

Committee: FINANCE AND RESOURCES

Date: 9 May 2008

Report: INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT)
STRATEGY

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek members' approval of an Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Strategy, to be adopted as the framework for delivering the Authority's operational IT services.

Strategic Planning Framework

2. The information and recommendations contained in this report are consistent with the Authority's statutory purposes and its approved strategic planning framework, and in particular its objective 'to manage all aspects of the Authority's business so as to make the most effective use of our resources' (Corporate Plan).

Background

3. ICT is the last of the four main strategies that set out how the Authority will use and develop its internal resources (the other three being 'Treasury Management', 'Property' and 'People'). These strategies assist in (and demonstrate) the good management of these major areas of the Authority's activity, each of which touch on every aspect of the Authority's work to varying degrees.

4. The Strategy presented here (please see **Appendix**) has been written with the help of the cross-departmental IT Working Group, and also incorporates feedback from both the Solicitor and the Personnel & Training Officer. In preparing this Strategy, the opportunity was also taken to review and update the authority's IT policies, and that revision is included as a separate item on the agenda of this meeting.

The ICT Strategy

5. The Strategy is intended to achieve what it says in the introductory paragraph, namely: "to ensure that everyone has access to the information they need for their job, and that existing stakeholders and potential customers can find out what they need to know about the Authority's work in an efficient and effective manner. It sets out how new developments

will be agreed, implemented and resourced over the next five years, as well as how existing systems will be maintained and upgraded”.

6. The Strategy does **not** contain a series of detailed work plans (those come later, during implementation of the strategy), though it does contain information on likely future developments (in line with the known objectives within the Corporate Plan) and a broad timescale for major IT projects over the next five years, that being the period this strategy is intended to cover.

7. One question raised during initial discussions was whether the IT Strategy should incorporate a long-term Web Strategy. The IT Strategy itself is intended to be at a higher strategic level than each component work area, and so only includes information about the website in that context. It is likely that a Web Strategy will be completed at some point by the Communications Team, and that this can then be made to dovetail with this Strategy; however, the completion of this strategy has not been held up on that point.

8. The proposed IT Strategy does not currently include anything on Member access, whether to the core intranet or an extranet or to detailed ‘Development Control’ information. A Member / officer working group has been established to look at these issues (commencing May 2008) and, subject to the conclusions of that group, the strategy is likely to be modified for that particular issue. However, IT remains a very dynamic area, and this almost certainly won’t be the only modification to the Strategy over the next five years; for that reason, the IT Working Group will review the continuing appropriateness of the Strategy every two years.

RECOMMENDATION

9. That Members approve the ICT Strategy as presented.

Steve Funnell
Senior IT Officer

Richard Burnett
Head of Finance & Resources

24 April 2008

Background documents: none

Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Strategy

Aim

“The National park Authority is a forward-thinking, focused and influential organization, which provides its staff, members and volunteers with the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to make the most effective use of its resources to: deliver clear aims and objectives; provide high standards of service; give the public a sound understanding of our work; meet public expectations; and continuously review and improve its performance” (*Best Value review Plan 2007/08*).

This strategy is intended to deliver the ICT-related component of this aim: to ensure that everyone has access to the information they need for their job, and that existing stakeholders and potential customers can find out what they need to know about the Authority’s work in an efficient and effective manner. It sets out how new developments will be agreed, implemented and resourced over the next five years, as well as how existing systems will be maintained and upgraded.

A. Introduction.

The Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority wants to provide high quality, efficient services to its stakeholders, including internal and external customers. Key requirements of these services are ease of access to the information that the Authority produces or requires, and for efficient and effective dialogue with audiences and partners.

ICT plays a vital role in the running of the Authority, and the network infrastructure underpins all ICT services (including email, access to the web, communications and administrative applications), telecommunications, systems, on-line security systems, and public information systems. Built on this is a large investment in desktop machines, printers and software. However, the role of all of this hardware and software is to provide access to information and services, and the technology should not drive the way the Authority operates (although, because of geography, it may sometimes be a constraint). This ICT Strategy aims to guide the development of a well-founded information environment in order to deliver convenient access to information, improve communication and collaboration and to ensure a flexible, responsive and above all reliable system. This should enable established systems to function effectively, and new initiatives to be undertaken efficiently and to the highest quality.

This Strategy is applicable to the whole Authority, and should mean that information will be easier to access and that duplication of information will be reduced. Accordingly, time and costs will be saved and quality and reliability of information will be improved. Finally, more effective compliance with regulations will be achieved.

This document also clarifies the way forward for ICT developments within the Authority. It sets out a vision and plan for the next 5 years and will guide medium- and short-term decisions on technical, staffing and financial issues relating to the development, use and support of ICT infrastructure and facilities.

However, the strategy will remain flexible and responsive to changes in technology and the needs of the Authority via clear and inclusive debate on a regular basis, Current influences on the strategy include:

- The strategic aims and objectives of the Authority
- Financial, contractual and legal considerations

- Best practice and opportunities for improvement in all activities
- Pressures from central government (provision of e-services; the move to shared services; regulatory requirements; initiatives for developing professional services, such as Development control)

An assessment of likely developments is included in the following section.

Following formal adoption of the ICT Strategy, the details of its implementation will be described, with timescales and costs, in an Operational Plan (provisionally summarized in Section H).

Finally, this Strategy is supported by a series of IT policies and procedures (reviewed and revised as necessary, but at least over a maximum cycle of two years); reference to these is made throughout the following text, as appropriate.

B. Future considerations and assumptions

In setting out the strategy, it is necessary to have a vision of what the world will be like in 5 years time. The pace of change is such that this vision is based on today's knowledge and expectations - there is no attempt to predict developments that are not yet visible.

The pace of change in ICT shows no sign of slowing. It is occurring in the technology itself, in the availability of electronic information and in consumer connectivity. There will be massive developments in these areas over the next 5 years.

There will be ubiquitous access to a vast range of information and services, using low-cost communications of ever-increasing capacity: - "anyone, anywhere, any time, any device". However, the potential for the application of these developments needs to be tempered with the state of the communications network that is likely to be available across the area of the Yorkshire Dales, which is unlikely to be comparable to that available in more urbanized areas. This constraint needs to be borne in mind when considering the statements within this strategy.

Mobile communications will be pervasive, including data as well as voice. Communication technologies will be media-rich and interactive, integrating data, voice and video. Increasing data rates will make more of these available to mobile computing devices.

The Authority's interactions with the public will increasingly be through electronic media. It is expected that mobile communications will greatly expand, including data as well as voice. Communication technologies will be even more media-rich and interactive. Increasing data rates will make more of these available to mobile computing devices, which will become cheaper and more common.

The hub of the Authority's information base will be the website and intranet and the value of information is in its accessibility. Success will require all Managers and most of their Officers to use the website as integral to their routine work and the main means of communicating with new and existing audiences.

The effect on the public image of the Authority, of having high-quality up to date information systems, especially the Authority's web presence, will be increasingly important to maintain relevance in a changing world and to improve service quality.

In operational terms, most aspects of the Authority's core functions will be conducted electronically wherever appropriate. There will be corporate information systems providing unified access to coherent corporate data across all offices. The Authority's interactions with the public will increasingly be with the latter as e-citizens, and it will need to ensure all key services are suitably enabled.

Users will need and expect a high standard of up-to-date facilities, ease of use, reliability, richness of information, joined-up services and support. The majority of staff will increasingly have their own computer technology (laptop, pda, etc) and all staff will have access to all corporate systems. It will become even easier, for those with appropriate security authorisation, to access the central managed services via any general-purpose computer to enable offsite working. This will be achieved by reliance on the web interface.

C. General principles for ICT services

This strategy adopts the following principles in relation to key areas of ICT-supported delivery.

(i) Information Needs. An understanding of the information needs of the Authority (members, officers and volunteers) is critical to developing and maintaining successful systems, as is the way information flows through the organization to current and future stakeholders. All areas of the Authority will be responsible for this information but will be supported in identifying and understanding the flows of information and data that they are concerned with.

(ii) Access. All officers of Authority should have access to the information they might reasonably need, via appropriate IT systems and hardware, in order to execute their duties for the Authority and to act as an effective member of the Authority community. Information should be accessible in an appropriate format and available in a timely manner. Effective management information and reporting systems are required. Keeping published information up to date is the task of the officer responsible for that data and it is not the specific duty of any other officer to check what has been published nor that it remains current.

The Authority needs to be fully aware of the legal issues surrounding information access. Currently these include the Data Protection Act, the Freedom of Information Bill and the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act.

(iii) Information management. Officers of the Authority require access to both internally and externally generated information in order to execute their duties. The Authority will therefore procure access to that part of the external knowledge base required in order to meet these information needs (e.g. GIS), to the extent that resources permit. The general principle of information being available to all will apply, unless specifically specified otherwise (e.g. for legal, data protection or HR reasons). The Authority will provide

appropriate information resources through networked access.

(iv) Information systems. The Authority will provide the systems needed to create, manage, store, access, manipulate and transmit information, at every physical location where its officers may be required or expected to work. This will include communication networks, computational facilities, input and output facilities, and individual workstations. Corporate Information Systems will be provided which deliver information to the point where it is needed, securely, accurately and on time.

(v) Information sharing. Information created in or imported into the Authority's systems should be capable of being accessed, shared and manipulated easily from multiple platforms and applications, or transferred easily and without loss of accuracy or quality between them. Data should be held in as few locations and systems as possible and ideally live data should be coming from a single source. Data and all systems should have adequate security measures proportional to the assessed risk. Backup data, programs and access codes should be held separate to this, and adequate and proportionate security provision will be provided on all means of information provision. Information provision systems should be DDA compliant, both internally and externally.

Web browser based interfaces will be maintained to provide access to applications wherever appropriate, including Corporate Information Systems. Where web based delivery systems are not available, consideration should be given to how users of all platform, including remote users, will access information. In all cases, security of data and applications will be the paramount consideration in the provision of such access.

Team-based or site-specific Information Systems will not be supported or developed, but instead the Authority will seek to ensure that all systems are potentially Corporate-based ones, allowing ease of sharing

(vi) Corporate identity. The Authority should seek to develop and maintain an effective, positive and attractive corporate identity that enables awareness recognition and familiarity. Although work in relation to this issue is primarily outside the scope of this strategy, all information, regardless of format, created by officers of the Authority for corporate purposes should be consistent with, and should thus enhance, the Authority's corporate identity. All such information should be up to date, accurate and subject to regular review.

Production of certain corporate information has specific legal requirements attached to it, which must be met (e.g. copyright). In some cases there are templates available that meet these requirements (for example, when information based on Ordnance Survey data is distributed). There is an Authority guide for creation of documents consistent with corporate identity. See: [Corporate communications information series no. 1 - Hints & tips for better communication](#)

D: Risk

Specific risk management within ICT is achieved through compliance with IT policies and procedures, which are available to all officers via the intranet, and for which the context is given in the [IT Policies and Procedures](#) document. The policies and procedures include:

- [Information Security Policy](#). Covering security, access and information integrity issues (including disclosure).
- [Software Management Policy](#). Sets out the means of ensuring that software is installed and used in an appropriate manner.
- [Internet Acceptable Use Policy](#). Deals with the risks of internet access and sets out what the Authority has determined is unacceptable use.
- [Email procedures and protocols](#). Describes best practice and what is considered to be acceptable behaviour.
- [Remote Access Procedure](#). Describes the process to follow to achieve access. A separate [Remote Access Policy](#), dealing with Health & Safety considerations, and management approval for off-site working, is maintained within the Personnel policies section of the intranet.
- [Back-up and contingency policy](#). Covers the approach to dealing with minor and major systems failures.

Generic risks that could affect delivery of this Strategy include:

- The risk to the security of persons, belongings and equipment and the privacy of information (though these are to an extent covered by the above policies).
- The availability of sufficient and competent ICT support staff. Workload and support implications will be taken into account when planning new systems and developments.
- Cost. Work to reduce diversification of equipment including printers and software, in favour of a limited set of standards and shared network devices
- Wastage of energy and materials. Minimised by careful choice of equipment and design of working practices (see below).

E. Sustainability

Sustainability considerations will remain at the heart of IT developments. The technology-sharing enabled through the adoption of thin client technology, the approaches to repairing equipment and to only replacing equipment where truly necessary are already established means of underwriting sustainability. The basic principles that will be applied as part of this Strategy include the following (though this list is likely to evolve over the next five years):

- Because the vast majority of environmental cost occurs before a PC is switched on (for example; 10 times a typical machine's weight in raw materials is used during manufacture), equipment should be used until the end of its life before switching to energy saving alternatives and upgrading only when absolutely necessary.
- PCs should be reconditioned and reused rather than disposing of them, wherever possible.

- When replacing equipment, high-spec machines will be bought that will last longer. The energy efficiency and recycled content of new equipment will be examined, taking into account the cash and environmental costs.
- Thin clients systems will continue to be used to reduce energy consumption; they last longer and require less frequent upgrades as all the applications sit on central servers.
- Where practical all consumables such as printer cartridges will be purchased as re-manufactured/recycled items and subsequently returned for further re-use/recycling.

F: Planning of workload and for future developments

All new ICT developments will be undertaken in accordance with the following principles:

(i) ICT **planning and resourcing** will aim to provide a sound basic level of facilities appropriate to helping fulfil the Authority's key objectives.

(ii) There will be a means of **planning and prioritising** ICT related developments in the Authority, not in isolation but **in a 'joined-up' manner**. Plans will be clearly agreed, well-publicised and appropriately funded, and any compatibility and data sharing issues will be discussed with partners, as necessary. This strategy document and its annual review will provide a basis for ICT planning. Operational plans (e.g. for the rollout of new services) will be clearly and publicly explained in advance, so that teams and individuals can plan accordingly. Provision of appropriate information and training will form part of the planning process for ICT developments, to ensure their proper take-up and use.

(iii) All planning of ICT facilities and services will take into account the implications and constraints for the **number and skills of IT staff**. Workload and support implications will be taken into account when planning new systems and developments. There will be active measures in place to reduce diversification of equipment including printers and software, in favour of a limited set of standards and shared network devices.

(iv) The need for constant **revision and replacement** of ICT resources, as well as specific resourcing of projects, is recognised and will be reflected in the nature and timing of purchases within the budget cycle. ICT budgets will include both a realistic long-term constant component for normal planned turnover, as well as considered one-off funding for specific developments. Budgeting for turnover of equipment will be based on careful consideration of expected lifetimes, and number of breakdowns and cost of support. Normal computer processing equipment is replaced over a three to five year program (as necessary: clearly, there is no value in replacing equipment that is substantially performing the role it was purchased for). Servers will aim to be upgraded on an annual basis where there is a need to do so.

(v) The planning of new systems will be based on **reliability, ease of upgrade and of maintenance**. Reliability targets will be set and monitored, as and when required by the IT Working Group in response to the identification of a systemic issue.

(vi) The **network infrastructure** will continue to be developed with a view to long-term benefit, prudent use of new products and careful collaboration with other services. The level of user traffic will be monitored to enable adequate capacity to be planned and

provided. The availability of broadband network (and its support costs) will be taken into consideration when deciding the location of office sites.

(vii) The **acquisition** of ICT equipment will be based on formally negotiated and technically sound purchasing agreements. On-site maintenance for at least the first year will continue to be included with the purchase price of desktop equipment, though cost effective extensions of this will be considered. Servers and other specialist equipment will have maintenance contracts while they are in operational use.

G. The Infrastructure: current status and likely future developments.

An analysis of the current and likely future status of the Authority's ICT infrastructure is included within [Appendix 1](#). A detailed register of current ICT facilities and services is maintained by the IT Section. Please note that references to web interfaces relate to the processing available by that means, and not to the authority's external website(s).

H. Roles, responsibilities and communication

Responsibility for managing information rests with **all officers** of the Authority, both in the latter's individual or managerial capacities.

The Authority has an **ICT working group**, which meets quarterly; the existence of these meetings demonstrates that the Authority is providing good governance of its ICT structure. The Group comprises a member of the Authority's Senior Management Team, the IT Team and a representative from each of the Authority's departments, who acts as a channel for IT developments both to and from their department. In support of this Strategy the working group will:

- Monitor the implementation of this Strategy (including the provision of adequate staff training and development), and review and revise it at intervals
- Advise, direct and support all officers in implementing this Strategy, including advising the Senior Management Team on future developments and their prioritisation, through the preparation of background papers to SMT and the preparation of detailed implementation requirements.
- Receive technical advice concerning the impact of ICT decisions, for communication back to other officers in each department
- Collate ICT related queries from their Department for communication to the IT team or IT Working Group, as appropriate
- Maintain oversight over hardware, software and security of ICT, and to provide basic IT support to their colleagues wherever possible
- ensure that this Strategy is fully linked to the corporate planning
- ensure that implementation of the Strategy proceeds in a cost-effective way, and that careful analysis is made of any changes to ways of working to meet information requirements
- set clearly defined markers defining progress
- meet the needs of performance assessment requirements.

Once the **Senior Management Team**, in consultation with the **Member Champion for Corporate and democratic Services**, has agreed on the information and systems that are agreed, and subject to any necessary approval by members (for example, in the case of additional budget), then (and only then), will the **IT Team** become responsible for creating the necessary technical framework which supports these developments. More specifically, the IT Team will be responsible for providing and maintaining:

- a high speed, dependable network to all Authority-owned offices located throughout the Park
- up to date systems and software delivered according to industry standards
- voice/data to all desktops
- a high quality, integrated telecommunications system.

The Communications Team is responsible for maintaining and developing the Authority's website.

Subject to any specific approval on new developments (see above), the role of **members**, through the **Finance & Resources Committee**, will be to approve this Strategy and also to approve IT Policies and Procedures, as and when the latter are reviewed. Progress on delivering this strategy (see following section) will be reported annually to the senior Management Team.

I: Provisional Timescales.

The necessary and potential developments which are projected for the next five years are listed in Appendix 2, alongside a general timescale for this work. More specific timescales will be added when annual objectives are set each year.

It is envisaged that this Strategy (and therefore these timescales) will be reviewed each year by the IT Working group, and accordingly that new or changed objectives will be set each year, on a rolling basis.

The ICT Infrastructure: current status and likely future developments

1. Servers. The servers, all HP models, operate as a windows 2003 client server infrastructure, and there is one main server farms, located at Yoredale. Ideally the servers only run one key application on each server(s) instance. Where more than one key application is running processing performance is monitored. The Authority also has a share in the National Parks Web Portal Server farm at Titan Internet

The Future. During the time period covered by this document some of the servers are likely to need to be physically replaced. The backup system as a key function will almost certainly be enhanced during the next five years. The key servers will still be located at Yoredale.

2. Backups. See [Back-up and Contingency Policy](#).

3. Network – WAN, LAN, Wireless Public Access Points

3.1 Wide Area Network. YDNPA premises at Bainbridge, Grassington, Malham, Stonedykes, Hawes and Aysgarth are all connected by a Wide Area Network. This service is provided through a contract with North Yorkshire County Council. The actual service provider is MLL telecom and the technology used is a combination of microwave wireless links and BT lines. The WAN is used for both data and voice traffic. This network has been in place since February 2005.

The Future. The contract between NYCC and MLL telecom will terminate at the end of December 2009. It is unlikely that YDNPA will continue to take WAN services from MLL independently and therefore will have to source a replacement for the existing system. NYCC have set up a new company NYNET to provide WAN services throughout North Yorkshire, additional value added services such as a storage area network will also be available. This company will provide all WAN services for NYCC and is also being marketed to other local government and similar organisations. One possibility would be for YDNPA to take WAN services from NYNET but alternatives will also be investigated.

3.2 Local Area Network (LAN). All the offices are running on either a category 5e or category 6 fixed wire Ethernet network. All the primary switches are rated at 1G

The Future. All the primary switches will be due for replacement during the time period and will be replaced with whatever is the most cost effective solution at the time. We will also look at maximizing the use of Yoredale, increased usage at Aysgarth and possible changes to the Dales Countryside Museum within the next five years.

3.3 Wireless Access Points. There is one Wireless Access point at DCM (to provide visitors with up to date information on Open Access).

The Future. It is not intended to increase the provision any further, and wireless will only be used where absolutely necessary and cabling is not a possible 'better alternative', because of security and reliability issues.

3.4 Public Access Points. All Authority-owned visitor centres have public access information points giving access to CRoW information. The access points are maintained on a day to day basis by the ICT team.

The Future. Within the next five years the hardware on these devices will need to be replaced. By then there will be new versions of the software, but a decision will need to be made at the time if it is worth upgrading then. Day to day support and maintenance of the equipment will be handled by the ICT Team. The availability of wireless access and developments in pda technology will probably have an effect on what is provided, and it is

hard to predict what this will be, and how it will affect these points. The siting and use of these points needs to be reviewed.

4. Client Machines

4.1 Hardware. Current client machines are a combination of Windows XP and Windows 95/98 machines acting as thin clients through the use of Citrix Thin Client technology. on a rolling basis, because of the use of Thin Client technology. The screen offered is a 17 or 19 inch. Pdas are used for specific limited functions

The Future. Client machines will be replaced as and when necessary. The user will continue to be offered the most useful type of machine for their job function - a desktop, laptop, notebook or pda depending on which is best for the user.

4.2 Operating System. Currently the Authority has academic license status which saves a very considerable amount of money on licenses. The client machines runs Microsoft Windows Xp Professional or Microsoft Pocket Pc operating systems.

The Future. It is assumed that the Authority will continue with the academic license status. The discounts offered by this status make it not viable to consider non Microsoft systems for this during this time period. During the timescale of this document the next Microsoft client operating system Vista will come on line. It is not envisaged that we will do an upgrade, unless there is an operational advantage to this, but have a steady migration to the new operating system as new client hardware is rolled out and provided that Vista is shown to be a stable platform.

5. Input/Output Devices (Scanners, Printers etc). Scanners – A high capacity multi page dual sided scanner is available at Yoredale together with an A0 continuous roll scanner; these are primarily used by the Planning Department; lower specification scanners are available at other offices. There is an A0 colour plotter at Yoredale. Networked colour laser printers are available to all staff located at Yoredale and Colvend.

The Future. In general there needs to be a process of rationalizing the number and varieties of input/output devices, especially printers to reduce ongoing consumable costs. For printers and scanners, the hardware that enables them will be replaced, as required, during the timescale covered by this document. It is likely that some form of central print function would save time, money and reduce the environmental impact (reducing waste paper; savings on toner, etc).

6. Non Data Communications Systems

6.1 Mobile Communications. There are currently 30 mobile phones being paid for by the Authority, running across Vodaphone and Orange networks. There is very limited access to mobile networks in the more remote areas of the Park.

The Future. The mobile phone system may merge with the desk based one to one unit, so all users might have one unit that can act as a mobile or desk based one depending on location. Until the coverage has improved mobile pda usage will be the exception rather than the norm.

6.2 Fixed Line Communications. Yoredale, Colvend, Aysgarth Falls Visitor Center, The Dales Countryside Museum and the Stonedykes Workshop all have Siemens telephone switches installed. Multi Subscriber Numbers are allocated to provide direct dial to officer's desks. The calls are provided by a least cost provider, giving value for money.

The Future. Over the life of this Strategy the phone system will be reviewed.

7. Voice Over Internet Protocols (VOIP). VOIP-supported telephony operates over the WAN, and serves all premises with the exception of Reeth.

The Future. The technology in use is towards the upper end of what is currently possible. A watching brief will be kept on future developments.

8. Webcams (Public external viewing). There are no operational webcams at present although we do link to three webcams operated by other individuals within the National Park through our website (see:

<http://www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/index/enjoying/webcams.htm>)

The Future. There may be some potential in this area, particularly in connection with the continuing development of the website. Sensitive and appropriate placement of any such cameras would have to be carefully considered.

9. Video Conferencing. Not in current use, but is being investigated.

The Future. A trial of video-conferencing is planned for Spring 2008. Current constraints in the WAN provision are a limiting factor in the provision of video conferencing. The replacement of the current WAN provision (see above) may provide an opportunity for video conferencing implementation

10. Information Provision

10.1 Website

Current situation: The website is one of the Authority's key communications tools, providing a large amount of information to the public. In addition to HTML it contains multi format data including pdfs, mp3 sound files and Flash files.

There are a number of regulatory requirements relating to what information is provided on the site and how timely this information is. This includes committee agendas and minutes of meetings, A-Z of services, planning applications, tree preservation orders (TPOs) and so on.

During 2006/7 the site received over 3 million page impressions, with the most frequently downloaded pages being the homepage, news releases and document library searches. There were 163,170 unique visits to the site – around 450 per day. At the time of writing the site contains over 1,200 pages and downloadable documents. The main URL for our website is www.yorkshiredales.org.uk.

The Authority is a member of the National Parks Portal Website project. This means that our website is hosted – along with www.nationalparks.gov.uk and a number of other national parks websites (for example the Peak District and the Lake District NPAs) – on servers managed by a company called Titan, based in London. Membership of the Portal also gives us access to the Livelink software with which our website has been developed. Livelink has a content management system allowing content to be updated by authorised users across the Authority. This means that we can add and remove content to our website very quickly and efficiently.

Our website will be subject to a 'See it right' accessibility audit by Useability (a partnership of the two organisations RNIB and AbilityNet) during the spring of 2008. If successful we will then be able to display the See it right accredited symbol on our website, thus indicating that our site is full accessible in accordance with the W3C Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) standards on website accessibility.

The Authority is also a member of the national Planning Portal. This means that users can submit and pay for planning applications online. In addition users can view live planning applications and appeals on the Authority site itself.

The Future: Web-based services will continue to be a high priority for the Authority and information provided via the web will become the key means of communications with the

e-citizen. We will need to ensure that the site develops in line with W3C Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) standards on website accessibility.

Developments due to take place during 2008/9 are likely to include:

- introduction of an e-shop
- installation of a weather feed
- development of e-postcards and downloadable screensavers
- implementation of ReadSpeaker technology
- new interactive resource for young people/families
- introduction of GIS mini-maps across the site

We intend to continue as full members of the National Parks Portal Website Project and as such, we will need to keep up with any developments relating to software upgrades – for example, if at some point the Portal Project decides to introduce a new content management system we would need to follow suit and migrate our website to the new platform.

10.2 DMS – Sharepoint. Sharepoint is the main Document Management for the Authority. Access is via a web front end, and can be accessed either from any office or remotely, provided the user has the correct permissions. Each user has their own “MySite” for storage of personal documents. The main front page of the Portal has a staff notice board that any member of staff can add to and a central listing of events. It has the capacity to upload documents directly to the web site. The system has the capacity to have secure extranet sites that are made open to a limited (password controlled) audience. Preference is to use the facilities provided by the NPA Web Portal.

The Future. Proposals for further developing the available system will be formulated by the IT Working Group.

11. Office Users. All users are running Microsoft Office 2003 Professional service pack 2 or above, making full use of the Academic Licensing Status afforded to the Authority by Microsoft, as an environmental organization. The client pcs are running on a mixture of Thin Client (Citrix) and Windows XP or 95/98.

The Future. Provided the Authority keeps its Academic License Status it will continue to use Microsoft Products, and it is assumed that we will follow the standard Microsoft upgrade path as these new products are made available.

12. GIS Software. The Authority is part of the Mapping Service Agreement for Local Authorities, giving it access to a comprehensive range of base maps from the agreed suppliers. The Authority also buys extra datasets as required by various projects, where the information is not available under the MSA. Datasets are also provided by other agencies, which integrate in with the base maps. The Authority has a copy of the GeoPerspectives Aerial Photography as a part of the corporate dataset. All the datasets and base maps are available to all map users as corporate datasets via the network. The corporate datasets are maintained and updated by the IT Officer (GIS). The main mapping desktop client is Mapinfo, used to generate internal datasets and to manipulate external ones and the Authority also has a mapping application (MOBY) that provides users with a low-cost alternative to a full Mapinfo license.

The Future. The utilisation of GIS software within the Authority will increase over the period of this document, as it is the key means of recording information against a spatial reference. New cost effective technologies are being developed all the time, which will enhance this process. Two key areas where this is likely to be the case will be GPS hardware/software and use of vertical mapper (although these are not part of a current work program). It is assumed that the Authority will continue to use MapInfo as the main client software and this will be upgrade as new versions come along. All users will have

good access to Corporate datasets via the network, which will be kept up to date as part of the Mapping Service Agreement and other such agreements the Authority has in place. Wherever possible datasets will be integrated into central datasets (once created) for ease of use.

The web interface allows access to a limited number of GIS datasets. These online datasets will increase over time and a schedule of maintenance will be put in place to ensure these layers are kept up to date.

The work of the IT Officer (GIS) over the next 5 years will be focused on the corporate issues of copyright, organising the Authorities GIS data and Metadata, training and reviewing the GIS software in use. Further work will be driven by the departmental priorities of Planning, External Affairs, Park Management and Conservation and Policy, covering the areas of training, copyright, online GIS, support and customised GIS applications.

13. Historic Environment . The Authority holds the Historic Environment Record for the Park which is recorded using HBSMR, supplied by Exegetis.

The Future. HBSMR is developed by Exegetis; upgrades are installed as operationally required.

14. Planning – Planning System, Portal etc. The Authority is a member of the Planning Portal. The in-house planning system is PACS, supplied by Exegetis.

The Future. The developments to the planning system will be largely determined by external drivers, central/local government and performance targets. PACS is developed by Exegetis under guidance from the PACS User Group; upgrades are installed as operationally required.

15. Finance System. The main Finance system is Sun System, installed two years ago. It integrates easily with other office functions, and successfully provides the information required. Since installation upgrades have been added as they become available, and this is foreseen to carry on for the future. The client is installed on the majority of users' machines. The system is only available to users on the internal Authority domain.

The Future. Currently this is seen as a fit for purpose application.

16. HR Software. The flexitime system (Truetime) is provided by ITS Ltd.

The Future. The Truetime system will be developed to take advantage of its potential as a more wide ranging HR database, capable of generating reports on a wide range of people management matters (*in addition to leave, sickness and attendance records, this will enable reporting against such matters as performance indicators, the status of travel insurance held by individuals and the completion of annual reviews*).

17. Other Application Software. There are a number of specialist client applications in operation the main ones being the Snap questionnaire database, Print & Design software and Banking software (BACS). In house developments provide systems to manage the electronic operations of the definitive maps and the Public Rights of Way management information.

The Future. If it is cost effective and the application is still fit for purpose, then these applications will be upgraded as new versions are made available. All new specialist applications will be reviewed to see how they integrate with the main corporate systems, and only applications that fit in with current systems will be purchased. The savings the Authority achieves from the *Academic licensing* pricing from Microsoft means that where fit for purpose Microsoft applications will be implemented in preference to other providers.

18. Images. Planning and archaeology/built environment functions use LibraryLink to maintain a database of images. Other libraries are held mainly by Park Management and External Affairs in a folder and file system.

The Future. The image data resource should be held in an easily searchable and accessible manner. LibraryLink will be considered as a means of implementing this.

19. Data Protection

See [Data Protection Policy](#)

20. Access

20.1 Multi site working. The advent of broadband across the Park has enabled the WAN to be expanded to cover all sites. Any officer should be able to logon to any client machine on the Authority's domain and access all the key datasets and client applications. The telecom system allows for calls to be forwarded from one extension/line to another. The potential for a video conference facility is being developed to improve communications.

The Future. The Authority will continue to run multiple sites across the Park, and as such all key ICT facilities will be made available wherever possible to all officers at all sites. Whilst the IT team will endeavour to maintain similar services at all sites, priority will be given to the two main sites (in terms of staff numbers, i.e. Colvend and Yoredale). Wherever there are likely to be considerable changes in the volume or type of future working, managers will need to bear this in mind when allocating staff to a particular location.

20.2 Remote working. A limited number of staff are doing this on a regular basis. They can access all of the systems that are available to them at the office. To work effectively from home the officer needs broadband connected to their home address. The availability of such working potentially ties in with work life balance and with sustainability issues.

The Future. This is an area of functionality that it is believed will grow considerably over the time period of this document, not least due to economic and central governmental pressure. Usage will be monitored to identify any other operational impacts of this change in working practice.

21. Security. The Authority's system makes use of Microsoft's Active Directory system for security control. The current password parameters are set to 8 characters, changed every 30 days.

The Future. Confidence in the Authority's ICT systems is a key criterion of the e-citizen agenda, and trusting the security infrastructure is an integral part of this process, as such the Authority will be expected to comply with certain levels of security imposed by central Government. Each year the minimum conditions are raised. It is assumed that this will carry on over the period of this document, and extra security functionality could well be a cost. It is envisaged that the Authority's system will continue to make use of Microsoft's Active Directory system for security control.

22. Training. As part of the induction process training is provided on all key general systems. Additional help is available via the support system. For specific specialist applications training is sometimes provided by outside trainers, either as in house sessions or external courses. The trainer is selected by content cost and any past experience of the quality of training provided. For new applications Authority wide training programs are provided with follow up sessions as required.

The Future. It is not envisaged that the general training processes will change over the timescale of this document. The approach to the area of 'a basic standard of IT literacy' is under review: existing staff will, be ECDL qualified and this qualification will become a desirable requirement of employment; where possible and practicable, e-learning facilities will be utilized.

23. Support. The authority has a support team of three IT Officers and one half post specialist GIS officer, looking after the internal systems as well as the public access infrastructure. Certain key applications have additional support and maintenance

contracts. It is recognized that these contracts are expensive and value for money versus service level agreement is a very important factor. NYCC provide support under a Service Level Agreement for the LAN networking infrastructure.

Though there are no standard service level agreements between the ICT team and the rest of the Authority there is a current set of commitments that the team aims to keep.

These are:

- If it is a multi user/server/network error and is covered by an external agreement, this is reported to the external contractor support agent on the same working day as the fault is noticed.
- If it is a multi user/server/network error and is covered by our internal systems, the IT team endeavors to repair it within one working day, where possible (parts may need to be ordered which will be delivered the next day).
- If the error is user specific, then we have alternative client machines available in all offices that can be used instead. The error will aim to be fixed and replaced within a couple of days.
- Support calls are logged and trends are monitored
- There is a direct relationship between age of equipment and number of breakdowns also between quality and faults. If any product/make/machine is shown to have more than an average number of faults its continuing use will be reviewed.

Note that, because of IT resource constraints, it is not possible or cost effective to deal with certain minor faults (typically, minor flaws within purchased software that, whilst potentially irritating, do not materially affect the function of that software). However, all attempts will be made to keep such items to a minimum (for example, by installing upgrades to software as they are released by the manufacturers).

The Future. It is envisaged that the authority will continue to have an effective support team looking after the internal systems, as well as the public access infrastructure.

Whenever proprietary systems are run, we will continue with the current approach to contracting out specialist support work. External additional support will continue to be provided but SLA's and very quick response times are very expensive. Unless new money is forthcoming then support of the systems will have to be paid for from existing budgets, and this support element needs to be taken into account when considering any new system. A help desk application is being investigated that will enable users to log their own support calls.

Major IT System Project Timescales

Activity	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13
Web Site Upgrade			X		
WAN Replacement	X	X			
Server & switch replacements/upgrades	X	X	X	X	X
Review Telecoms System				X	
Client Operating System Upgrade			X		
Office Application Upgrade (to 2007)		X	X		
Replace Backup Hardware		X	X		
Replace Domain Controller(S) Hardware & Software		X	X		
Upgrade Exchange Hardware & Software	X	X			
Upgrade Finance System	X				
Replace SQL Database Servers Hardware & Software		X	X		
Replace Servers for Sharepoint			X	X	
Replace Citrix Servers				X	X
Upgrade Citrix Operating System	X		X		