



Report to Council

Department: Corporate Services
Division: Information Technology
Date: September 8, 2025
Prepared by: Jack Barron, Manager of Information Technology
Report Number: Information Technology Report 2025-02
Subject: IT Strategic Plan Update 2025
Number of Pages: 7

Recommendation(s)

That Information Technology Report 2025-02 **entitled** IT Strategic Plan Update 2025 prepared by Jack Barron dated September 8, 2025 be received.

Purpose

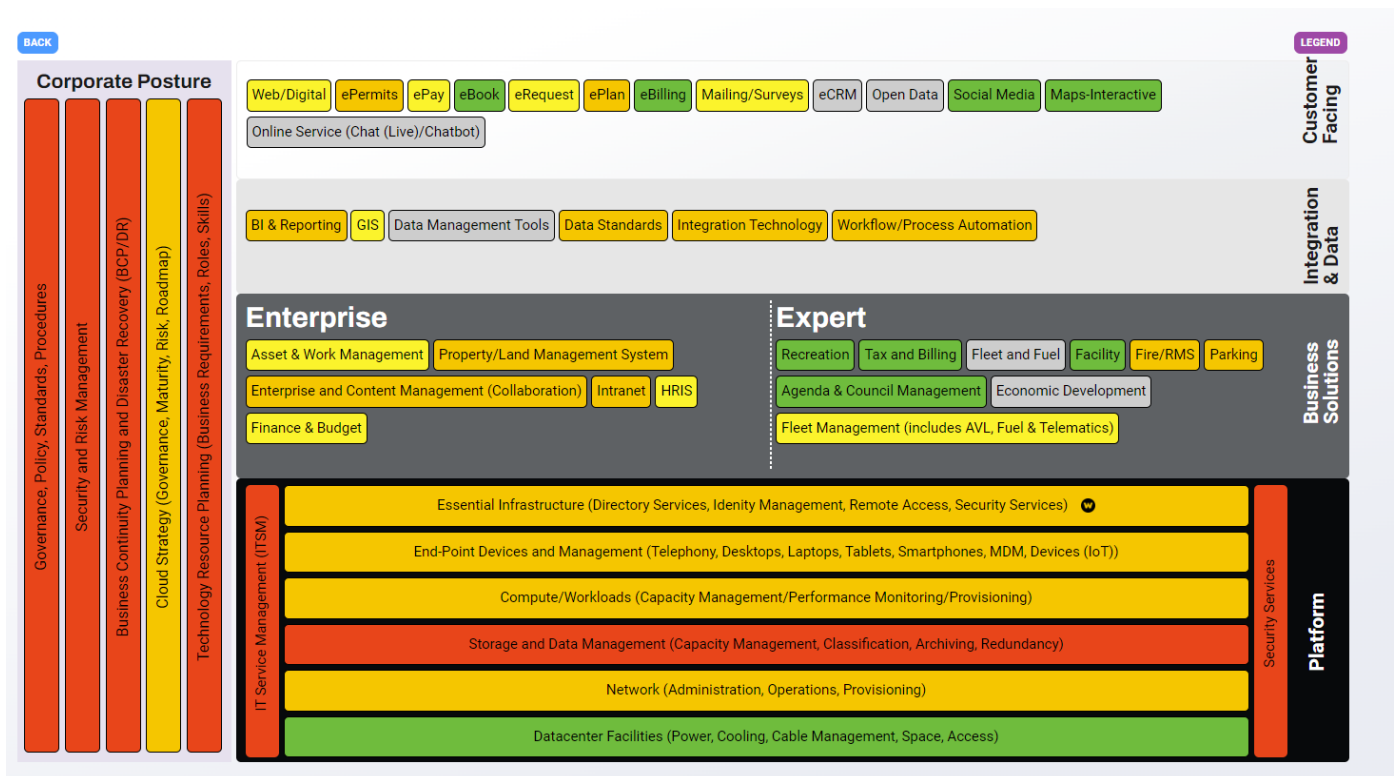
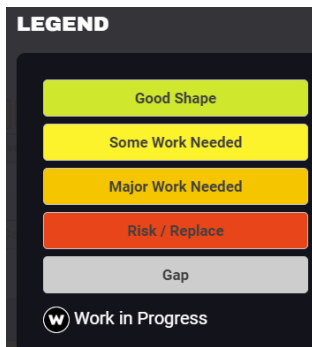
To inform Council on the progress of the Five Year IT Strategic Plan.

Background and Discussion

In 2022, the Town issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) to develop an IT Strategic Plan. As a result of this process, the Perry Group was engaged to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of all IT services across the Town of Essex. Upon completion of their review, the group's findings and recommendations were presented and formally adopted at a Special Meeting of Council held on June 20, 2022.

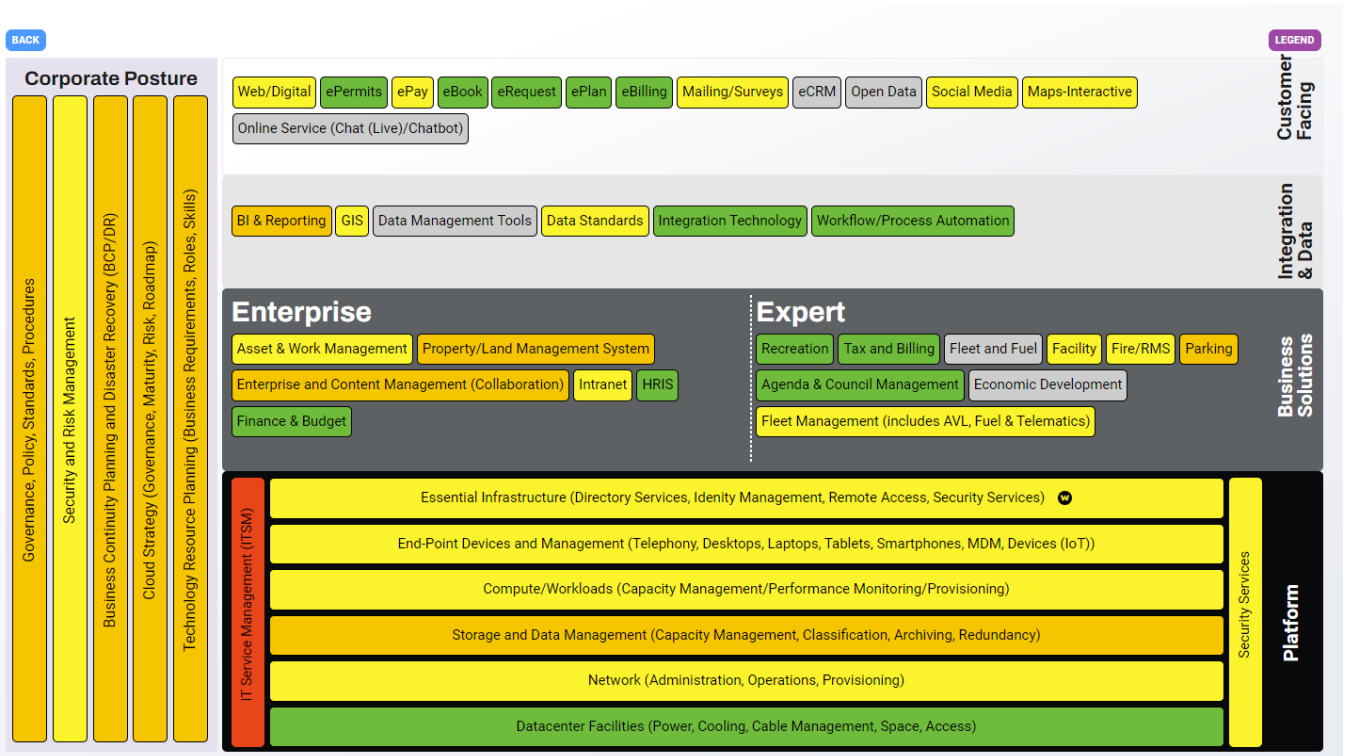
In 2022, a questionnaire was distributed to all departments to evaluate IT services across the organization. The graph below presents the results of this initial assessment.

The colours represent the rating scale of the diagrams:



The IT Department implemented several of the recommendations from the initial Five-Year IT Strategic Plan. In 2023, a reassessment was conducted to measure progress and improvements. The findings were outlined in Report to Council:

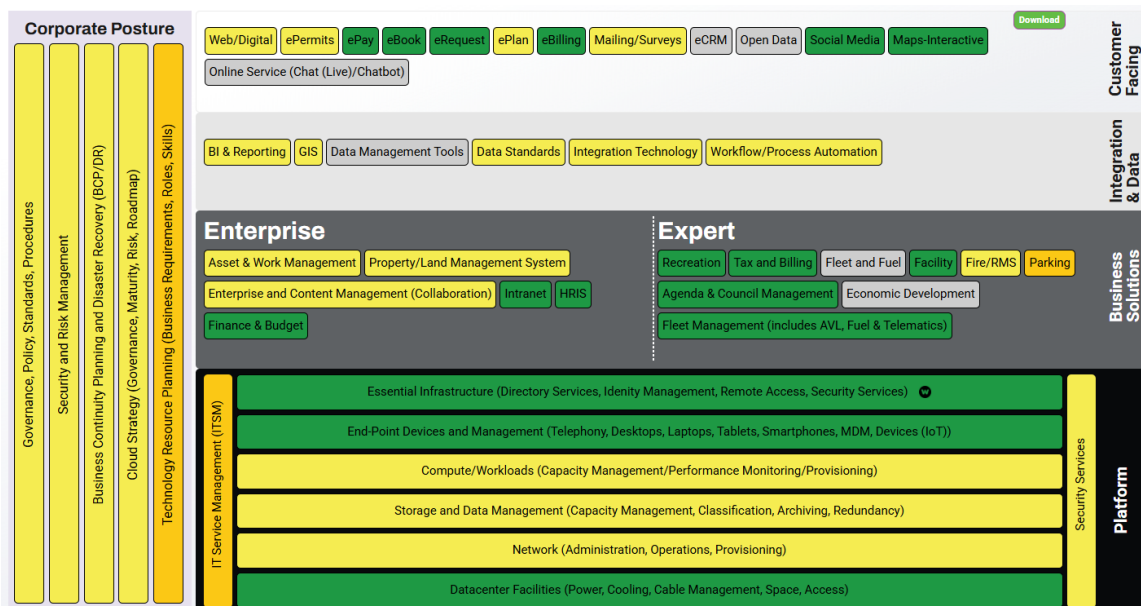
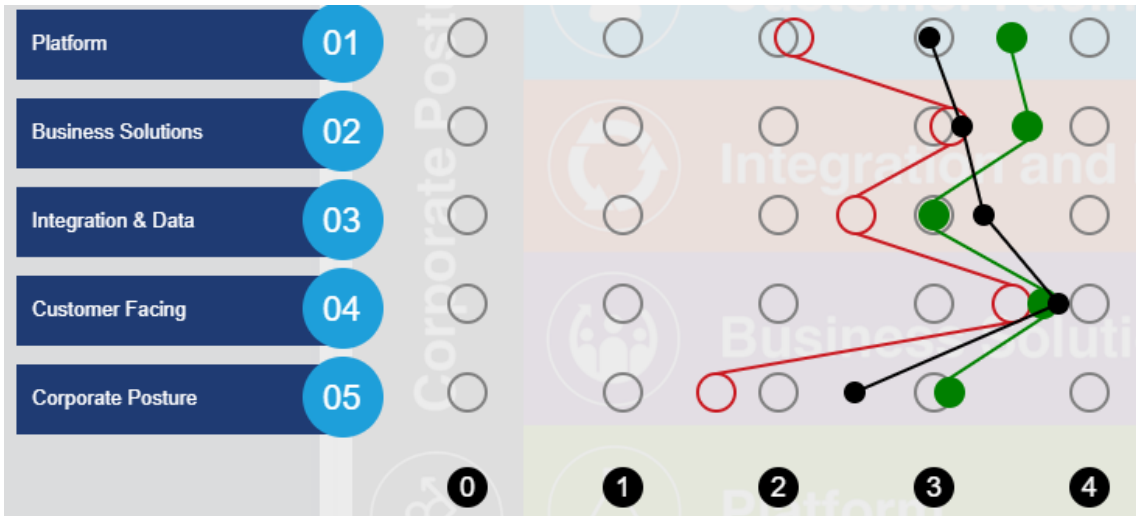
Information Technology 2023-01. The graph below illustrates the results from the 2023 assessment.



Since the 2023 assessment, the IT Department has focused on strengthening internal systems. Utilizing the Perry Group Assessment Portal the IT Department performed an internal review of systems and services. These graphs outline the summary of improvements.

The Trend Analysis Diagram below illustrates the overall improvement.





The IT Department continues to enhance its services by leveraging the recommendations outlined by the Perry Group as a strategic roadmap. This plan serves as a framework when adopting innovative technologies and improving technical services across the organization.

The key areas of focus in the last year have included improvements in technology outlined in the IT Strategic Plan, specifically in these areas:

Strengthening the Town's network and cybersecurity posture.

- Staff cyber security training and phishing campaigns.
- Updated user hardware and software.
- Improvements in remote management and monitoring software.

Enhancing connectivity and speeds between remote sites.

- Enhancing connectivity between remote sites through the implementation of a more robust and efficient SD-WAN (Software-Defined Wide Area Network) solution, providing improved network performance, reliability, and centralized cloud management at remote sites.

Developing a corporate-wide Business Continuity Plan

- Creating a corporate-wide Business Continuity Plan (BCP) to identify critical business functions, assess potential risks, and establish procedures to maintain operations during and after an emergency.

Improving the IT Disaster Recovery Plan.

- Strengthening the IT Disaster Recovery Plan by updating recovery procedures, conducting regular testing, and incorporating cloud-based and offsite backup solutions to ensure rapid recovery of critical infrastructure in the event of a system failure or cyber incident.

Cloud software strategy.

- Standardizing the procurement process to prioritize cloud-based software solutions, supporting greater flexibility, remote access, and streamlined maintenance while aligning with modern IT best practices.

Update Legacy Phone System

- Upgrading the legacy phone system to a cloud-based telephony solution.

- This will improve call quality, enable seamless remote communication, and integrate with the existing IT infrastructure.
- A cloud phone solution also includes enhanced communication and support for remote and hybrid work environments.

Moving forward, the IT Department will continue to use the IT Strategic Plan as a roadmap for adopting new technologies and enhancing the services it provides.

The plan will remain a guiding document for the implementation of future initiatives, ensuring alignment with organizational goals and industry best practices.

Key upcoming priorities include:

- Working with the Finance Department to evaluate options in replacing Great Plains financial software with a new cloud based solution.
- Continuing the migration of network infrastructure and user data to secure, cloud-based platforms to enhance remote computing, scalability, and disaster recovery capabilities.
- A request for a Systems Administrator position for the IT Department has been included in the 2026 budget request. This role is considered essential for maintaining and improving the organization's IT infrastructure, and was previously identified in both the IT Strategic Plan and the 2024 Organizational Review. The Systems Administrator will be responsible for ensuring the network runs efficiently and will also monitor security policies to protect the organization from data breaches and cyberattacks.

Financial Impact

Any implementation of the recommendations referenced in the IT Strategic Plan, has been included in the annual budgeting process.

Consultations

Kate Giurissevich, Chief Administrative Officer

Kate Rowe, Director, Corporate Services / Treasurer

Link to Strategic Priorities

- Embrace asset management best practices to build, maintain, and continuously improve our municipally owned infrastructure.
- Leverage our Town's competitive advantages to promote jobs and economic investment.
- Take care of our natural environment and strengthen the sense of belonging to everyone who makes Essex "home".
- Deliver friendly customer service in an efficient, effective, and transparent manner while providing an exceptional working environment for our employees.
- Build corporate-level and community-level climate resilience through community engagement and partnership and corporate objectives.

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Information Technology IT Strat Plan Update Report_2025.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Sep 10, 2025

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:



Kate Rowe, Director, Corporate Services - Sep 10, 2025 - 11:30 AM



Kate Giurissevich, Chief Administrative Officer - Sep 10, 2025 - 1:43 PM