

Information Released under Freedom of Information Act

Subject: Information on Companies House strategies.

Date Released: 1 September 2008

Summary of request: Request for information relating to the Financial Strategy, Capital Strategy, ICT Strategy and ICT Business Plan for 2008/09.

Information released:

Financial Strategy 08/09 and Capital Strategy 08/09

I should explain that Companies House does not have these specific documents; however you may be interested in the Companies House Business Plan 08/09. The Business plan can be found on our website: www.companieshouse.gov.uk

(From the home page go to About Us, Library, Corporate Documents - the Business Plan 08/09 is the 2nd item from the top). I am unable to provide you with a copy of the Business Plan as, under section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act, we are not required to provide information in response to a request if it is already reasonably accessible.

I have consulted with the Head of our Finance department and again I must emphasise that we currently do not have the documents you require. We are currently in the process of revising our mid term financial strategy in line with the Fees Order submission in March/April 2009 and our business plan for 2009/10 will obviously be a main plank in that piece of work.

As this document is still in progress I am unable at present to state whether it will be available for disclosure when completed.

ICT Strategy 08/09 and ICT Business Plan 08/09.

We also do not have these specific documents but I have attached our "BSD – Service Objective and Strategy document" (BSD – Business Solutions Delivery). This contains our core purpose, strategic goals and key priorities to deliver this year.

The strategic goals do not change each year although the key priorities to be achieved will. The Companies House ICT strategy which you attached to your email is dated 2004 and is now out of date and I can only re-iterate that we do not have a current 'ICT Strategy'. We are in the process of creating a Systems Roadmap which covers the next 3-5 years and considers

- Business Requirements
- Technical Simplification
- Replacement/Upgrade

in terms of hardware and software changes. This will be a dynamic document that responds to overall organisations needs. We anticipate this will be completed by December this year. Again as this document is still in progress I am unable at present to state whether it will be available for disclosure when completed.

B S D – Service Objective and Strategy

BSD Services – Our Core Purpose

To provide cost effective IT development, systems support and change management services on a robust technical platform that enables CH business goals to be achieved.

Strategic Goals

- To deliver high quality, and continually improving, services to internal colleagues and external customers.
- To simplify our technical infrastructure, hardware and software, whilst recognising the need to reduce our ‘carbon footprint’.
- To help the business simplify its internal processes and make the most of our IT infrastructure.
- To help the business implement change.

Guiding Principles

- We will use mature technology and not ‘leading edge’.
- We will ‘buy’ applications unless there is compelling business justification to ‘build bespoke’.
- We will challenge the business to change process rather than ‘customise’ applications, to minimise future version upgrade costs and improve value for money from systems investment.
- Applications and infrastructure must be simple to support and easy to upgrade/replace.
- Core application developments must use simple, flexible and scalable designs and will have speed of system performance as a primary objective.
- We will be flexible in choosing how we secure the skills needed within BSD services, whilst recognising the need to protect our ‘in house’ knowledge base essential to support and develop our services.
- We will actively support the development of skills within our people.
- We will use simple change management processes to enable change to be delivered quickly and accurately.

Our Key Priorities for 2008/9

Services

- We will achieve 7 day 17 hour availability for external customer services by Dec 2008.
- We will improve systems availability to 99.5% and develop measures/targets for systems performance.
- Complete building of dual site disaster recovery infrastructure.
- Improve our data security processes and procedures.

Simplifying BSD

- We will use fewer contractors and thereby reduce our software application development costs (per day charge) by 10% per annually for the next three years.
- We will reduce the number of software application packages we use.
- We will simplify and improve our web applications database/technical infrastructure.
- Establish and embed quarterly change windows.

Helping the business simplify/improve

- Reduce business work rounds within CHIPS
- Simplify and improve the change management process.

Helping the business implement change

- Companies Act Programme
- Service Transformation
- Late Filing Penalties