine attempts at collaborative working, while local ownership of joint efforts may be problematic. It is also possible that competition for resources may damage relationships between partners.

Customers

In making the customer central to Council processes, it is inevitable that elements of risk associated with the customer may be highlighted more clearly than has necessarily been the case previously. There is a possibility that we do not have a clear enough understanding of what our customers require in terms of availability of Council services as well as in terms of preferred access channels. It is also possible that customer requirements may change, and that increased electronic service delivery may expose latent demand. Councils may not be able to deliver joined up services to customers’ needs, may not be able to support extended access hours on a 24x7 model, and may fail to meet the rising expectations of customers. There will also be a risk of inequality of access leading to inequality of service. It is possible that there will be low levels of public access to ICT, resulting in low take up of electronic services by citizens.
Technology Issues

As stated previously, technology is a key enabler for the process of e-Government. Consequently, problems with technology constitute a very real risk to the overall modernisation agenda. The broadband network capability is a crucial factor to success, this may not be available to all required sites and the cost of wide area network development may prove to be prohibitive. Front to back office systems integration is essential to providing joined up service delivery and it is possible that replacing legacy systems may need to be brought forward as a result of their inability to integrate. It is possible that infrastructure capacity and performance may be insufficient. It is also possible that inconsistent technology standards may prove damaging, and that purchased technology may not be suitably ‘future proof’. Finally, it is possible that there will be technology failure, and/or disaster/catastrophe such as to render systems non-functional.

Capacity – People and Skills

Significant organisational change such as required by the modernisation agenda is dependent to a great extent on Councils having the necessary capacity in people and skills. In this context, it is possible that there will be a lack of skills or expertise to support and/or implement new technologies, or that there will be a lack of programme/project management skills, change management skills and knowledge management skills to support the implementation of a change management programme. There is also a risk that the size of the change management programme required will not be fully recognised. Staff may not have sufficient skills in the use of technology that is made available to them.

Business Processes

Successful implementation of the modernising agenda requires a close understanding of Councils’ internal and external processes. It is possible here that the current Council business processes will not be sufficiently clearly understood, there may be unwillingness to change policies and processes in order to achieve the potential improvements, and it is possible that current policies and procedures do not sufficiently support or recognise the development of e-Government.
Wrexham - Risk Assessment

Using the seven main generic headings the impact and probability of each has been ranked high, medium or low.

Risks have been identified as internal or external. Internal may be those, for example, which are organisational and relating to change management. External, for example are those relating to the outcomes of partnership and joint working.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>Probability</th>
<th>Internal / External</th>
<th>Joint / Local</th>
<th>Counter measure/action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vision</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower priority for the agenda at Member level</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>I</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Continue to communicate with Members, particularly with regards to the customer care principles at the core of the e-Government agenda</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Lack of engagement with Chief Officers         | High   | Medium      | I                   |              | • Seek emphasis on customer care and contact centre options  
• demonstrate benefits to Services through the achievement of quick wins and Web development  
• ensure that plans for the implementation of the ICT Strategy address key issues of senior officers |
| Lack of understanding of vision by staff       | High   | Medium      | I                   |              | • use of staff newsletter to communicate and share aims  
• use e-Government facilitators in departments to promote vision  
• engage staff in reviewing the vision                                                                                                                                 |
| Lack of understanding of vision by partners    | Low    | Medium      | E                   |              | • establish links with Community Strategy arrangements  
• share ideas on vision with partners  
• integrate different visions where appropriate                                                                                                                                 |

Page 33 of 38
### Strategy not updated

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>• e-Government steering group to review strategy and progress regularly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### e-Government not fully recognised within other Council Plans (eg WPI, Dept Service Plans)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Medium/High</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>• ensure that officers responsible for the development of other Council plans are involved in the development of e-Government</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• ensure that e-government is a feature of the whole Authority Assessment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Directorate/Service silos

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>• ensure strong and determined Corporate and Member leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• support non-prejudicial developments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• identify and support ‘quick wins’ and ‘long term changes’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Too many initiatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>High</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>• ensure project management methodology is developed corporately</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• ensure partners communicate regularly and in accordance with project management methodology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Collaborative Working

#### Lack of Project Management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>I/E</th>
<th>• determine and agree decision-making powers early in any project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

#### Ineffective communications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>I/E</th>
<th>• incorporate the requirement for political approval into the project timetable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

#### Unclear direction and/or decisions on working practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>I/E</th>
<th>• incorporate the requirement for political approval into the project timetable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

#### Slow political processes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>High</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>I/E</th>
<th>• incorporate the requirement for political approval into the project timetable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

## Customers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lack of understanding of what customers require (availability, access)</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>• continue consultation with our Citizens’ Panel on an on-going basis to assess how well electronic service delivery and access channels meet customer needs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Customer requirements may change</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>• the Council will emphasise the need for one source of information available through multiple channels • XML compliance will ensure the capacity to adopt new channels as and when they become appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronic Service Delivery may expose ‘latent’ demand.</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>• need to ensure that ‘back-office’ improvements are linked to enhancements in access • need to manage expectations as to the service that the Council can deliver, and ensure availability and scalability in all channels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May not be able to deliver joined up services to customers’ needs</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>• identify high volume services for early connection to a corporate CRM system • track and report on enquiries to identify which other services should be added to a corporate CRM system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need to avoid service inequality arising out of inequality of access</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>• ensure that the same quality of service is delivered regardless of access channel • maintain existing access channels as long as removing them would create inequality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inability to support extended access hours (24x7)</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>• use Citizens’ Panel to help identify impact of extended access on service delivery and support services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failure to meet the expectations of customers</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>• manage expectations of customers in external communications – do not over promise.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Low take up by citizens of electronic service delivery | Medium | High | I | ● on-going consultation with the public to identify their needs and expectation  
● regular feedback and actions to address  
● focus developments on channels which have a high level of active usage |
|------------------------------------------------------|--------|------|---|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Public access to ICT                                  | High   | Low  | I | ● promote and publicise access points to ICT eg. Learning Centres and Libraries  
● increase the number of public access and self-service facilities at Council Offices and other public locations |
| **Funding**                                           |        |      |   |                                                                                                                                 |
| Not enough resources to deliver electronic service delivery | High   | High | E/I | ● need to deliver quick wins to release further resources for electronic service delivery  
● consider alternative methods of financing  
● secure additional funding internally and externally by working with partners to share cost and risk as well as to deliver |
| Failure to deliver ‘best value’                      | Medium | Medium | I | ● projects will only proceed where a robust business case has been demonstrated |
| Lack of resources within services to devote to the implementation of e-Government | Medium | Medium | I | ● the effect on e-Government resources will be carefully monitored |
| **Technology Issues**                                 |        |      |   |                                                                                                                                 |
| Broadband network capability not available to required sites | Medium | Low  | E | ● liaise with British Telecommunications to discuss future requirements (local provider)  
● work closely with regional/sub regional agencies to encourage developments |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Likelihood</th>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cost of wide area network development prohibitive</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>review alternative approaches, prioritise future developments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legacy systems may not be suitable for delivering services electronically. (e.g. inability to integrate to overall systems architecture)</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>identify potential scope of problem from ICT inventory, identify those systems that may inhibit progress to delivering services electronically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inconsistent technology standards</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>enforce ICT strategy, continue standard desktop policy with rolling replacement programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology not be “future proof”</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>review procurement approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology Failure</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>ensure effective and adequate testing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disaster/Catastrophic Failure</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>use ICT Continuity plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure capacity and performance</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>constantly monitor and review performance, balance investment across infrastructure and services/systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of skills/expertise to support/implement new technologies</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>IT structure monitored and an active training programme in place, buy in private sector expertise and use as an opportunity to educate internal staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size of Change Management Programme required to transform the Council not recognised</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>highlight need for change management skills, need to identify change issues that will need to be addressed and the mechanisms for achieving change, promote cultural change through education, support and staff development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of skills/capacity to support implementation:</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Programme/Project Management Skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Change Management Skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Knowledge Management Skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff may not have sufficient skills in using technology</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Business Processes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current processes not understood</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>• review existing processes with a view to adopting a standard approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unwillingness to change policies and processes</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>• Corporate leadership on organisational change and improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current policies and procedures do not currently support/recognise the development of 'e-government'.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>• develop understanding of where current policies may not support the development of e-Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• develop new policies where appropriate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>