

Information Technology Strategy 2016 – 2020



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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 West College Scotland delivers learning and vocational training to the West Region of Scotland, a catchment area of 1.2 million people, representing 23% of the resident population of Scotland. The College has an important presence and deep roots in our main towns of Paisley, Clydebank and Greenock, and our footprint stretches from Oban to Barrhead.
- 1.2 We are committed to taking a leadership role in the West of Scotland and, together with partners and stakeholders, tackling significant social and economic deprivation which still characterises many of the towns and communities across the region. The College works across local authority boundaries and engages formally with seven authorities.
- 1.3 As Scotland's second largest Regional College we provide education and training to almost 30,000 students. The College manages total funds of £69m and employs approximately 1200 staff.
- 1.4 West College Scotland is one of the Region's largest employers and is uniquely placed to help shape the West region's educational landscape and contribute to its social and economic development. The College wishes to exploit its scale and capacity to maximise its impact as a leader and influencer across the region and the wider College sector. While students are at the heart of what we do, we want to attract business at home and from abroad, and we seek to build a reputation which is recognised for being innovative, enterprising and modern.
- 1.5 At West College Scotland, we recognise the key role that Information Technology has in underpinning the development, improvement and success of our College and its users. The College IT Strategy provides the framework and direction to ensure technological change and development:
 - Is driven by curricular learning and teaching need.
 - Will support innovation in teaching and learning.
 - Provides online access to established and emerging learner and support processes.
 - Ensures existing hardware and software assets are utilised to their maximum potential.
 - Embraces mobile and flexible working models.
 - Recognises the benefits of collaborative working and shared service delivery.
 - Ensures adherence to legislative and policy requirements.
 - Supports a mobile, flexible and hybrid-cloud infrastructure.
 - Provides required levels of ICT service delivery and standards.

2.0 West College Scotland Strategic Priorities

- 2.1 Our vision of a *'Collective ambition, pride and passion to be a vibrant and dynamic College – providing excellent education, training opportunities and services for our students,*

customers and communities' will be achieved by implementing the College's eleven Strategic Priorities. At the heart of our strategic priorities are our Ambitions, which include:

- **To make a difference**
- **To be bold**
- **To be forward thinking, fast-moving, quick to explore new ideas and exploit fresh opportunities**
- **To build on areas where we currently demonstrate excellence; and to set new standards for learning, teaching and service delivery that others will aspire to**
- **To be a leader, working with partners to address local economic and societal challenges**
- **To innovate, grow, diversify and invest**
- **To have an engaged, flexible and modern workforce that is proud to work for West College Scotland**

And alongside our Ambitions sit our Values:

- **To ensure our students have the opportunity to achieve all that they can**
- **To place students and local communities at the heart of what we do**
- **To innovate**
- **To commit to professionalism and partnership**
- **To achieve and sustain excellence**
- **To have a 'can-do' attitude**

The Information Technology Strategy reflects our ambitions and values and is aligned to support the implementation of the following College Strategic Priorities:

Strategic Priorities 1 & 2 – Inspirational and innovative

- 1) We will provide education and training in inspirational and innovative ways to engage and meet the diverse needs of our students.
- 2) Education and training will be delivered to students in high quality College facilities, in their place of work or through the development and use of digital technologies.

Strategic Objective 4

- 4) *To provide a flexible, user-friendly and inclusive digital environment for learning teaching and assessment.*

Strategic Priority 4 – Supporting Success

- 3) We will support the development of our staff to achieve successful outcomes for themselves, our students and the College.

Strategic Objectives 2 and 4

- 2) *To ensure all students have access to comprehensive, appropriate and responsive support services.*
- 4) *To support staff to work successfully with digital technologies.*

Strategic Priority 8 – Securing our Future

8) We will proactively look for new partners and new areas of activity, which will allow us to grow and develop our income to reinvest in our core business for the benefits of our students, our staff and our communities.

Strategic Objectives 2 and 4

2) *To enhance internal business processes, exploiting the use of technology where appropriate, to deliver user friendly, effective and efficient ways of working.*

4) *To ensure technology infrastructure is flexible, responsive and fit for purpose.*

Strategic Priority 11 – Committed to our Region

11) We will deliver a sustainable effective and efficient service to our communities, through the implementation of sound governance, leadership, planning and management.

Strategic Objective 1

1) *To secure a well-managed, financially and environmentally sustainable College.*

2.2 The IT Strategy will support these Strategic Priorities and Objectives through delivery of the following IT Objectives:

- **Infrastructure – Hardware and Software: *Strategic Priorities 2 & 8.***
- **Projects and Enhancements: *Strategic Priorities 2, 8 & 11.***
- **Structure and Service Delivery: *Strategic Priority 4.***
- **Planning and Risk: *Strategic Priorities 8 & 11.***
- **Policy and Process: *Strategic Priority 8.***
- **Collaboration and Partnership: *Strategic Priorities 8 & 11.***

3.0 Regional Outcome Agreement

3.1 The Information Technology Strategy also supports the implementation of the West College Scotland Regional Outcome Agreement in respect of the following objectives:

- **Efficient and Sustainable Regional Structures**

4.0 IT Strategic Objectives

4.1 In support of College strategic priorities and delivery of the Regional Outcome Agreement, there are six strategic IT objectives:

IT Strategic Objective 1 - Infrastructure (Hardware and Software)

The College will develop, maintain and support an integrated IT infrastructure providing users with available, robust and secure access and services, establishing effective and efficient IT administration support practice.

Where are we now?

- The age and condition of the IT infrastructure, including passive cabling, varies by site and location.
- The College continues to operate on the multi-vendor hardware infrastructure inherited at merger.
- Core software applications in support of the student journey were deployed at merger however some ancillary systems software still require replacement.
- Teaching staff have been provided with mobile equipment however little change has been made to classroom and support staff equipment where the age and specification varies widely.
- To support teaching and learning and infrastructure operations, the College is now subscribing to enterprise licence agreements with core software suppliers.
- Technology shift and sector drivers are driving greater use of mobile device, wireless access and cloud based resource.
- Feedback along with analysis of survey data reflects on the age and suitability on some parts of the IT infrastructure, whilst also outlining rising expectations.
- Large scale estate redevelopment, including spend on IT infrastructure, will be conditional on funding provided by the Scottish Funding Council.

Where do we want to be?

- Infrastructure resource is administered effectively and efficiently.
- Infrastructure supports the student journey and engagement process; electronic delivery and assessment; and can adapt to support innovative learning initiatives.
- All elements of existing IT resources are optimally utilised.
- Infrastructure change or enhancement is prioritised, planned and deployed to meet need.

How do we get there?

- Deliver the College IT infrastructure from a 'hybrid cloud' model providing online access to teaching and support resource and services.
- Utilise the tools and resources available under our educational licencing arrangements to support the delivery and enhancement of teaching and learning and to support infrastructure operation.
- Develop the existing Skype for Business (*formerly Lync*) infrastructure to improve cross-College access to communications and collaboration resources.
- Sustain the print and copy environment by procuring a College wide Print Service solution.
- Upgrade our internet connection and equipment to utilise change within the JANET service provision.
- Expand campus wireless connectivity and access.
- Extend the use of thin client solutions to replace classroom desktop solutions.
- Ensure College staff are provided with the equipment which supports their needs, whilst also exploring options to make effective use of 'bring your own device' models to supplement and sustain equipment for students.

- Ensure estates redevelopment plans encompass required IT infrastructure elements.

How will we recognise success?

- The IT infrastructure will support the resources required by the College to undertake its delivery portfolio within teaching and learning.
- The college will have taken full advantage of the software and associated resources available to us under our major enterprise license agreements.
- Our JANET connection, providing College Internet access, will be upgraded and aligned to post merger requirement and operations.
- Thin client solutions will be more in evidence across the classroom desktop estate.
- Feedback from students and the wider learning community will reflect an improvement in the software and hardware available to support teaching and learning.
- Print service will exist as a single solution delivered by a comparatively procured supplier.
- A successful deployment of Skype for Business will have enhanced cross-campus collaboration and communications.
- User wireless access and server cloud resource will be key established elements within a hybrid IT infrastructure.
- By providing teaching and support resources online, the College will reduce the need to be the provider of the endpoint equipment in all situations.
- IT will be a core element of estates redevelopment activities.

IT Strategic Objective 2 - Projects and Enhancements

The College will deliver the approved and prioritised IT infrastructure sustainability and enhancement programs.

Where are we now?

- SFC funding is on annual basis, and makes medium and longer term strategic planning challenging.
- IT spend is governed by procurement efficiency via framework identification and competition.
- The internal College Resource Request process is in place and supports the IT Department in understanding, identifying and prioritising projects and enhancements.
- The College has made significant progress through the initial period following merger in relation to IT enabled business process improvement and there is a need to further develop capacity and approach.
- The College has baseline IT asset information in place and systems for developing and maintaining this require further development.
- Further development of the planning processes across the College will support and improve proactive delivery.

Where do we want to be?

- Deliver agreed and prioritised change within a recognised annual process and to a recognised project methodology.

- Operate with established sustainability plans and with well understood and effective Resource Request processes.
- Operate in a stable IT budget forecasting and planning environment.

How do we get there?

- Continue to refine prioritisation process via collective SMT input and involvement.
- Plan and forecast flexibly to account for known budget constraint.
- Ensure stakeholder representation in determining detail of solutions design for approved change initiatives.
- Develop the project delivery methodology for use within the IT Directorate and more widely across the College.
- Utilise the West College Scotland Technology Committee and staff and student intranet to communicate change priorities and initiatives and to provide the stimulus to gather and implement improvement proposals.

How will we recognise success?

- The College will recognise and deliver prioritised technology change to specification and within approved budget.
- Stakeholder understanding and engagement will streamline delivery of the resource request and business improvement processes.
- An effective and involved College Technology Committee will be informing and publicising IT delivery across teaching and learning and support activities.
- IT change will be enabled and supported from a recognised project delivery methodology that is embedded through staff engagement with the Corporate Professional Development review process.

IT Strategic Objective 3 - Structure and Service Delivery

The College will maintain and develop a flexible operating IT structure that delivers a high quality and responsive service.

Where are we now?

- The IT Directorate structure is in place and operational.
- IT staff remain distributed cross-campus.
- Training and development needs for IT Staff require to be reviewed, prioritised and agreed under the College Corporate Professional Development process.
- IT software for service desk operations requires upgrading.

Where do we want to be?

- Operate with a balanced and flexible IT support resource, able to deliver service support and change activities effectively within a flexible and changing College environment.
- Proactively collect and publish IT service and monitoring data for use in performance review, diagnostics and analytics.
- Operate against a recognised IT Service Delivery model that is designed to provide a set of practices for IT service management.

How do we get there?

- Identify, procure and implement replacement IT service desk software.
- Agree clear performance indicators and establish cross-campus IT support processes to deliver and exceed these.
- Make use of the Corporate Development Planning process to enable improvements in customer service awareness and delivery via a recognised service management methodology.

How will we recognise success?

- IT services will deliver performance against a collection of agreed indicators of success that are set and reviewed during the annual Operations Management cycle and deemed appropriate to the College environment.
- IT staff will introduce a recognised service delivery methodology and will design cross-campus operations to deliver improvements to the user base.
- Available service desk and infrastructure monitoring software will provide effective operational support.

IT Strategic Objective 4 - Planning and Risk

The College will establish and maintain asset information, develop the planning processes and maintain audit activities to deliver a sustainability model for the required IT estate.

Where are we now?

- IT budget levels are established. An effective account management and review process is established. Annual forecasting supports budget efficiency.
- The IT Contingency plan is complete and will be further refined within the context of wider business continuity planning.
- An IT asset information database is now available and this data will be maintained on a continuous basis
- The internal College Resource Request process is in place and supports the IT Department in understanding, identifying and prioritising projects and enhancements.
- Information Security documentation will continue to be maintained, developed and implemented.
- IT risk is recognised, mitigated and managed within the Strategic College Risk register, with regular review taking place by the Senior Management Team and Board of Management.
- A high-level 10 year proposal, including IT requirement, has been prepared for the SFC Infrastructure Strategy working group, and this will continue to be developed on a rolling basis.

Where do we want to be?

- Maintain flexible, pro-active forecasting and budget management for all IT related spend recognising current sector drivers and constraints.
- Collate and maintain reliable and up to date asset information.

- Direct approved spending in line with established plans to support identified and evolving curriculum requirement.
- Embed problem definition, risk analysis and options appraisal methods into the operational IT change\improvement management processes.

How do we get there?

- Complete the auditing, maintenance and centralised recording of IT asset information.
- Further develop and refine short and long term College IT change plans to focus available resource on pro-active maintenance and innovative change delivery.
- Maintain a portfolio of IT change projects capable of maximising and responding to fluctuating budget availability.
- Use Information Security review outputs to inform risk management activities.
- Establish internal processes based on recognised problem, risk and option management methodologies. Utilise staff development opportunities accordingly.

How will we recognise success?

- Annual IT spending will be delivered within budget, achieving outcomes as required.
- IT asset information will be complete and maintained and will be informing sustainability reviews and selections.
- Contingency plans will be subject to annual review and maintained to reflect the changing College environment and IT infrastructure.
- Flexible and adaptive IT resource request planning will deliver prioritised change and support the College's response to a fluctuating budget environment.
- Operational risk assessment and options appraisal techniques will be embedded and positively impacting operational effectiveness.

IT Strategic Objective 5 - Policy and Process

The College will maintain IT documentation and guidance resources to ensure user understanding and behaviours secure the data assets and information held by the College and protect the College from loss or litigation

Where are we now?

- The College culture of collective ambition is well established.
- Compilation of a suite of West College Scotland IT policies is in progress.
- Guideline documentation to direct user behaviour and activity are developed as required.
- A dedicated 'IT Home' section is operational on the staff and student Intranets.
- Freedom of Information requests are answered on an ad-hoc basis.
- The College has to respond to the Scottish Government Open Data Strategy.

Where do we want to be?

- Maintain a suite of resources that inform, support and protect the data and information assets in use within the College.

- Ensure the College's non-personal and non-commercially sensitive, Open Data, is made available in accordance with practice and legislation.

How do we get there?

- Maintain IT policy documentation.
- Progress opportunities with funding bodies, awarding bodies and Community Planning Partnerships in responding to the Scottish Government Open Data strategy.

How will we recognise success?

- IT operations and stakeholder behaviours will be governed by a set of policy and guideline documentation that is agreed, understood and is maintained through consultation and review.
- Operational processes and behaviours will be fully established and embedded and determined by culture, policy and stakeholder feedback.
- Non-personal and non-commercially sensitive organisational data will be more readily available.

IT Strategic Objective 6 - Collaboration and Partnership

The College will develop and maintain sector contacts and promote the College profile to ensure WCS is positioned to lead on, or make best use of, identified collaboration and partnership opportunities

Where are we now?

- Digital Scotland's further education IS Strategy is being serviced via University and College Shared Services [UCSS].
- The Sector Oversight Board for FE is in place and operating proactively.
- Via the Community Planning Partnership, the College has established IT contacts and will look to actively develop links with all community planning partners where this will support delivery of opportunities.
- The College has well established links with APUC to support IT Procurement.
- The College has well established links to JISC and elsewhere within the sector that support IT infrastructure operations.

Where do we want to be?

- Ensure the College secures and maintains representation on strategically influential IT groups within and beyond the sector.
- Identify and utilise shared service opportunities where there is clear organisational advantage.
- Support viable shared service and collaboration IT opportunities within and beyond the sector.

How do we get there?

- Actively participate in identified sector groups.
- Ensure collaboration and shared service options are considered and evaluated in identifying, agreeing and implementing the IT Strategy.

How will we recognise success?

- The College will be an established and recognised IT contributor within the sector and with other connected public sector organisations.
- IT infrastructure operations will be enhanced by solutions delivered from identified and beneficial sharing or collaboration opportunities.