



# Connecting People to Opportunity

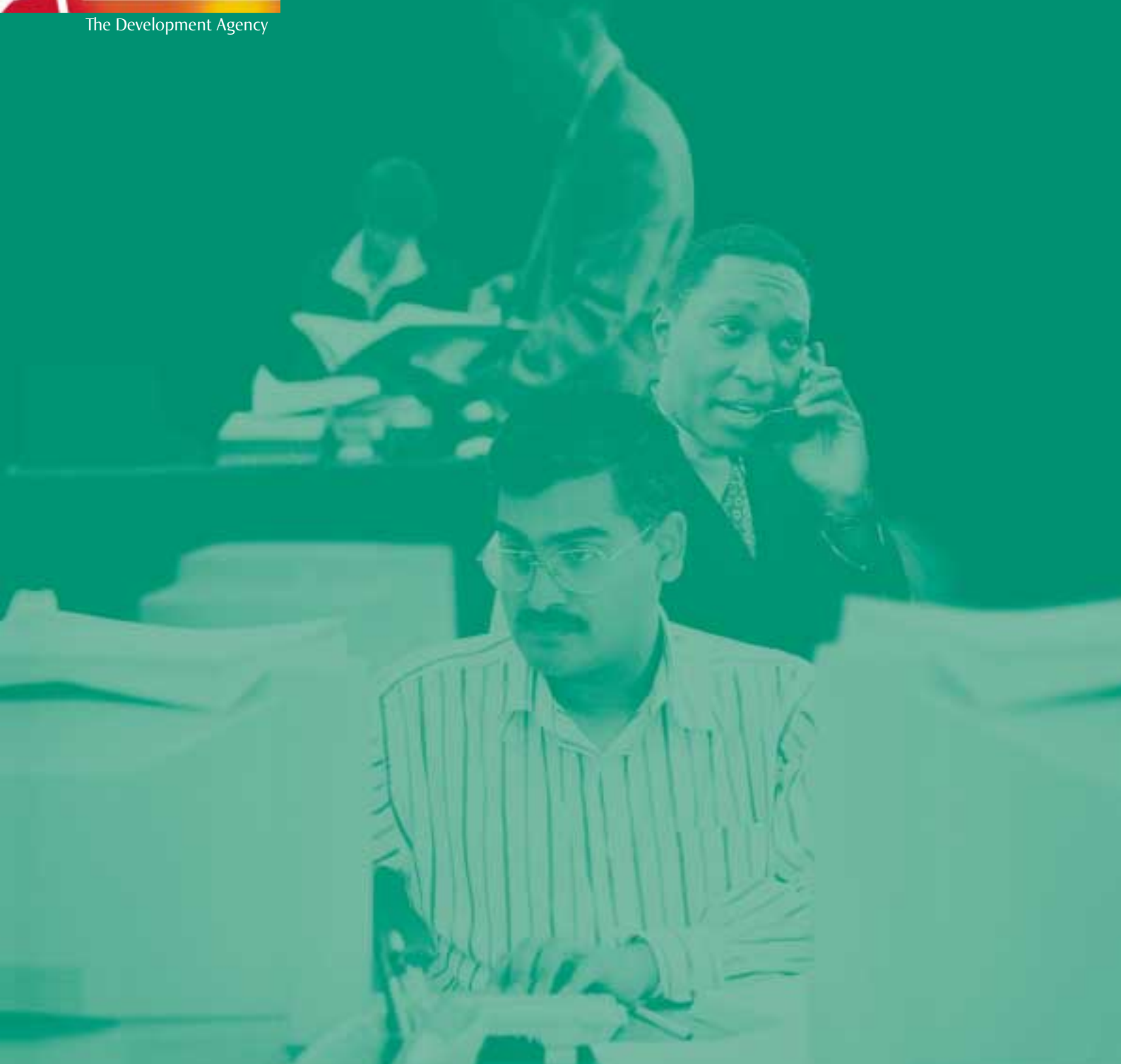
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The information and Communications Technology  
Strategy and Action Plan of the West Midlands

First Phase

The Advantage is clear

The Development Agency



This Information and Communications Technology (ICT) strategy has been developed by the ICT Steering Group<sup>1</sup> of the West Midlands region, for all individuals in every one of the region's geographic locations and sectors

It is the first phase of a strategy that will be under frequent review as it continues to reflect technological and economic evolution and person needs.

Your comments and contributions are enthusiastically welcomed for inclusion in future strategic debate and developments.

Please direct them to



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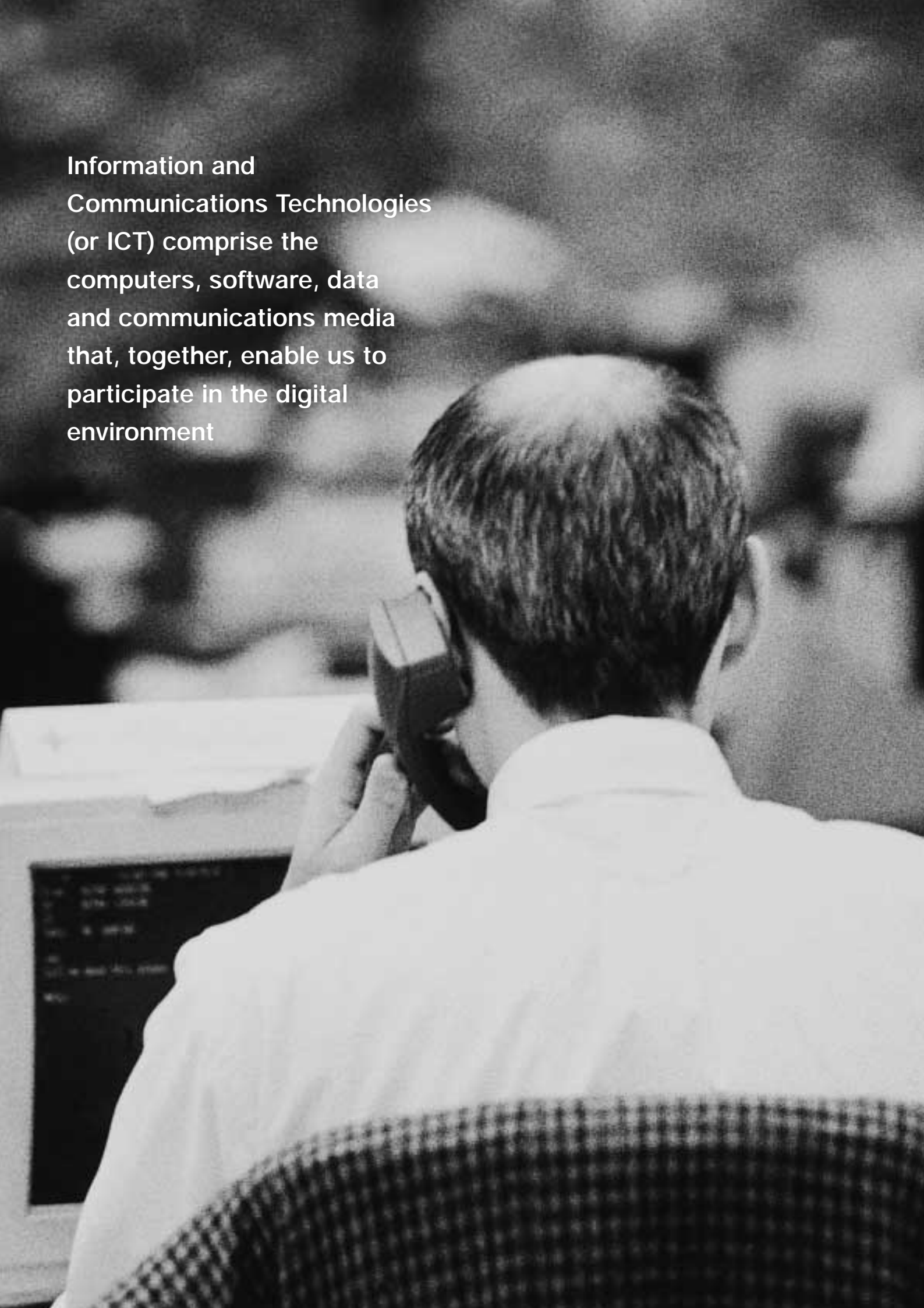
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Information and  
Communications Technologies  
(or ICT) comprise the  
computers, software, data  
and communications media  
that, together, enable us to  
participate in the digital  
environment



# Our Goal: What We Will Achieve and Why



'The West Midlands region will exploit and co-ordinate Information and Communications Technologies to contribute to a productive, competitive and efficient environment that enhances the ways in which we work, learn and live'

## The Elements Of The Strategy

The region's ICT strategy comprises six inter-dependent elements:

- The core elements of Infrastructure, Access and Content within the encircling themes of:
- Globalisation, the Region and the User.

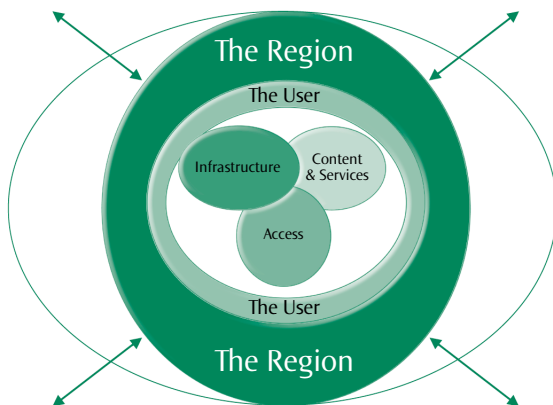


fig 1. Strategic ICT Elements

## Our Goal - The First Twelve Months

Our strategy strongly embraces all six elements of the ICT framework. Initiatives in each of the core elements will continue to be funded and we will drive forward on all fronts.

However, for the first twelve months following its launch, our focus and offensive - and priority wherever we can prioritise - will be on the provision of an integrated infrastructure, in order to

***facilitate the delivery of affordable broadband services to everyone in the region by the year 2003***

### **Globalisation**

*...operating as an active player in a world economy*

### **The Region**

*...a region wide approach to any ICT strategic development*

### **The User**

*...any individual, business or organisation who participates in the development of or uses the outputs from any ICT development*

### **Infrastructure**

*...the strata of services which are essential pre-requisites to the successful, equitable exchange of electronic content throughout the West Midlands region and beyond. This includes data communication networks, knowledge centres, people networks and advisories / visionaries*

### **Content**

*...any information exchange including electronic data, products, services and tools which form part of a knowledge economy*

### **Access**

*...the availability of infrastructure and so content to the user*



## Why Focus?

Infrastructure enables access to ICT content and services. By focusing initially on the improvement of infrastructure provision, the full benefits of high quality content and services will ultimately become available to all within the region on an equitable basis.

- **There are islands of highly successful network provision, which linked would deliver greater access to more services**

Examples of highly successful infrastructure projects being delivered in the West Midlands are the Birmingham Media Hub<sup>5</sup> and MidMAN<sup>6</sup>.

We are now driving to achieve the integration of these developments and, in the future, a greater co-ordination of activities such as these, guided through a pro-active, collaborative spend of public monies towards a commonly shared goal.

- **The rural west of the region is currently disadvantaged by a history of poor network investment by the private sector**

The West Midlands region divides between the less populated west and the industrialized east. This has had a profound effect on private sector investment in ICT infrastructure. The more developed eastern half of the region has attracted much better coverage than the more sparsely populated west: a factor which impinges on economic and educational development as a whole and policy issues such as business development, home working and worker migration. There is still little incentive to private sector investment in the west of the region, where low population densities and distance make costs prohibitive.

By focusing first on infrastructure and working collectively in partnership with the private sector we will direct public monies in order to:

- **Provide integrated network services**
- **Address the rural-urban divide**

Co-ordinated, cost effective network provision across the region will increase the potential for economic growth by delivering high quality content and services wherever and however it is needed.

### What We Will Achieve

By 2003 we will be able to deliver the same services to all individuals no matter where they live or work in the region. We will thus continue to develop:

- A region which is electronically at the hub of Europe
- Access to and interaction with digital art, media and culture
- A region which builds upon its cultural reputation, supporting and encouraging the creative industries
- A growth environment for providing new and innovative ways of learning
- Every reason for the individual to stay within or re-locate to the region, through a retained and growing skills base
- An increasingly attractive region in which to locate and build business
- Access to markets for all through e-trading
- An excellent infrastructure to provide equality of opportunity in e-learning, e-government and e-health

The equitable provision of large capacity network provision across the region means that no individual will be disenfranchised.

With knowledge centres, people networks and advisories and visionaries in place, a pro-active approach to strategic initiatives and the diffusion of their outputs will be achievable.





# Achieving Our Goal: Six Groups of Objectives

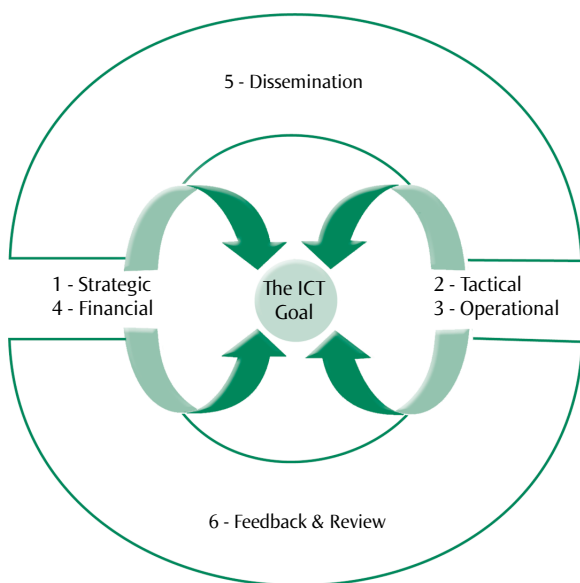


fig 2 Six Groups of Objectives

## Our Strategic Objectives are to .....

- Review and prioritise strategic goals on an on-going basis
- Research and encourage new and innovative solutions to ICT implementation
- Meet the regional economic objectives through ICT and influence future regional strategies
- Include all individuals within the region when considering strategic direction and ensure that any regional initiative is informed by user needs
- Continue to recognise the region's position as a global player

## Our Tactical Objectives are to .....

- Work collectively and collaboratively across the region, building on the regional partnership model, in order to maximise the attraction, selection, leverage and use of both public and private sector resources
- Support the sub-regions in developing guidelines and standards, so that projects will be implemented within a recognised framework, ensuring standardisation and integration

### Our Operational Objectives are to .....

- Plan for the delivery of integrated broadband services, identifying ICT 'gaps' and encouraging bids for public monies to close them
- Develop a number of infrastructure models, recognising that a single model will not be applicable to all sub-regions
- Co-ordinate the management of infrastructure implementation
- Provide implementation support, such as project management and mentoring, to ensure successful project delivery
- Establish and encourage the spread of knowledge centres and examples of best practice

### Our Financial Objectives are to .....

- Take a pro-active and collaborative approach to fund seeking in order to make the best possible use of both public and private monies when resourcing identified ICT needs
- Join together in supplier negotiation and procurement, recognising that we can achieve more through the pooling of knowledge and resources than we can individually
- Encourage the funding authorities to adopt a pro-active approach to those bidding for funds, so that the bid process becomes faster and increasingly supportive
- Provide guidelines advising those making bids for public monies and those assessing such bids of the criteria that will be used for assessment

### Our Objectives for Dissemination are to .....

- Take every opportunity to promote the ICT strategy amongst all communities within this and other regions
- Encourage the spread of information networks and cohesive partnership groupings across all sectors at both regional and sub-regional levels
- Publish ICT information in a variety of formats and media so that it is accessible and can be understood by all intended recipients

### Our Objectives for Feedback & Review are to .....

- Review and prioritise strategic goals on an on-going basis
- Ensure that project outputs lead to a recognised end goal





# Making it Happen: The Action Plan

## Priority Action:

An immediate bid will be made for European Technical Assistance (TA) funds. These will be used to provide support to the ICT Steering Group (ICT SG) in the implementation of the Action Plan

## Strategic Objectives

### SO1. To review and prioritise strategic goals on an on-going basis

| <i>Action</i>  | <i>Co-ordination by</i> | <i>Timescale</i>                    |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Plan and facilitate strategic reviews  | ICT SG and TA           | Jan 2001<br>(Twice yearly review)   |
| Prioritise specific programmes to be supported with public sector funding, publishing this in an Annual Operating Plan (AOP)       | ICT SG and TA           | June 2001<br>(Twice yearly review)  |
| Use intelligence arising from research and other information sources to inform both strategy reviews and the development of an AOP | ICT SG and TA           | On-going<br>(Formally twice yearly) |

### SO2. To research and encourage new and innovative solutions to ICT implementation

|   |                   |                             |
|---|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| Establish a research sub-group to investigate the Research & Development (R&D) output available for access and use            | ICT R&D sub-group | February 2001<br>& On-going |
| Co-ordinate a group of visionaries and advisories from both the public and private sectors to contribute to future ICT vision | ICT R&D sub-group | March 2001<br>& On-going    |
| Build an information resource base on new technological developments for the region to draw upon                              | ICT SG and TA     | June 2001<br>& On-going     |
| Identify emerging, regional ICT requirements and feed this information to research groups                                     | ICT SG and TA     | On-going                    |



**SO3. To meet the regional economic objectives through ICT and influence future regional strategies**

| <i>Action</i>  | <i>Co-ordination by</i>  | <i>Timescale</i>                    |
|--|--|-------------------------------------|
| Ensure that the corresponding links between the goals and objectives of the ICT Strategy, the Regional Innovation Strategy (RIS) <sup>4</sup> and the West Midlands Economic Strategy (WMES) <sup>2</sup> are maintained as the strategies evolve. Similarly ensure that ICT work influences the development of the WMES | ICT SG and TA<br>WMES representatives on the ICT SG<br>Advantage West Midlands Regional Innovation Manager | On-going<br>(Formally twice yearly) |
| Encourage secondments ('buddying') between strategic groupings, to benefit from the cross-fertilization of ideas and the exchange of knowledge   | ICT SG and TA  | On-going                            |

**SO4. To include all individuals within the region when considering strategic direction and ensure that any regional initiative is informed by user needs**

|  |        |          |
|--|--------|----------|
| Review frequently the membership of the ICT SG so that it continues to represent all sectors of the region | ICT SG | On-going |
| When assessing bids for public monies, ensure that the proposal includes reference to user needs           | ICT SG | On-going |

**SO5. To continue to recognise the region's position as a global player**

|  |               |          |
|--|---------------|----------|
| Develop and implement technical standards at a regional level so that the region can continue to integrate with initiatives external to it | ICT SG and TA | On-going |
| Gather information on external activities and developments and use this information in any strategic review                                | ICT SG and TA | On-going |

## Tactical Objectives

**TO1. To work collectively and collaboratively across the region, building on the regional partnership model, in order to maximise the attraction, selection, leverage and use of both public and private sector resources**

| <i>Action</i>  | <i>Co-ordination by</i>  | <i>Timescale</i> |
|--|--|------------------|
| Establish task specific collaborative groups to undertake elements of this plan  | ICT SG + sub-regions   | March 2001       |
| Quickly establish a number of collaborative bidding groups to address early needs  | ICT SG + sub-regions   | March 2001       |
| Develop opportunities for cross-regional bodies to interact with sub-regional and local ICT groups to ensure 'vertical' and 'horizontal' integration of agenda | ICT SG and TA<br><br>Advantage West Midlands through active management of knowledge exchange | On-going         |
| Encourage, where appropriate, cross regional bidding for larger scale projects with local delivery mechanisms  | ICT SG and TA  | On-going         |
| Connect bidding groups to funding sources  | ICT SG and TA  | On-going         |
| Contribute to the development and implementation of the Single Programming Document (SPD), Objective 3 delivery plan and others                                | ICT SG and TA  | On-going         |
| Work with cross-regional bodies (eg NHS, Small Business Service (SBS)) to influence the matching of funding streams coming into those bodies with others       | ICT SG and TA  | On-going         |

**TO2. To support the sub-regions in developing guidelines and standards, so that projects will be implemented within a recognised framework, ensuring standardisation and integration**

|  |               |                      |
|--|---------------|----------------------|
| Raise funding for the development of guidelines and standards for development projects in the region                           | ICT SG and TA | July 2001 & On-going |
| Foster standards development by working with a small number of projects in the sub-regions and diffuse these to other projects | ICT SG and TA | July 2001 & On-going |
| Ensure that the intention to adhere to published standards is a criterion for bid acceptance                                   | ICT SG and TA | July 2001 & On-going |

## Operational Objectives

**OO1. To plan for the delivery of integrated broadband services, identifying ICT 'gaps' and encouraging bids for public monies to close them**

| <i>Action</i>   | <i>Co-ordination by</i> | <i>Timescale</i> |
|---|-------------------------|------------------|
| Examine and document existing provision   | ICT SG and TA           | April 2001       |
| Conduct a broad spectrum overall needs analysis to establish priority areas for bidding       | ICT SG and TA           | April 2001       |
| Generate an outline plan by which to determine bid scope, services, timescales and objectives | ICT SG and TA           | April 2001       |

**OO2. To develop a number of infrastructure models, recognising that a single model will not be applicable to all sub-regions**

|  |               |            |
|--|---------------|------------|
| Use successful projects as exemplars and develop a number of models appropriate to rural, small town and city needs  | ICT SG and TA | April 2001 |
| Develop technical specifications for groups considering or working on infrastructure projects to ensure that all necessary stages and options have been considered | ICT SG and TA | April 2001 |

**OO3. To co-ordinate the management of infrastructure implementation**

|   |  |            |
|---|--|------------|
| Form a project management board comprising project managers from each infrastructure project to meet regularly and co-ordinate activities | Advantage West Midlands + project managers | March 2001 |
| Develop a regional network of operational ICT managers to share experiences of project specification, management and implementation       | ICT SG and TA                              | March 2001 |
| Seek support from private sector ICT suppliers in seconding and sharing expertise from outside the region                                 | ICT SG and TA                              | On-going   |

**OO4. To provide implementation support, such as project management and mentoring, to ensure successful project delivery**

|  |               |           |
|--|---------------|-----------|
| Establish a central project office service   | ICT SG and TA | June 2001 |
| Ensure that all bids have included in them the need for project management support | ICT SG and TA | On-going  |
| Engage project management expertise and training                                   | ICT SG and TA | On-going  |

**OO5. To establish and encourage the spread of knowledge centres and examples of best practice**

|  |               |          |
|--|---------------|----------|
| Identify examples of best practice across regional infrastructure projects and encourage the interchange of information on these | ICT SG and TA | On-going |
| Set up and extend knowledge centres in the region for information exchange   | ICT and TA    | On-going |
| Forge links with other regions, both UK and Europe, to exchange best practice  | ICT SG        | On-going |

## Financial Objectives

**FO1. To take a pro-active and collaborative approach to fund seeking in order to make the best possible use of both public and private monies when resourcing identified ICT needs**

| <i>Action</i>   | <i>Co-ordination by</i> | <i>Timescale</i>      |
|---|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Establish a finance sub-group whose task it is to identify new funding sources  | ICT SG and TA           | March 2001 & On-going |
| Lobby central government and lobby Europe in seeking funds  | ICT SG and TA           | On-going              |
| Seek support in principle from holders of funding streams that pooling of resources for larger scale purposes will be considered - especially for infrastructure projects | ICT SG and TA           | On-going              |
| Engage with private sectors (Telecos and other) to secure partnerships and contributions  | ICT SG and TA           | On-going              |

**FO2. To join together in supplier negotiation and procurement, recognising that we can achieve more through the pooling of knowledge and resources than we can individually**

|   |               |            |
|---|---------------|------------|
| Assess the feasibility of joint ventures for infrastructure and service provision   | ICT SG and TA | March 2001 |
| Encourage private sector partnerships, trade associations and organisations to investigate joint procurement for ICT services, training etc | ICT SG and TA | On-going   |
| Encourage and broker purchasing partnerships between sub-regions  | ICT SG and TA | On-going   |

**FO3. To encourage the funding authorities to adopt a pro-active approach to those bidding for funds, so that the bid process becomes faster and increasingly supportive**

|  |               |               |
|--|---------------|---------------|
| Bid for funding to establish a core support program for bidders and successful project participants  | ICT SG and TA | May 2001      |
| Ensure that the West Midlands ICT priorities are clearly explained and disseminated to funding bodies  | ICT SG        | February 2001 |
| Offer expertise from the ICT SG to sit on funding decision panels to ensure effective implementation of the strategic priorities, thus avoiding the duplication of ICT related initiatives | ICT SG        | As needed     |

**FO4. To provide guidelines advising those making bids for public monies and those assessing such bids of the criteria that will be used for assessment**

|  |               |           |
|--|---------------|-----------|
| Develop explicit guidelines for specific funding streams to advise potential bidders and assessors of the criteria that will be used in awarding funds | ICT SG and TA | July 2001 |
| Identify and brief sub-regional experts on the guidelines, so that they can act as a local source of expertise   | ICT SG and TA | On-going  |

## Objectives for Dissemination

**OD1. To take every opportunity to promote the ICT strategy amongst all communities within this and other regions**

| <i>Action</i>   | <i>Co-ordination by</i> | <i>Timescale</i>         |
|---|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Work with Advantage West Midlands overall communications strategy to develop an ICT dissemination strategy  | ICT SG                  | December 2000 & On-going |
| Promote the ICT strategy through events, workshops, websites etc, including both private and public sectors   | ICT SG and TA           | On-going                 |
| Work with other regional programmes such as Single Regeneration Budget (SRB), voluntary sector groups etc to share ideas on technology transfer between sectors | ICT SG and TA           | On-going                 |

**OD2. To encourage the spread of information networks and cohesive partnership groupings across all sectors at both regional and sub-regional levels**

|   |        |  |
|---|--------|--|
| Identify and promote an 'Information Age' Champion in each of the sub-regions, who will promote and represent the region's ICT aspirations  | ICT SG | April 2001                                   |
| Document all existing ICT related partnerships within the region - e.g. West Midlands Regional Broadband Consortium, the Libraries Partnership - West Midlands, etc. Map out areas of commonality and provide a definitive "Index of Contacts" listing regional and local champions and experts | ICT SG | May 2001<br>(Twice yearly review and update) |
| Engage with sub-regional partnership groups throughout the West Midlands to communicate objectives, elicit support and facilitate discussions on co-ordinated and integrated planning for ICT projects and the procurement of ICT goods and services  | ICT SG | Feb 2001<br>On-going                         |

**OD3. To publish ICT information in a variety of formats and media so that it is accessible to and can be understood by all intended recipients**

|  |               |            |
|--|---------------|------------|
| Develop standards and guidelines for the media, format and content of communication output | ICT SG and TA | April 2001 |
|--|---------------|------------|

## Objectives for Feedback & Review

**FRO1. To review and prioritise strategic goals on an on-going basis**

|                 |  |  |
|-----------------|--|--|
| As shown in SO1 |  |  |
|-----------------|--|--|

**FRO2. To ensure that project outputs lead to a recognised end goal**

|  |               |          |
|--|---------------|----------|
| As a part of bid assessment, 'score' competing projects on their contribution to published strategic goals | ICT SG and TA | On-going |
| Ensure that regular and final project feedback is made a bid acceptance criterion for each project         | ICT SG and TA | On-going |



# Implementation: Our Approach

The region will take a pro-active approach to reaching its end-goal. The ICT 'gaps' that exist will be identified and bids encouraged for projects that will close them

## The Framework - Standards and Guidelines

The Longson five layer model shows the foundation and framework within which projects at any level will be developed and implemented. Emphatically this model applies not just to technical IT matters but also to project planning, organisation, approval and partnerships. This model will be used to guide bid assessments.

To be applied consistently across the region, each of the five layers needs specific, detailed parameters within which projects can be formed and implemented. These standards and guidelines will not be prescribed - we will support sub-regional users in developing and implementing them. This will ensure evolution of standardisation and integration within the pyramid and buy-in from the project principals.



fig 3 The Longson Five Layer Model

### Local Initiatives (LIs)

...the core ideas around which a project is formed. The scope of 'local' is variable and may be a whole region. LIs address local issues dealt with by local solutions. They may be community, sectoral or geographically focused and will be generated by groups who understand the problems they are trying to address

### Scalability

...the need to make LIs scalable. This scaling may be up or down depending on changing requirements or the degree of success of a project. A successful project that is scalable is one for which outputs can be increased with relative ease. An unsuccessful scalable project affords easy redeployment of resources. The importance of scalability increases with project size



### *Replicability*

*... a good idea should be easily and appropriately replicated. A successful project addressing a particular need in one location should be easily repeatable in similar circumstances in another location. Replication is based on partnership, good documentation and the free exchange of ideas and best practice*

### *Common Standards*

*... common standards for project implementation -both ICT and Process standards- will greatly contribute to the technical longevity of a project. They will also help ensure that the scalability and replication of a project is viable*

### *Networking and Interoperability*

*... the capability of networking and inter-working with remote users and organisations will be built into all projects. The nature of this networking will be understood from the onset of the project, though the form which it will take may not. 'Joined-up' projects, in the sense of acting in concert to achieve a desired objective, will be achievable. This does not mean seamless integration of projects but rather projects whose boundaries are transparent to the end user*

### Enhancement of the Bidding Process

The bidding process will be made proactive, faster and more supportive. We will provide information on areas where bids are required, encourage outline bids and give feedback on ways to improve the potential for success. Guidelines will be published, advising those making bids and those assessing bids of the criteria that will be used for assessment.

We will support bids that are commercially attractive so that their realisation will enable commercial partners to justify their involvement.

### Collective and Collaborative Working

We will continue to build on the regional partnership model, identifying and fostering the growth of cohesive ICT groupings at both regional and sub-regional levels, with representation from all sectors.

This will enable us to work collectively and collaboratively across the region, in order to maximise the attraction, selection, leverage and use of both public and private sector resources.

We will negotiate jointly with suppliers and procure jointly where appropriate.

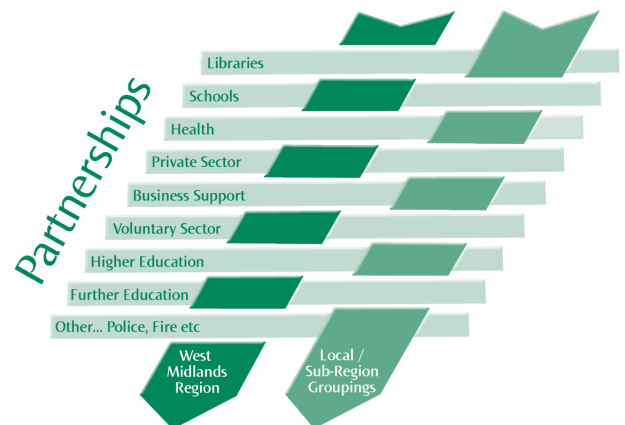


fig 4 The Regional Partnership Model

It is through these groupings that the further development and diffusion of the ICT strategy will also take place.



### Information Gathering and Dissemination

Up to the minute information and its availability to all who need it is essential to keeping our decisions on ICT strategy and its attainment current and informed. We will encourage the growth of information networks for gathering and disseminating detail on external initiatives and sub-regional activities. Visionaries and advisories from both the public and private sectors will also continue to support this work.

We will establish and encourage the spread of knowledge centres and examples of best practice, taking every opportunity to promote the ICT strategy amongst all communities within this and other regions. Information will be made available in a variety of formats and media, so that it can be accessed by all individuals. Content will also be appropriate to target audiences.

### The Provision of Implementation Support

Built into all projects will be the people, processes and procedures needed for their successful delivery. This includes project management skills, project office facilities, mentoring, follow through and feedback on all projects. We will engage with the funding bodies to encourage them to provide increased, real support to those charged with project delivery.

### Feedback & Review

We will ensure that planned project outputs build upon previous work, as well as being co-ordinated and directed towards the end-goal. Strategic goals will be under frequent review and re-prioritisation.

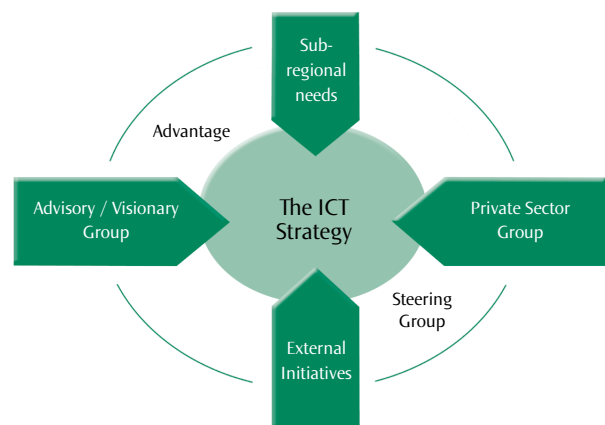


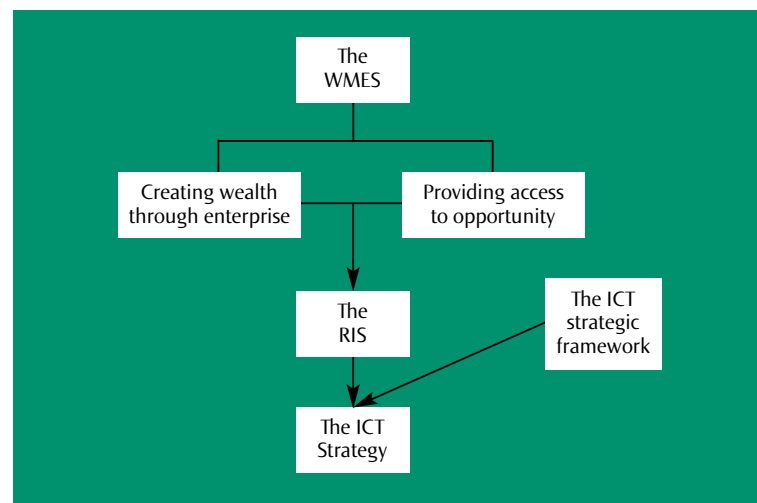
fig 5 The ICT Strategy Review Model

## Our Mandate - The Context of ICT Strategy Development

ICT is central to the successful delivery of the West Midlands Economic Strategy<sup>2</sup> (WMES). The economic strategy is based on two fundamental principles - creating wealth through enterprise and providing access to opportunity. ICT cuts across both of these themes, that is, the entire strategy

The ways in which ICT will deliver the objectives of the economic strategy are more clearly defined by the Regional Innovation Strategy<sup>4</sup> (RIS), developed and guided by the WMES. Designed to catalyse innovation, a priority action of the RIS is 'to work with the ICT Steering Group to ensure the implementation of the ICT strategic framework<sup>3</sup>'. The latter framework was developed late in 1998 and has served as a major template for the development of this ICT strategy.

Advantage West Midlands is the champion of the RIS and the ICT strategy. For the first time there is a full, regional endorsement of this approach, thus providing a solid structure for developing an innovative and e-enabled region and a focus for directing funding from central government and European structural funds.



## Appendix B

# ICT Steering Group Members

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### The ICT Strategy working group members are indicated\*

**Mr Graham Beaumont\***  
West Midlands Telematics  
Group (Local Authority)

**Mr David Bellamy**  
Birmingham Voluntary  
Services Council

**Ms Hilary Chilton\***  
Staffordshire University

**Mr Robin Chowdhuri**  
Advantage West Midlands

**Mr Alan Cormack\***  
Shropshire County Council

**Pr Tony Henry**  
East Birmingham College

**Mr Tony Lewis**  
Computing Services and  
Software Association

**Mr Kevin Jarrold**  
Department of Health

**Ms Ann Johnstone\***  
(Chair)  
Advantage West Midlands

**Mr John Latham**  
Midlands Innovation Relay  
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**Ms Janet Lay**  
Small Business  
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Nersi International

**Ms Judith LeMaistre\***  
Herefordshire Health  
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**Ms Val Leyland\***  
Coventry University  
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**Mr David Longson\***  
Stoke on Trent City Council

**Mr David Lumley**  
Department of Trade  
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**Mr Ken Marshall**  
Coventry & Warwickshire  
Chamber of Commerce,  
Training & Enterprise

**Mr Adrian Middleton\***  
(Secretary)  
Advantage West Midlands

**Mr Danny Owen**  
Warwickshire County  
Council

**Mr Ian Poole**  
Sandwell TEC

**Dr Phil Range\***  
University of  
Wolverhampton

**Mr Steve Bull**  
Government Office for the  
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**Mr Geoff Warren**  
The Libraries Partnership -  
West Midlands

**Mr Nic Cole**  
Government Office for the  
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### Other members of the ICT Strategy working group are

**Mr Klitos Andrea**  
Coventry University  
Enterprises Ltd

**Mr Alan Blundell**  
Herefordshire County  
Council

**Ms Wendy Jackson**  
Malvern Hills ICT Group

**Ms Pat Laughlin**  
Advantage West Midlands

**Mr Kevin Malone**  
Shropshire County Council

**Miss Sarah Middleton**  
Black Country Consortium

## Appendix C

# References

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### 1 The ICT Steering Group

Founded in early 1997, in response to a European directive to steer ICT developments throughout the region, its mandate now comes from the West Midlands Economic Strategy via the Regional Innovation Steering Group. It is led by Advantage West Midlands and its membership, which represents all sectors, may be seen in Appendix B.

### 2 The West Midlands Economic Strategy (WMES)

The WMES was launched in October, 1999. It describes the strategic approach of the region to economic growth and development. The economic strategy is based on two fundamental principles - creating wealth through enterprise and providing access to opportunity. ICT cuts across both of these themes, that is, the entire strategy, and is fundamental to its successful delivery. A copy may be obtained from <http://www.advantagemw.co.uk>

### 3 The ICT Strategic Framework

The ICT Strategic Framework has been used since its publication late in 1998 to provide guidance on the selection of regional ICT project funding. It was developed by Technopolis for Government Office for the West Midlands (GOWM) and a copy will be found at <http://www.advantagemw.co.uk>

### 4 The Regional Innovation Strategy (RIS)

The RIS was launched in June, 1999. It complements the Government's Competitiveness White Paper in which the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, talks of a new world that "challenges businesses to be innovative and creative, to improve performance continuously, to build new alliances and ventures". Facilitated by Advantage West Midlands, the RIS provides a framework for regional organisations to take forward innovation as part of the strategy for improving regional economic performance and enhancing competitiveness. The ICT Strategy has been developed under the umbrella of the RIS, a priority action of which is 'to work with the ICT Steering Group to ensure the implementation of the ICT strategic framework<sup>37</sup>'. The RIS can be accessed from the following web site - <http://www.advantagemw.co.uk>

### 5 Birmingham Media Hub

The Birmingham Media Hub has been trialling some interesting concepts in linking media organisations such as The Custard Factory and Hollymoor Multimedia with educational establishments such as The Digital Media Centre at the University of Central England (UCE) and with socially deprived groups in public housing.

The project, which was originally ERDF funded, is now sponsored by Birmingham City Council. It is currently supporting a network of forty community learning and business support centres in disadvantaged communities in Birmingham. Models of community participation in the information society, through e-learning, e-governance and e-business, are also being developed.

### 6 MidMAN

The MidMAN network has been established to link together six of the region's universities. MidMAN is also linked to the national academic computer network 'SuperJANET'. This network provides UK higher and further education institutions with a means of exchanging educational material, details of developments, project material, etc. Recently, as part of a national initiative to provide Further Education (FE) colleges with access to SuperJANET, many of them have been embraced within MidMAN.

A relatively recent network, MidMAN has the potential to contribute to the overall educational and economic welfare of the region by providing links and services to other organisations outside the higher education sector. This has been demonstrated by the People's Network in the West Midlands - a project connecting fourteen public library services - which uses and has built upon the existing networks. This project has been funded by ERDF and the DCMS / Wolfson Challenge Fund.

Recent national initiatives such as Learndirect, and the National Grid for Learning, will help to realise this potential further.





The Development Agency

## How to contact us

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For more information on investing in the West Midlands, regeneration opportunities, business growth support and more, call Advantage West Midlands now on 0121 380 3500.

An electronic copy of this document may be obtained from our website: [www.advantagewm.co.uk](http://www.advantagewm.co.uk)

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