Becta Corporate Plan 2003-04

In a world increasingly interconnected by networks and dependent on knowledge, the interface between education and technology is vital. Becta works at this interface to harness the opportunities offered by technology to the needs of education.

Our purpose is to support the transformation of education through the exploitation and embedding of technology[1] in learning and teaching, in educational organisations[2] and in developing wider education networks and systems. We are the Government's key partner in the development and delivery of its Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and e-learning strategy for schools and the learning and skills sector.

As a UK agency, we support all four UK education departments in their strategic ICT developments, facilitating knowledge transfer among them in order to encourage innovation and improvement, and bring coherence and synergy to UK-wide developments.

We have five strategic aims which are to:

1. improve learning and teaching through the effective and embedded use of ICT

2. increase the number of educational organisations making effective, innovative and sustainable use of ICT

3. improve the availability and use of high quality educational content[3]

4. develop a coherent, sustainable and dependable ICT infrastructure[4] for education

5. continuously improve Becta's ability to deliver.

Our corporate plan sets out the programmes of work associated with each of these aims.

Reflecting the increased responsibility identified in Becta's new remit, we will deliver our programme by:

- influencing and supporting **Government and its agencies** through policy development and partnership

- direct delivery to the **schools sector** through partnerships, networks, improvement strategies and the provision of advice, standards, and targets

- direct delivery to the **learning and skills** sector through organisational development strategies, the provision of advice, digital content, partnerships and standards

- developing key strategic relationships with local and multinational ICT business and **industry** and setting standards, accrediting products and monitoring performance

- developing and disseminating robust **evidence** of what works in the application of ICT to learning and teaching; emerging technology; and ICT's impact on education

- communicating appropriately, coherently and clearly to all stakeholders.

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[1] For consistency, *technology* is used to mean electronic devices, networks, and connectivity – the 'hardware'; *ICT* is used for the combination of technology with digital content, services, other 'soft' technologies and how these are used; and *e-learning* refers to their application to the learning process.

[2] The term educational organisation is used to cover the wide range of schools, colleges, and adult and community learning centres in the schools and learning and skills sectors.

[3] Educational content is used to describe digital resources developed and used for specific educational purposes.

[4] Infrastructure includes broadband connectivity and support services.

Introduction by Owen and David to the Corporate Plan and to Becta's new direction.
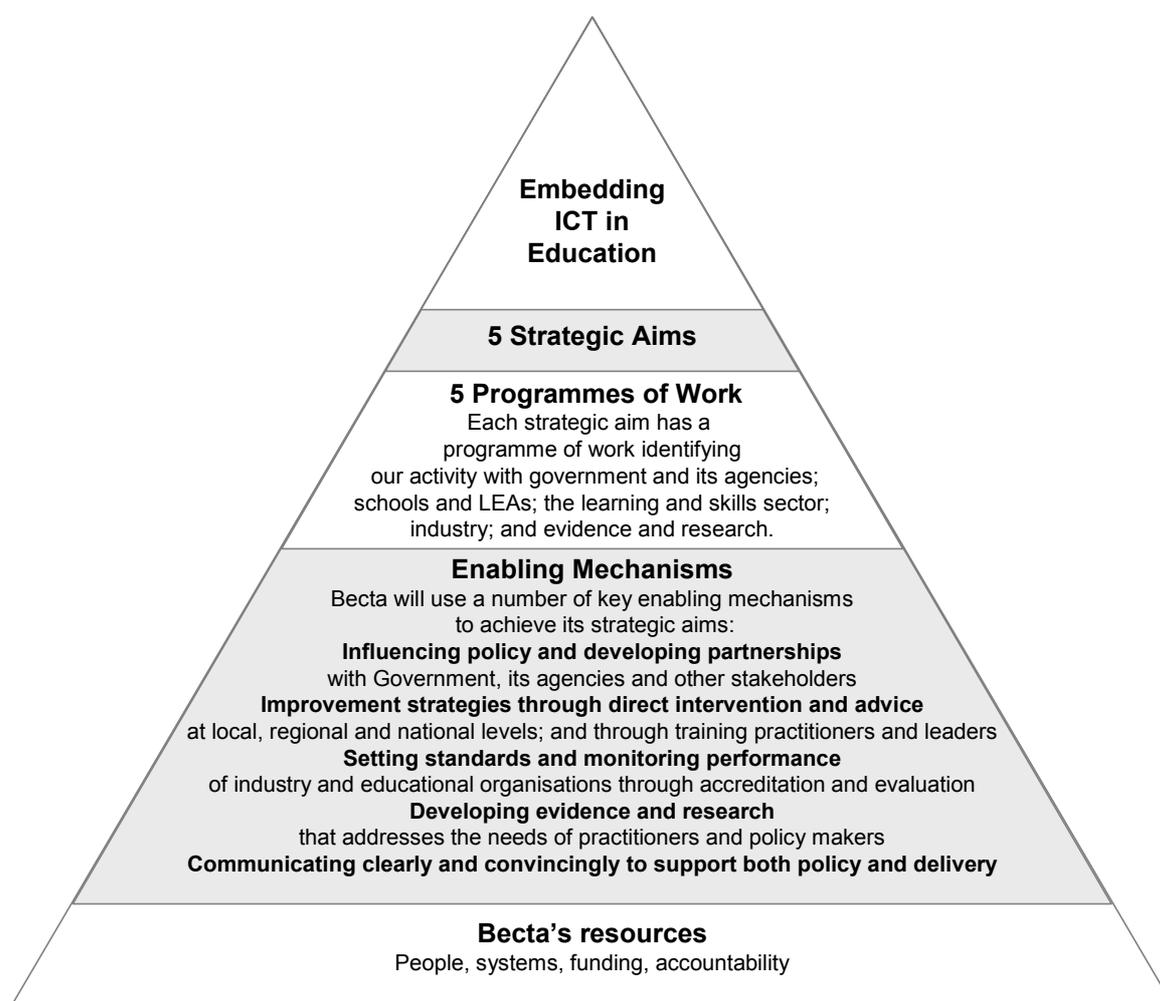
David Hargreaves   Owen Lynch
Chairman   Chief Executive

Becta's strategy

Our overall purpose of supporting the transformation of education through the exploitation and embedding of technology has five major components: improving learning and teaching through ICT; embedding ICT into the processes and practices of educational organisations; developing high quality educational content and its use; developing a sustainable and dependable infrastructure; and improving Becta's ability to deliver.

Each of these elements has a **strategic aim** and a **programme of work** associated with it and will be assessed according to a set of performance indicators to be agreed with Becta's Board and the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). These programmes of work contribute equally to the overall strategy and are mutually dependent. We will take them forward in an integrated and coherent manner, working with Government and other key partners.

Embedding ICT in Education

5 Strategic Aims

5 Programmes of Work
Each strategic aim has a
programme of work identifying
our activity with government and its agencies;
schools and LEAs; the learning and skills sector;
industry; and evidence and research.

Enabling Mechanisms
Becta will use a number of key enabling mechanisms
to achieve its strategic aims:
Influencing policy and developing partnerships
with Government, its agencies and other stakeholders
Improvement strategies through direct intervention and advice
at local, regional and national levels; and through training practitioners and leaders
Setting standards and monitoring performance
of industry and educational organisations through accreditation and evaluation
Developing evidence and research
that addresses the needs of practitioners and policy makers
Communicating clearly and convincingly to support both policy and delivery

Becta's resources
People, systems, funding, accountability

In order to deliver our aims systemically, Becta will deploy a range of **enabling processes** to maximise their impact on the education system as a whole. These are outlined in the diagram above. Becta's **resources** - people, systems, funding, accountability - underpin the strategy to deliver our programmes of work.

Strategic aim 1- improve learning and teaching through the effective and embedded use of ICT

ICT is now central to the education agenda and the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) reports an 'unprecedented willingness to engage' amongst the profession. However, while there are many individual instances where ICT has transformed learning and teaching across all phases, they are still the exception rather than the norm. The challenge now is to build on teachers' recognition that technology is a powerful support to engage them with how ICT improves learning and teaching and to draw together these individual instances into a programme of systemic change.

Becta's strategic programme for learning and teaching

Our strategy has four elements which focus on using ICT to improve the quality of learning and teaching and develop an inclusive approach to education:

– working with Government to create the right policy framework and leadership to support and sustain changes in learning and teaching

– working in the schools sector through key partnerships with government strategies, agencies, Local Education Authorities (LEAs), professional associations and others to provide direct subject specific support for teachers and build communities of practice

– delivering direct support and improvement strategies to the learning and skills sector through key partnerships with the National Learning Network (NLN) and others

– developing and disseminating robust evidence and advice on the opportunity that the effective use of ICT provides for learning and teaching.

A. Government
Government has a central role in supporting innovation and improvement directly and in developing a climate in which innovation can flourish. It will need to continue to champion the potential of ICT and e-learning to revolutionise the way we learn and teach and to ensure that all of its policies for the schools and the learning and skills sectors help embed ICT. These policies should aim to create a climate which makes it easy, natural and appropriate for teachers and learners to embed their use of technology.

ICT is at its most effective when it has been incorporated into strategic planning from the outset. Key areas of delivery such as Government's primary and secondary strategies must embed ICT into all change programmes.

Alongside those areas where Government exerts direct control sit a number of key areas of influence. Firstly, ICT will support learning and teaching more effectively if the curriculum continues to evolve to include new knowledge, skills and understanding afforded by ICT and if national tests, examinations and qualifications allow for the use of technology where appropriate. Secondly, effective learning and teaching requires effective tools and content. The continued development of materials and digital content alongside more reliable and better quality technology is an essential prerequisite of change. Effectively combined, this will provide us with the 'must have' solutions that will convince teachers and lecturers that technology can radically improve learning and teaching.

Such a major programme of change requires coherence and collaboration. This means ensuring much stronger relationships between parents, governors, teachers and learners, and between schools and the lifelong learning sector to increase continuity across the education community. This needs to be matched by greater strategic cohesion, primarily between Government and educational organisations but also involving LEAs, agencies, subject and professional associations, public and private providers of training and materials and others. This will require a communication strategy which engages teachers and learners.

The priority for Becta is to help Government build that lasting partnership.

To support this, Becta will:

- provide advice from Becta's Board to the Secretary of State at regular intervals, and when requested on specific issues relating to learning and teaching and work with the DfES's ICT in schools programme, the e-learning strategy and the NLN programme to provide expertise and understanding and bring coherence of direction and delivery across all aspects of strategy
- engage the DfES and its agencies in discussions about policies that relate to ICT in learning and teaching and inclusion, providing a view across all phases and areas of the schools and learning and skills sectors
- act as a focus for research on ICT in learning and teaching to inform policy and to provide a stimulus for relevant research and capacity building
- provide new models of pedagogy and ICT to ensure that curricula and assessment continue to evolve to reflect new knowledge, skills and understanding afforded by ICT and e-learning
- collaborate with DfES and Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) to ensure that ICT is used in, and supported by, assessment and examination processes
- engage the profession through networking communities of practice, online and face-to-face networks in policy discussion and debate
- deliver a joint communications strategy with DfES to develop supportive environment for change.

B. <u>Schools</u>

Systemic change in how schools use ICT to improve learning and teaching will only be achieved when a number of interrelated components are in place. All learners will need the appropriate ICT skills and the ability to apply these skills safely in their learning if they are to benefit fully from the flexibility offered by ICT to provide increasing opportunities for individualised learning. Teachers, lecturers and learning assistants will only be able to support e-learning effectively if they themselves possess good ICT skills and the ability to use them effectively and safely in conjunction with other methods, not just in their day-to-day teaching but also in planning and assessment. Learners and teachers will both benefit if educational organisations are able to support their teachers through effective planning and co-ordination of ICT across the curriculum and beyond the classroom into the home. A supply of compelling and innovative 'winning solutions', including both support materials and content should be developed for subject teachers. Ideas, materials and support should be created that help schools to plan and integrate curricula, assessment and staff development effectively and to transfer best practice within and among schools.

All teachers should have access to subject-specific professional development for ICT. Professional development opportunities should exploit the benefits that technology offers in terms of online support, but we should not underestimate the real value of hands-on support at the local level. Local support should be stimulated by a critical mass of leading edge practitioners and schools in each subject area. All learners should be supported in meeting their personal learning goals through online learning and flexible, interactive assessment systems.

Existing online communities should connect to a larger, national network that supports the transfer of knowledge and establishes centres of expertise as hubs. This should build on and integrate into existing school networks. LEAs and subject associations, together with specialist and leading edge schools, should form part of this national network. As partners, they will provide online and face-to-face support for using ICT in subject teaching and learning.

To support these strategies, Becta will work with the ICT in schools programme to:

- identify 'must have solutions' for learning that are inclusive, innovative and clearly useful to all subject and specials needs teachers created in collaboration with public and private providers of materials, training and support

- lay the groundwork and protocols for the development of interconnected online communities and networks, developing partnerships among the national strategies, subject and special needs associations, specialist schools, and LEAs
- support hands-on training to ensure that LEAs and lead teachers are equipped to deliver
- support online training models that stem from the current DfES pilot models
- work with LEAs and subject associations to identify, map and develop a critical mass of leading edge practitioners and/or schools in each subject area
- collaborate with Ofsted to build ICT and e-learning into the inspection framework and associated processes
- provide a national set of online services that support teachers in their use of ICT in subject teaching and inclusion, drawing on existing online communities
- gather evidence of what makes networks work and how membership of online communities of practice enables teachers to change their practice.

C. __Learning and Skills sector__

In the Learning and Skills sector, learning and teaching best practice should be built into material development and training, with staff development being provided through the NLN programme for all of those involved in learning and teaching support in the sector. Coherent online advice will be provided for all support and teaching staff and ongoing research. In addition, analysis of e-learning best practice will identify and promote leading edge ICT use, while ensuring that ICT and e-learning are strong components of self-assessment and strategic area reviews. Collaboration is vital to the impact and success of the overall learning and skills programme.

Examination and assessment processes will be aligned with the opportunities afforded by technology and e-learning and work will continue to incorporate ICT and e-learning into the common inspection framework and associated processes.

To support these strategies, Becta will work to:

- develop a framework of effective collaboration between the NLN partners to improve overall coherence within the sector
- embed best practice in e-learning (learning styles, inclusive and differentiated learning, individualised approaches) into content and staff development programmes
- develop a programme of staff development for all staff involved in teaching and supporting learning in the sector
- provide ICT and e-learning advice and guidance for all support and teaching staff
- support the learning and teaching processes and practices that develop out of the DfES's e-learning and skills strategies
- collaborate with Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) and Ofsted to build ICT and e-learning into the common inspection framework and associated processes
- encourage sharing of good practice through development of online communities.

D. __Evidence__

A strong evidence base on ICT in education is essential to provide a sound foundation for policy and practitioner support. To support innovation, evidence must be credible and rooted in practice. Research must address the needs of practitioners and policy makers and be communicated effectively to maximise its impact on pedagogy and training.

There is a need to increase research activity and build capacity to do this. Researchers need to be attracted from outside the ICT field, along with additional support from the private sector, and more teachers should be involved in action research. The aim is to establish a vibrant research community drawing together researchers, practitioners, funders and policy makers.

To support this, Becta will:

- engage teachers, lecturers, schools and the learning and skills sector with the process and outcomes of research through a programme of dissemination, support and advice
- continue to build Becta's role as a focus for research on ICT in education through the research network and the research bursaries
- act as a focus for research on ICT in learning and teaching to inform policy and to provide a stimulus for relevant research and capacity building
- promote the use of ICT in education as an evidence-informed activity.

Immediate Priorities for 2003-04

E. Government
- develop a process to identify policy needs, monitor coherence and provide briefings to appropriate policy makers in Government and its agencies, including setting up co-ordinated points of contact with DfES departments, key agencies and strategies
- provide Government and the UK departments with timely, evidence-based advice to inform policy
- continue research into what works in ICT and subject learning and teaching to inform policy, managing specific research projects that seek to explain and develop the evidence base and continue to draw together the research literature on ICT and pedagogical issues
- extend and promote the research bursaries programme, developing and promoting a toolkit to support practitioner-based research
- continue the analysis of ICT and the 14-19 agenda to ensure continuity between sectors
- analyse the next steps, and Becta's involvement in the use of ICT as part of the planning and assessment and examinations.

F. Schools
- develop the partnership with Primary and KS3 Strategies to ensure ICT is embedded into their frameworks and training of all strategy consultants
- develop ways of identifying schools' needs for information and advice and establish the most effective method of delivery
- advise and influence DfES on its offer of subject-specific materials, training, advice and support to all teachers
- review and develop further mechanisms for identifying leading edge practice, working with LEAs, subject associations, special needs expertise, and specialist schools and continue to develop the awards schemes as a primary source of data on the effective use of ICT in learning and teaching
- develop the Supporting Schools programme of work on ICT advice, networking practitioners, curriculum planning and working with subject and other associations
- work with DfES and LEAs to identify the capacity of LEAs to respond and begin to carry out a skills audit of LEAs
- develop a programme of disseminating research findings on approaches to ICT and subject learning and teaching in a way that influences professional practice
- review and map online communities, networks and potential hubs including subject associations and the feasibility of creating a critical mass of lead teachers for ICT, and research into online communities and communities of practice, establishing what makes them work or fail
- supporting schools in using ICT to develop links with parents.

G. Learning and Skills
- carry out an analysis of priority areas of development to support the skills strategy and e-learning strategy, and ICT's role in work-based learning
- offer advice and guidance on learning and teaching for FE staff through Ferl
- scope advice and guidance services required for the wider learning and skills sector

- develop the Ferl practitioners programme to provide further accredited continuing professional development (CPD) for FE staff – providing materials and development officers to support integration into college staff development programmes
- develop the Community Learning Resource to provide advice and guidance on learning and teaching for adult and community learning
- develop the Help is at Hand website providing advice and support to UK online centres
- scope issues relating to e-assessment
- continue to work with ALI, Ofsted and develop materials to integrate ICT and e-learning into the common inspection framework and support colleges with their internal evaluation
- develop ways of identifying the needs of sector providers for information and advice and establishing the most effective method of delivery
- review Ferl and the Community Learning Resource in line with the visioning of NLN Online for the post 16 sector.

H. Evidence

- identify and exemplify models of effective and inclusive practice at LEA, institution, classroom and home levels in using ICT to transform schools and colleges and raise standards
- manage specific research projects that seek to explain and develop the evidence base and continue to draw together the research literature on ICT and pedagogical issues, disseminating research findings into areas such as barriers to ICT use in a way that influences professional practice
- extend and promote the research bursaries programme
- extend the ICT research network to include non-ICT researchers
- continue to develop the awards schemes as a primary source of data on the effective use of ICT in teaching, learning, management and administration
- develop and promote a toolkit to support practitioner-based research
- develop a quality assurance model for industry-sponsored research
- influence National Education Research Forum (NERF) and Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) programmes to place greater emphasis on ICT in education.

Strategic aim 2 – increase the number of educational organisations making effective, innovative and sustainable use of ICT

Technology not only has an impact on the way we learn and teach, it can also transform the nature of educational organisations if its use is embedded into all of their management and leadership processes and practices. Such organisations develop a climate for innovation and change. They provide appropriate access to ICT to their learners and teachers, and maintain and develop this in an effective, innovative and sustainable way. They provide ICT training and development for all their staff and work with the home and the local community to embed and manage ICT in all learning environments. They use ICT administration to support the development of their workforce and to ensure learners can be effectively supported and tracked across sectors and programmes of learning. They consider the application of ICT to all their educational agendas and opportunities.

Effective educational organisations link to a variety of networks, improving both internal and external communications and knowledge management. They routinely use technologies such as email and the internet to communicate with their staff, their learners, their community and other educational organisations. They make effective use of management information systems for administrative purposes such as assessment and curriculum planning.

While there are 'islands of excellence' among schools, colleges and adult and community education centres, too many have ICT as a 'bolt on' addition in some aspects of their organisation rather than a fundamental part of their organisational processes. The challenge now is to help every educational organisation to embed technology into its processes and practices and into the developing networks that increasingly link organisations.

Becta's strategic programme for institutional development

Our strategy has four elements:

– working with Government to create the right policy framework and leadership for continuing and increasing organisational change

– direct support to schools and LEAs through training for school leaders and through frameworks for organisational evaluation and change

– direct support and training for leaders and managers in the learning and skills sector

– develop a strong evidence base on ICT in education to support the needs of educational managers and policy makers and communicate it effectively.

I   Government

Technology is constantly evolving and its likely effect on educational organisations is increasing significantly. Systemic change builds on leading edge organisations that both explore and develop innovative solutions to educational issues and work with the rest of the education system to transfer this knowledge. Leaders need support and development to meet this challenge. LEAs, Local Learning and Skills Councils (LLSCs) and regional and local networks are significant change levers but with great diversity in the levels of support and strategies they provide. Government needs to set this agenda. The Government's e-learning strategy provides a welcome framework for change which emphasises the need for greater clarity, coherence and support. Technology will play an increasing role in supporting a coherent national system, allowing the interconnection of educational organisations within a national framework, helping to marry up local needs with national needs.

This is a joint challenge for Government and its leadership colleges, its agencies, LEAs, LLSC.

To support this Becta will:

- engage policy areas of the DfES and its agencies in a dialogue on the implications of ICT for organisational management and design, influencing and advising the DFES and its agencies on coherent policy and strategy

- work with key partners to create accredited programmes for senior management and governors to support their strategic development of ICT and e-learning

- work in partnership with government on policies to support the use of ICT to free teachers to teach, including developing new organisational models and systems, improving knowledge transfer and information handling across the education system

- work in partnership to set guidelines for the creation of best practice in developing ICT and e-learning confident institutions

- collaborate with DFES and the ICT industry to encourage the development of management information systems to support learning

- work with ALI and Ofsted on the common inspection framework ICT and e-learning guidelines for institutions

- identify and exemplify models of effective practice at LEA, institution, classroom and home in using ICT to transform schools and colleges and raise standards.

I.   Schools

If schools are to transform themselves into outstanding centres of learning using ICT effectively and efficiently, they will need to develop their approach to change management, planning and innovation. Recent reports, especially from Ofsted, recognise that schools often have poor leadership in both management of, and management with, ICT and that many LEAS are not able to provide the wide range of advice and support that schools need.

Leaders throughout the school will need an ICT and e-learning vision that will enable organisational transformation to occur, creating innovative centres of learning. They need models to show how the application of ICT to routine administrative, organisational tasks can free teachers to teach. They need models where a mix of ICT used for planning, record keeping and assessment, together with a bigger role for support staff, provides every child with the tailor-made learning they need to make the most of themselves. Leaders will need to have access to up to date thinking and information to ensure they, along with their management teams and governors, can make timely choices about how their schools should develop. Becta has a key role in providing leaders, institutions and LEAs with sound, evidence-based advice and support on ICT issues.

Advice and cohesive support will be provided by working in partnership with LEAs and other local intermediaries and with government departments, the national strategies, government agencies and professional associations.

To support these strategies Becta will develop a programme with the following components:

- the provision of expert, up to date ICT advice and guidance for leadership, management and institutional development
- support for the role ICT can play in promoting partnership with home, the community and in particular for improving and supporting collaboration among educational institutions
- support schools in their use of ICT to handle routine administrative, planning and organisational tasks, freeing teachers to teach and helping provide every child with tailor-made learning
- strategic partnership with National College for School Leadership (NCSL), LEAs and government departments and agencies to integrate advice and support into school management processes and with support providers and Ofsted on support for embedding ICT throughout school
- investigate, and pilot, how ICT can impact on institutional capacity and effectiveness, the effect it can have on leadership and management and the role it can play in raising standards, offering national benchmarks for schools and LEAs to use when measuring their achievements in school ICT provision
- investigate and explore future technologies and e-learning systems, ensuring up to date information is available for schools and enabling them to develop coherent, manageable whole school technical support programmes
- review and develop the support and services offered to leaders on the application of ICT to special needs and inclusion
- provide opportunities for leaders, LEAs and other intermediaries to extend their ICT leadership and planning skills by developing appropriate tools for future planning, self-evaluation and review.

J   Learning and Skills sector

In the Learning and Skills Sector, the launch of a new Leadership College offers opportunities for strategic partnership and collaboration in the development of institutional leaders and e-learning leadership training. Becta will also review the existing Ferl Practitioners Programme (FPP) to create modules that will meet the needs of senior management in developing learning organisations.

The Learning and Skills sector is moving towards the integration of ICT and e-learning within corporate development plans. New guidelines are required that ensure all aspects of the strategic area review and self assessment processes reflect ICT and e-learning.

Becta will:

- provide online advice and guidance on ICT and e-learning for leadership, management and institutional development
- provide advice to the NLN programme board and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) on strategies to improve the ICT and e-learning components of the strategic area reviews

- continue the development of strategic partnerships and collaboration that encourage local, regional and national strategies for ICT and e-learning
- develop with ALI and Ofsted training materials and guidelines for quality inspection teams
- continue the development of the Ferl Practitioner Program to meet the needs of leaders within the Learning and Skills sector
- develop a more strategic approach to the work of Ferl Development Officers in their work with college senior management to undertake action research
- developing with NLN national guidelines for ICT and e-learning strategic planning.

J. <u>Evidence</u>

Research must address the needs of managers and policy maker and be communicated effectively to maximise its impact on management, support and institutional development. Evidence and research is required to identify innovation, vision and good practice in the transformation of learning organisations where ICT and e-learning has supported the change process. This will include models of good practice in the development of an ICT and e-learning culture, people, business practice and processes.

There is also a need to increase research activity and build capacity. Researchers need to be attracted from outside the ICT field and more school managers and leaders should be involved in action research. The aim is to establish a vibrant research community drawing together researchers, practitioners, funders and policy makers.

To support this, Becta will:

- engage educational managers with the process and outcomes of research through a programme of dissemination, support and advice
- continue to build Becta's role as a focus for research into ICT in education through the research network and the research bursaries
- act as a focus for research on ICT in institutional management and development to inform policy and to provide a stimulus for relevant research and capacity building
- promote the use of ICT in education as an evidence-informed activity.

Immediate Priorities for 2003-04

K. <u>Government</u>
- expert ICT advice and guidance for leadership, management and institutional development to Government
- key partnerships with government departments and other agencies to ensure coherent thinking on organisational development
- identify a common approach to the development of managed learning environments
- planned interventions including programme evaluations, specific evaluations focusing on the model developed through the data analysis, Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) research.

L. <u>Schools</u>
- assess and review website provision for leaders and LEAs, identifying future needs and developments
- continue to provide strategic guidance and support to school leaders through the Strategic Leadership of ICT programme (SLICT) in partnership with NCSL
- continue to provide support and up to date advice and guidance to LEAs and intermediaries through the ICT Support Network (ICTSN) and Building the Grid projects
- identify opportunities to review future technologies, including Managed Learning Environments (MLEs) and Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs), and how they can be used to support schools and LEAs in organisational development

- continue to manage the ICT test bed project, providing advice and guidance from the lessons learned
- continue to develop matrix online planning and review tool for supporting school self-review, identifying areas of future work and developing them as appropriate in conjunction with the National Association of Advisors in Computer Education mark (NAACEmark)
- continue to review, alongside Technical Support Advisory Service (TSAS), technical support advice for schools and how this can support the embedding of ICT across all school practices.

M. __Learning and skills sector__
- provide advice to the NLN programme board and the LSC on strategies to improve the ICT and e-learning components of the strategic area reviews
- assess and evaluate the potential of repackaging FPP to meet the needs of senior management and institution development
- review and develop existing online Learning and Skills Service, identifying gaps in existing provision for leadership, management and institutional development
- create ICT and e-learning training materials to support college leaders and internal college management preparation for inspection
- scope Becta's involvement with the needs of the e-learning strategy to scope and identify opportunities for action research that informs innovative strategic management and institutional development
- research, develop and pilot ICT and e-learning strategy toolkit for colleges.

N. __Evidence__
- identify and exemplify models of effective practice at LEA, institution, classroom and home levels in using ICT to transform schools and colleges and raise standards
- manage specific research projects that seek to explain and develop the evidence base and continue to draw together the research literature on ICT and management issues, disseminating research findings into areas such as barriers to ICT use in a way that influences professional practice
- extend the ICT research network to include non-ICT researchers
- continue to develop the awards schemes as a primary source of data on the effective use of ICT in management and administration
- develop and promote a toolkit to support practitioner-based research
- develop a quality assurance model for industry-sponsored research
- influence NERF and ESRC programmes to produce greater emphasis on ICT in education.

Strategic aim 3 – improve the availability and use of high quality educational content

Improving teachers' access to high quality educational content and the effective deployment of these resources in learning and teaching are necessary if ICT is to have a positive impact on standards and inclusion. The involvement of both the public and private sectors to achieve quality of breadth and depth is the key to successful delivery. Quality resources by themselves are not sufficient; users need to know about them, access them and use them effectively.

The challenge is to build a bridge between educational need and the provision of dynamic content and services which support whole class, group, and individual learning. We need to enable educators to share, evaluate and access content, while at the same time enabling commercial, voluntary and publicly funded suppliers to meet the needs of educators with appropriate, accessible content.

Becta's Strategic Programme for content development

To achieve this, we are proposing a strategic programme with five elements:
- working with Government to create the environment for improved content development through policy, consultation and partnership

- direct improvement, and delivery of content, in the schools sector

- direct improvement, and delivery of content, in the learning and skills sector

- working with suppliers to improve the technical and pedagogical standard of content provision

- working with partners to provide evidence, advice and support to end users on the quality and range of digital resources.

O. Government

The growing market for digital resources has created a number of challenges for Government and its agencies. Curriculum coverage, pedagogy, safety and technical interoperability need national commitment and guidance. Government will need to support collaboration with industry to stimulate the development of active, creative learning resources and tools to help users to find and use suitable resources.

Becta will:

- advise Government on the supply of content, its take-up and the ease and safety with which it can be located, determining the range, abundance and quality of educational content, and identifying priorities and gaps in sufficiency of supply

- work with government departments to improve further the coherence of the content offering to education

- develop an approach to the integration of the web services for government-funded sites and portals which provide access to curricular resources

- manage the commissioning of content development for Government and its agencies

- work with the DfES to develop Curriculum Online and to set up and manage the new Content Advisory Board.

P. The schools sector

Content for schools is no longer purely an issue of teachers and learners using single applications on computers. The wide range of online services, the development of managed learning environments, and the integration of management and assessment all mean that schools will face an increasingly complex task of accessing, using and managing content in order to meet their educational needs. Teachers and others need to develop confidence and competence in making effective use of new and innovative digital resources and services. They need to be able to select from a bank of appropriate, quality-assured material, and to be informed and discerning consumers of these resources. Schools need to consider key management issues including how they develop more integrated approaches to managing their learning environments through the use of digital resources and how they provide access to digital services to learners at home. Becta will provide advice and information, promote standards for content creation, and facilitate the growth of communities of practitioners developing and using innovative content.

Becta will:

- support innovation while maintaining safety for young users by monitoring and evaluating innovative content and new business models. Particular attention will be given to new rich content and services requiring broadband which aid learning in both the home and educational organisations

- set and promote standards for organisations to meet their developing educational needs for ICT, ensuring integrated approaches to content and the management of digital resources in relation to infrastructure, services and support. Work in partnership with LEAs and Regional Broadband Consortia (RBCs) to ensure these standards are taken up

- provide advice to schools on purchasing, managing and using learning platforms, managed learning environments (MLEs) and virtual learning environments (VLEs)

- help users to find what they are looking for and to discover other related resources, providing advice to teachers, lecturers and other staff to help develop them as discerning and informed purchasers and users of content
- work towards providing the user with a single, personalised account and point of access for all UK quality assured online content and services.

Q. Learning and Skills sector

The continuing development of e-learning content that meets the needs of the learner by being pedagogically sound, interactive and truly educational remains a high priority for the NLN Transformation Board. Becta will continue to procure and oversee the development of high quality content that complies with international standards and specifications, and is accessible to all. We will provide advice and guidance to encourage the use of good practice in content development and pedagogic design.

New ways of developing e-learning content will be explored and evaluated to give teachers tools to provide more innovative and creative approaches to teaching. Becta will work with other partners to ensure easier access to a wide range of online materials and resources. We will work in partnership to manage the consultation with key stakeholders to develop the vision for 'NLN Online' and produce a business and implementation model.

Becta will:

- procure and manage the development of new e-learning content for the post-16 sector
- evaluate a range of authoring tools for the sector and oversee development to make them fit for purpose
- contribute, as members of IMS and other standards bodies, to discussions and decision-making in relation to technical standards and specifications
- influence, through working in partnership, the development of VLE and MLE systems that meet the needs of the different sectors
- provide advice and guidance on the use of e-content within a range of VLEs
- disseminate good practice to a wider group of commercial providers to encourage the development of content that is fit for purpose, pedagogically sound, and accessible to all. This will build on work carried out within the NLN materials development programme
- develop business models for licensing and content procurement to ensure use of best practice across all sectors
- commission research into creating a sustainable market for e-learning content
- undertake a review of the international content market to identify gaps and market failures.

R. Suppliers

The Government's considerable investment in infrastructure has been complemented by its major commitments to content through initiatives such as Curriculum Online, the National Grid for Learning and the NLN. The remarkable growth in the amount of content that has become available leads to a new set of priorities and questions. Where are the gaps in provision? How can suppliers, working with Becta, help users locate, obtain, manage and use these new digital resources? Becta will work with public sector and commercial suppliers to improve the technical and educational quality of content by providing advice, guidance and consultation, promoting technical standards and commissioning new digital resources.

Becta will:

- provide advice to schools on purchasing, managing and using learning platforms, managed learning environments and virtual learning environments
- provide advice to suppliers including a broad overview of what is needed in the education market and models of effective content development and use
- set technical standards for interoperability and searching

- approve content providers for initiatives such as Curriculum Online, National Grid for Learning (NGfL) and the Virtual Teachers Centre (VTC)
- maintain and develop minimum standards for relevance, technical compatibility and appropriateness, supported by a code of conduct for suppliers
- work in partnership with Government and content providers to ensure that the quality of provision is sustainable for the foreseeable future.

S. Evidence

The strategy for the development and use of high quality educational content will be underpinned by a sound basis of research into the content market, the needs of users and how the technology can contribute to the development of innovative learning opportunities.

Becta will:

- research and evaluate models for managing and using learning platforms, managed learning environments and virtual learning environments
- monitor the range, abundance and quality of educational content, and identify gaps in supply
- research learning and teaching needs for content, identifying barriers to its take-up and the characteristics of innovative and creative applications that are valuable to the educational process and help improve standards and inclusion.

Immediate Priorities for 2003-04

T. Government
- work with the DfES to set up the Content Advisory Board and establish baseline research on the availability of curriculum content
- work with the DfES on the development of Curriculum Online
- work with the DfES on the development of the NGfL
- work with DfES on the scoping of College Online
- work with the LSC on the development of the NLN and agree ongoing management relationship
- expand the number of teachers and learners involved in the internet proficiency scheme.

U. Schools
- develop advice on purchasing learning platforms
- ensure the provision of free teacher-generated resources and the exchange of good practice through mechanisms such as the Teacher Resource Exchange
- continue to monitor registered supplier content for compliance with standards and appropriateness
- work with Government to develop an approach to improve the integration of online services for education
- develop advice for schools and LEAs on the acquisition and use of content
- maintain and develop further a searchable single point of access for UK content
- expand the coverage of the accreditation schemes for ICT and internet service providers.

V. Learning and Skills sector
- manage the completion of the existing two rounds of NLN materials development
- continue the management and co-ordination of the NLN Information Learning Technology (ILT) Subject Mentors
- commission an analysis of the Adult and Community Learning (ACL) sector in relation to their content needs, infrastructure issues, learner and tutor profiles, and the ACL curriculum to inform the content procurement for ACL
- procure new e-learning content for the ACL sector and make existing NLN material available

- further develop the prototype of NLN Online for demonstration and consultation purposes
- consult the learning and skills sector and develop a prototype for the concept of NLN Online
- evaluate and develop a range of authoring tools for the LSC sector
- work in partnership with the Centre for Educational Technology Interoperability Standards (CETIS) on technical and pedagogic standards to provide guidelines to the LSC sector
- produce a publication on technical and pedagogical standards for the DfES, commercial suppliers and materials developers in partnership with CETIS/UK Office for Library and Information Networking (UKOLN), Office of the e-Envoy and Ufl/Learndirect.

W. <u>Content suppliers</u>

- promote standards for managed and virtual learning environments
- further develop technical standards for interoperability and searching
- continue to run a forum for NLN content suppliers
- provide guidelines and advice for suppliers on educational, technical and accessibility issues
- register content providers for Government initiatives to increase the availability of high quality materials to users.

Strategic aim 4 –develop a coherent, sustainable and dependable ICT infrastructure for education

Supporting the embedding of ICT into learning, teaching and organisational management needs an excellent, sustainable infrastructure of equipment, networks, system and application software together with the associated technical services and support. Realising these potential benefits depends on the existence of efficient, reliable, adequate and appropriate foundations, designed to meet today's and tomorrow's expectations. The challenge is to ensure that every educational organisation meets or exceeds a minimum standard of ICT infrastructure and connectivity, irrespective of size or location.

Becta's Strategic Programme for infrastructure

To achieve this, we are proposing a strategic programme with four elements:

– working with Government to develop the right policy framework and the strategic leadership planning needed to create a coherent and dependable infrastructure and broadband connectivity

– working directly with schools, colleges, adult and community education centres, LLSCs and LEAs to ensure the infrastructure is well designed, safe, purchased cost-effectively, professionally managed and supported

– working with the industry to explore new methods of service delivery, setting minimum standards of performance and monitoring and ensuring that there is a culture of continual improvement

– monitoring, research and evaluation to provide evidence that enables the development of an infrastructure at national, local and organisational levels to keep pace with the expectations of users and technological advances.

X. Government

Significant advances have been made throughout the UK in the development of organisational ICT infrastructure and the provision of internet connectivity. The number of computers within schools has risen significantly as has the number of staff who now have dedicated personal access to a computer to help with planning and preparation. Despite these major advances, it is clear that many organisations have yet to take full advantage of the assets that are available. Issues relating to the deployment and operation of the technical infrastructure still present a significant barrier to its widespread and confident use in many organisations. Substantial further investment is planned over the next few years. We need a clear strategic framework that allows leaders to plan their future investment with confidence, minimises the burden of choosing and purchasing the tools to meet these requirements, and ensures that when in place this investment is managed and supported to a high standard. The UK education system must exercise its significant purchasing power while maintaining the flexibility required to meet local needs.

Becta will:

- develop a well-defined strategic roadmap for policy makers, educational organisations, and the commercial sector to inform future development and strategic planning and investment, and to enable interoperability, integration and accessibility
- continue to develop new procurement strategies for education through the aggregation of demand and volume purchasing
- develop strategic partnerships to explore and develop non-traditional methods of ICT infrastructure provision to the organisation and local community
- support and engage with those leaders responsible for ICT strategic direction at national, regional and organisational level
- monitor local and regional planning, intervening where necessary.

Y. <u>Schools, LEAs and the Learning and Skills sector</u>

The impact of effective strategic leadership at an organisational level is central to realising the potential of ICT in education. Focusing on functional, educational objectives will help ensure appropriate and sustainable purchasing decisions. It will also help secure well deployed resources with effective operational management and support that meets end users' requirements and expectations. Ongoing, high quality advisory support will be a continuing requirement to ensure that local planning decisions recognise national strategies and future developments rather than simply reflecting today's expectations.

Current studies of the capability of organisation infrastructure indicate considerable diversity, with significant performance bottlenecks. These performance barriers can significantly affect the successful deployment of national initiatives and need to be addressed on an organisation by organisation basis. We need practical tools, supported by experienced staff, which allow organisations to assess their present position and adopt specific strategies to take them forward.

Becta will:

- further develop the technical roadmap and benchmark standards for organisations
- work to ensure all organisations have plans in place to reach or exceed these minimum standards, monitoring progress towards them and intervening if appropriate
- provide centrally procured framework contracts that allow organisations to adopt a proven route and procure fully integrated solutions from quality providers
- systematically challenge LEAs and organisations, ensuring they are obtaining value for money and an adequate return on the investment
- continue to increase the confidence and competence of teachers and support staff by improving personal access to computing resources
- work to ensure a step change in the support and operational management of the ICT infrastructure, ensuring management and support requirements are planned strategically at national, regional and local level
- work to ensure that organisations can and do purchase adequate support and align themselves with best practice.

Z. <u>Industry</u>

The commercial sector is recognised as a key strategic partner in helping educational organisations to realise the benefits that ICT can bring to learning, teaching and organisational management. Industry provides valuable insight into future developments and current trends, supporting innovation and the development of new approaches. We need to ensure that both private and public sectors work together effectively to address common issues and support national, regional and local infrastructure strategy. We also need to ensure that we work with industry to maintain and increase the quality of equipment and services that the commercial sector provides to educational organisations.

Becta will:

- engage with industry partners to share expertise and to involve them actively in the development of the future strategic direction
- develop strategic partnerships to explore and develop non-traditional methods of ICT infrastructure provision to the organisation and local community
- set appropriate standards for ICT equipment and services, accrediting and monitoring the supply industry
- through Becta's accreditation programme, continue to ensure that suppliers consistently meet and exceed these minimum quality standards and meet their contractual obligations
- work with suppliers, Government and LEAs to ensure that educational purchasers of ICT are aware of the accreditation schemes and use them in their purchasing decisions.

AA. <u>Evidence</u>

Technology and its use in society will continue to evolve rapidly. Government policy on the use of ICT in education will need to take account of these trends and opportunities if ongoing investment is to remain effective. The widespread introduction of new technologies needs to be carefully planned to ensure that appropriate training and support arrangements are deployed in parallel. Technological innovations are also increasingly breaking down traditional ICT management domains. New national, regional and community managed infrastructures will need to be considered and deployed when appropriate. To maintain an infrastructure that keeps pace with the expectations of teachers and learners requires in-depth intelligence, carefully evaluated in the educational context.

Becta will:

- continue to monitor the effectiveness, quality and development of the technical infrastructure to support future strategic planning
- identify and critically evaluate technologies and applications that could add real value to education
- use Becta's Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) model to understand the cost effectiveness of deployment strategies in order to support future decision-making.

Immediate Priorities for 2003-04

BB. <u>Government</u>
- begin to define a strategic framework for the development of ICT infrastructure in England through widespread consultation
- provide Government with strategic advice on technological developments and trends
- be Government's key strategic partner and advisor on all issues relating to ICT infrastructure
- undertake the first detailed national technical survey of educational ICT infrastructure to review the current position and provide recommendations for future investment
- provide strategic advice to Government on the future procurement strategy for ICT
- manage central procurement initiatives to support policy initiatives.

CC. <u>Schools, LEAs and the Learning and Skills sector</u>
- further development of 'whole-school' model infrastructure specifications
- 'soak test' the current technical roadmap for schools to ensure that it will meet the demands of Curriculum Online and Online assessment. Standards will be reviewed in light of the findings of this research
- continue the development of the Independent Procurement Advisory Service (IPAS) and the Academies Advisory Service to support schools and LEAs in the development of their procurement strategies
- deliver the national seminar programme on ICT procurement
- support the continuing Laptops for Teachers programme through the letting of further framework contracts and the ongoing contract management of suppliers
- support LEAs in the procurement of caching and content delivery systems to meet standard specifications
- develop a framework of standards for operational management and support in schools.
- develop the application of Becta's TCO model in schools and colleges
- produce a scoping study which reviews the opportunities for achieving better value for money through aggregation of purchase.

DD. <u>Industry</u>
- continue to review and develop Becta's Accredited ICT Service Suppliers programme
- monitor the performance of accredited suppliers, working with suppliers to achieve a culture of continual improvement in the services and equipment offered to education

- work to ensure that all providers of internet services to education meet Becta's minimum accreditation standards
- develop and exercise strategic partnerships arrangements with the commercial sector.

EE. <u>Evidence</u>

- evaluate emerging technologies and assess their potential for positively addressing current issues in education
- undertake pilot evaluations with key partners to explore the potential for new models of network connectivity, support and management
- research into the cost effectiveness of different methods of technical support provision in schools.

Strategic aim 5 – continuously improve Becta's ability to deliver

Becta aims to provide an ambitious programme of transformation for the education sector through the embedding of ICT. In order to implement this programme, it will be necessary to operate to the highest standards. The challenge is to be both a creative and innovative organisation and one which operates effectively and efficiently to bring about change.

Our primary role is to supply expertise and leadership throughout the sector. To do this, it is essential to deploy, direct and develop a highly skilled and motivated workforce. Success depends on the talent, commitment and dedication of our staff. To achieve successful change we will engage, enthuse and value all of our employees.

All elements of Becta's corporate function must exemplify these standards. We will provide high quality, value for money services which meet customer needs and review all of our policies and procedures to improve effectiveness.

We will build on the benefits of new technologies, increasing direct access where possible and improving productivity. All our policies and processes will be reviewed in light of the change programme the organisation is currently undertaking.

Becta's strategic programme for development of capacity

Our strategy has four elements:

- developing and implementing an accountability framework for Becta to assure our effective performance
- deploying a highly skilled, creative and motivated workforce, valuing the unique contribution of all our employees
- developing and maintaining corporate services to an exemplary standard
- continuously improving reputation management, internal communications and knowledge management.

FF. <u>Accountability and delivery</u>
Of particular importance is the role of the Becta Board in monitoring and challenging the organisation, providing assurance of Becta's effective performance, and offering strategic advice to the Secretary of State on the transforming influence of ICT.

Becta will:

- support the Board through a performance management framework with appropriate management information, structures and processes to enable them to carry out their role in supporting and challenging the Executive
- develop and maintain an appropriate structure of Board committees that will make recommendations in key areas of activity

- proactively provide support and information that enables the Board to fulfil its role in providing strategic advice to the Secretary of State and UK Education Departments
- develop and agree a set of aims and objectives which link to government objectives and through the development of the corporate plan set out how Becta will deliver the overall remit and annual priorities
- work with the DfES to develop performance indicators for all our strategic objectives providing clear statements of intention against which achievement can be measured
- develop the risk management process as a Board-led activity, cascading through all programmes of work
- provide assurance of impact and value for money by monitoring and evaluating the performance of the organisation and our people
- develop clear and effective ways of working with the DfES and the other UK Education Departments as expressed in memoranda of understanding, including a transparent accountability system with DfES and other funders based on agreed project management and financial processes
- implement methods for project and programme management which build on the principles recommended by the Office of Government Commerce (OGC).

GG. People

Becta's primary influence on the education sector is through expertise and leadership. Our HR Strategy will be developed and implemented to maximise the contribution of all of our staff, to reflect strategic priorities and refine the capacity of the organisation to deliver our remit. The strategy will identify the kind of employer Becta wants to be and how we aim to achieve this.

To support this strategy Becta will:

- develop the organisational design to ensure access to all the relevant human resources, skills and competencies
- develop innovative recruitment, development and training strategies to release the potential of Becta's workforce
- align the performance management scheme to reflect and reward delivery against strategic priorities, ensuring that Becta staff can see how their roles align with the overall strategy, what they are required to achieve, and the parameters within which they are working
- manage an effective employment process that is based on efficient use of human resource, best practice management policies, and compliance with employment legislation.
- utilise, where appropriate, the skills of staff from Becta's partner organisations, for example through secondments and joint working arrangements.

HH. Corporate systems

It is essential that support systems, including ICT facilities and information systems, are deployed to the highest standards in support of Becta's operational and administrative effectiveness. Becta should be an exemplar for the public sector in these areas. Corporate services are responsible for the development and management of responsive, high quality corporate policies, systems, practices and services which support the delivery of our objectives.

Becta will:

- develop and implement internal systems and processes to support business strategies
- implement models of best practice ICT use for Becta staff, and develop coherent systems which support communications and customer relations
- integrate and consolidate information systems, develop management information systems and implement a document management system

- provide the highest standard of corporate financial governance and develop and disseminate timely management information which demonstrates accountability, propriety and value for money
- provide a safe and motivating physical working environment, and deliver a range of cost-effective services to Becta staff and customers.

II. Reputation management, internal communication and knowledge management

Becta's impact, and consequently reputation and credibility, is enhanced by appropriate and coherent external communication with stakeholders, partners and customers. Knowledge management and good internal communication are vital components of external communication as well as necessary to support the business cycle and strengthen ways of working.

It is also important to solicit customer feedback regularly against the key areas identified in our new remit and corporate plan, and to involve customers in the development of communications products and services.

Becta will:

- Build and strengthen understanding of Becta's purpose, aims, and objectives among stakeholders and partners through a coherent communications strategy
- Develop and implement an internal knowledge management system
- Develop a cross-phase marketing and online communications strategy to promote to stakeholders, partners and customers the evidence, advice and standards generated by the organisation.

Immediate Priorities for 2003-04

JJ. Accountability
- develop new support mechanisms and processes to support the Board
- provide training and induction for new Board members
- develop and agree the corporate and business plans
- develop appropriate management reports to inform SMT and the Board of progress
- implement and review policies on risk management and internal control
- agree terms of reference with Board committees
- develop and agree programme and project methodology focusing on delivering outcomes
- train key staff in project management.

KK. People
- implement and monitor processes relating to the realignment of the organisational structure
- develop the HR strategy to complement the realigned organisation
- review performance management and the pay and grading scheme
- review current pay and grading structure
- agree overall corporate training strategy and develop leadership and management training programmes
- deliver training to address key priorities for the change process
- undertake a strategic review of HR policies to ensure compliance and fitness for purpose
- develop the HR management information system to achieve full functionality
- assess the organisation's readiness for Investors in People (IIP) accreditation.

LL. Corporate systems
- review and update the IS/IT strategy to support new ways of working
- Integrate IT helpdesk, user and asset databases and improve software control and distribution
- develop the communications and network structure (particularly wireless technologies)

- procure and commission an electronic document management system
- upgrade finance system to increase functionality, in particular direct access to budget holders
- develop financial management reports and systems against new requirements
- define procurement integration project and set up procurement board
- review and revise support service policies, procedures and service level agreements.

MM. **Reputation management, internal communication and knowledge management**

- work with the media to expand on Becta's new purpose and aims, by sector
- following developing guidelines, work with external sponsors to benefit from increased investment in Becta's external communications activity
- build and strengthen Becta's brand through cross-organisational communications standards, consistency and clarity
- implement a new online publishing structure that reflects the new remit, makes best use of new technologies, and has the flexibility to meet future needs
- establish a process for managing cross-organisational customer analysis
- pilot the implementation of an externally managed marketing strategy for educational technology products and services
- develop and implement an internal communications strategy to support the new remit, including increased involvement by staff in strategic planning
- develop and implement a knowledge management strategy for Becta.

Glossary

ACL	Adult and Community Learning
ALI	Adult Learning Inspectorate
Becta	British Educational Communications and Technology Agency
CETIS	Centre for Educational Technology Interoperability Standards
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
FE	Further education
FPP	Ferl Practitioners Program
HR	Human Resources
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ICTSN	ICT Support Network
IIP	Investors in People
ILT	Information Learning Technology
IPAS	Independent Procurement Advisory Service
IS	Information Systems
IT	Information Technology
LEA	Local Education Authority
LLSC	Local Learning and Skills Council
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
MLE	Managed Learning Environments
NAACE	National Association of Advisers in Computer Education
NCSL	National College for School Leadership
NERF	National Educational Research Forum
NGfL	National Grid for Learning

NLN	National Learning Network
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
OGC	Office for Government Commerce
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
RBC	Regional Broadband Consortia
SLICT	Strategic Leadership of ICT
TCO	Total Cost of Ownership
TSAS	Technical Support Advisory Service
Ufi	University for Industry
UKOLN	UK Office for Library and Information Networking
VLE	Virtual Learning Environment
VTC	Virtual Teachers Centre