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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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### Introduction

1.1 Computerised systems are central to virtually all the financial and management systems deployed by public sector bodies. Information and Communications Technology (ICT) also underpins the provision of vital management information to all sectors at a corporate and departmental level. From a Corporate Governance perspective the overall arrangements for the management of ICT in the Council are considered in the following key areas:

- strategy
- installation management
- security of ICT assets
- networking
- organisational structure
- service delivery
- contingency planning

1.2 The majority of the areas mentioned above were previously reviewed and reported on in an Internal Audit Report dated 18 November 2002 titled "Review of Information Technology". The Council is progressing actions arising from this review. As part of our 2003/04 audit activity we reviewed the networking component of Argyll and Bute Council's ICT provision.

1.3 This report summarises the findings from our Networking Overview and, where appropriate, makes recommendations to address the weaknesses identified.

### Summary of Main Findings

1.4 As part of the ongoing reorganisation the Council recently appointed the Head of ICT and Financial Services.

1.5 The Council adopted PRINCE2 project management methodology and has committed resources to train PRINCE2 practitioners.

1.6 The Council is establishing an ICT Steering Group, part of its objective is to formulate an overall ICT Strategy for the Council.

1.7 The Modernising Government Agenda increases the use of electronic communication and the demands placed on the network. The network infrastructure appears to be reaching capacity at times. Options for increasing the capacity are under consideration, including amongst others Broadband and Voice over IP (Internet Protocol), the latter being new technology that can carry voice communications over data networks.

1.8 The Council is in the process of developing an Information Security Management System, including network security policies.

## Conclusion

The changes resulting from the Modernising Government agenda will inevitably increase the demands on the Council's networking infrastructure. The ability of the existing infrastructure to meet these demands was not clear at the time of our review, although indications are that the infrastructure was at times reaching capacity.

The implementation of the recommendations contained in the Internal Audit report and those contained in this report will strengthen the control environment and assist steering of the Council's networking infrastructure, supporting the achievement of the Council's objectives.

## ACTION PLAN

No.	Recommendation	Responsible Officer	Action	Implementation Date	Update as at 30 July 2004
1	<p>We support the creation of an ICT Steering Group and recommend that the ICT Strategy should embrace a network strategy that is capable of supporting the Council's Strategic Objectives.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>High Risk</b></p>	Head of Financial and Information Technology Services	The ICT Strategy Working Group has been established with the aim of formulating a strategy and monitoring its implementation.	August 2004	This recommendation will be completed September 2004.
2	<p>The responsibility for control and co-ordination of devices connected to the network should be clearly defined. A Council-wide network strategy recommended in point 1 above can serve as good starting point, supported by clearly defined management responsibilities to address this potential risk.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>High Risk</b></p>	IT Infrastructure Manager	The Council's Strategic Management Team (SMT) is considering a revised method of desktop management. This includes centralising the control and co-ordination of devices connected to the network. However the implementation of such controls depends very much on the ongoing network monitoring and intrusion detection systems outlined in recommendations 3 and 4 below.	August 2004	The Council's Strategic Management Team (SMT) is still considering a revised method of desktop management. It is unlikely that this will centralise the control of devices connected to the network. However some controls have been introduced to provide co-ordination of the connection of devices to the network.
3	<p>Ongoing monitoring of the network's ability to function within acceptable parameters should be implemented. This monitoring should provide valuable information relating to traffic volumes</p>	IT Infrastructure Manager	The Council has invested in HP Openview to assist with the monitoring of the network's ability to function. However the limited	August 2004	Report went to the Corporate Services Management Team but additional resources could not be made

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	<p>data flows, trends and anomalies to aid management and strategic planning functions.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Medium Risk</b></p>		<p>resources available within the networks section at present and the increasing workload will impact on our ability to proactively monitor the network. A paper will be presented to the SMT requesting additional resources. Also, HP Openview does not easily provide information relating to traffic volumes, data flows, trends and anomalies. Other products are being evaluated to address these areas of concern and some funding has been made available for this.</p>		<p>available.</p>
4	<p>The Council should consider employing an intrusion detection system on their networks to help detect any unauthorised activity. Such monitoring should be automated, with the IDS (Intrusion Detection System) configured to send alerts and reports on activity.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Medium Risk</b></p>	IT Networks Manager	<p>Agree. An analysis of the products available will be undertaken and, subject to appropriate funding being available, an appropriate system will be implemented.</p>	Sept. 2004	<p>Report went to the Corporate Services Management Team but additional resources could not be made available.</p>
5	<p>Recent changes to procedures should be documented and collated</p>	IT Networks Manager	<p>Agree. A procedure database will be</p>	March 2004	<p>Complete.</p>

No.	Recommendation	Responsible Officer	Action	Implementation Date	Update as at 30 July 2004
	for ongoing reference.  <i>Medium Risk</i>		completed and updated as changes are agreed.		