



Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

And the

Telford Millennium Community

A discussion document for the TMC Community Group

14 October 2003

“The Millennium Community will be exceptional in its application of new thinking and best practices”



Community ICT and the Telford Millennium Community

Community ICT is the use of computers and communication devices in the home, school and community to support community development and communication.

ICT can help make the Telford Millennium Community a happier, safer, more convenient place to live by:

- Allowing residents to have a say in the efficient running of community services
- Helping people communicate and share friendships, skills and services
- Providing access to learning and job opportunities
- Creating a more sustainable environment, reducing traffic and safeguarding nature

We want the community to demonstrate the best use of technology and innovation and for ICT to provide positive benefits for you, your families and the community's development. These things can't happen without your involvement though - after all, ICT is only a set of tools and, like all tools, they have to be used by people and for a purpose.

I have been appointed to lead the ICT strategy for the community and this document is really the start of what I hope will be a process of involvement and consultation to produce a really successful, innovative, connected community.

The document outlines some of the areas in which ICT can be used within the TMC and, hopefully, you will be able to add further suggestions of your own - I do hope that you will want to be involved in helping form the ICT strategy.

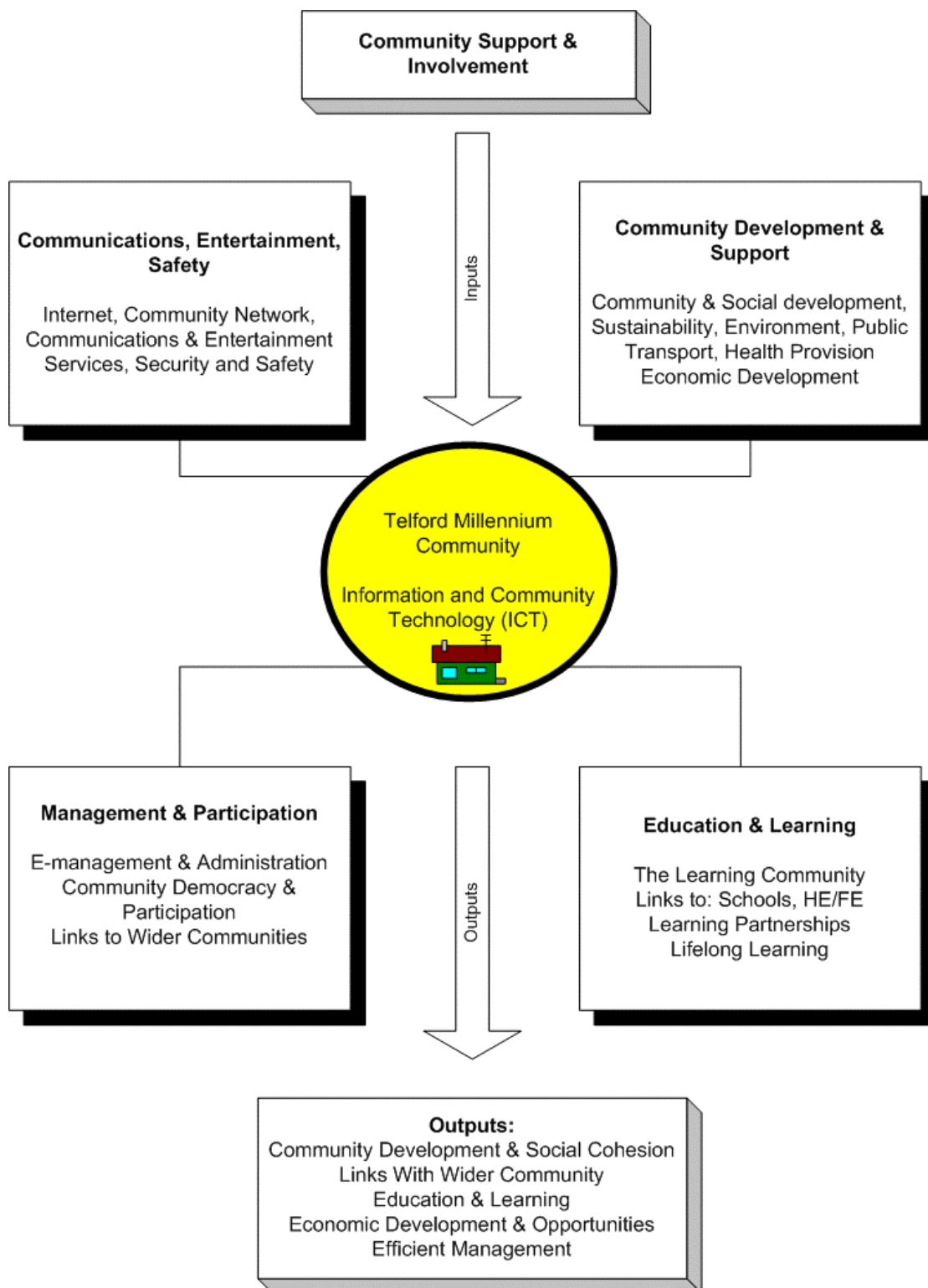
I intend to be at the Community Group meeting on 3/11/03 and there will be time then to discuss the plans for Community ICT in general and ways that you might be contribute.

If you have any immediate comments or suggestions do please get in touch, otherwise I very much look forward to meeting you then.

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Telford Millennium ICT





ICT in the Home

There are many potential uses for ICT in the TMC home. These are just a few:

- Using email to communicate with friends and family within the community and beyond
- Working from home or connecting remotely to an office
- Accessing the Internet for home shopping services
- Connecting to schools and colleges for homework or to access courses
- Connecting to the community network to book a baby-sitter or submit a maintenance request

As a minimum, we want to provide fast, always on, Internet access to every home and sockets within the home to allow computers to be used in different rooms. (An alternative to sockets would be wireless access throughout the home). It is possible that the cable bringing Internet access could also be used to supply TV, telephone services and even video conferencing.

Just as many homes are now offered with refrigerators and cookers, some people might want to buy a home with computer equipment already installed. Others might have their own equipment already.

Home computers are also changing, and there are now small PCs especially designed for the living room which sit at the centre of entertainment and communication systems combining DVD, audio, TV and radio recording. These kinds of bundled entertainment systems are already being offered with some new homes.

Finally there is the possibility of using ICT for home management and security. Smarthome devices can allow residents to control heating, lighting, entertainment and security systems both from within the home and remotely via the Internet. The cable network could also be used to provide security and CCTV services.

So some of the questions we need to answer are:

- What kind of ICT access do people want and where do they want it in their homes? Should we wire the home for data and/or audio? Use wireless?
- Will sufficient residents take up broadband access and entertainment channels to make a viable proposition for a commercial cable company? What services would be popular?
- Is there a demand for bundling computer equipment with homes? What kind of equipment? How would we provide support and maintenance?
- Is there interest in Smarthome device control?
- How big a priority is ICT-driven security? How would this be paid for?



ICT in the Community

By having every household connected, there is the potential for ICT to transform the way the Telford Millennium Community is managed and organised and how people within it collaborate and socialise.

ICT could play a part in the day to day management of the community in areas such as:

- Logging of property repairs and maintenance
- Information for recycling, cleaning and refuse
- Grounds maintenance and upkeep
- Information on service charges and rent
- Access to administrative information and documents

It can also be used to provide opportunities for democracy and participation including:

- Online discussion groups
- Community bulletin boards
- Online polling and voting
- Publication of proceedings and minutes

Community sustainability is another area which ICT can enhance by the provision of:

- Real-time public transport information
- Booking of car shares or community vehicles
- Access to individual household and community data on utility and energy use
- Recycling information and statistics
- Central purchasing (e.g. for groceries) and co-ordination to reduce delivery traffic
- Providing information on wildlife, habitat and environmental issues

Perhaps the greatest potential though is for the use of ICT to transform the way that people within TMC will interact socially through:

- Making friends online through shared activities and special interest groups
- Reducing isolation with email communication (especially for older people or those with reduced mobility)
- Sharing stories, recipes, pictures etc. on an online community notice board
- Organising social and community events
- Offering services and skill swaps

There are an increasing number of communities using ICT in this way and links to some of their sites are provided at www.incamedia.co.uk/TMC-ICT



Usually, to provide these services there needs to be a central community web site or intranet which not only provides information, but also allows residents to make their own contributions. Obviously, there is a certain amount of organisation and work required to maintain a community intranet and this might be done on a voluntary basis or by paid staff.

Some of the questions we need to ask about Community ICT provision are:

- How can we learn from other communities and adopt their best practice?
- How would we ensure that everyone that wants to use the TMC network receives the training and support they need?
- What about people who didn't want to join the TMC Network? How would we provide them with the same information and opportunities?
- And people who did want to use the network but didn't want their own computer in the home? Would we have community ICT facilities for them? Where? How would they be paid for?
- Who would organise the intranet and keep it up to date? Is this a management or a community responsibility? Or both?
- Should we promote sustainability issues through the network? Provide sustainable living guides (for recycling, energy management, transport etc.)
- There will be a cost associated with supporting the TMC Network. How much would residents be willing to pay (either directly or indirectly) and would we manage this?
- What should we call the intranet? The TMC Network, TMC Online etc.?

ICT and the Wider Community

We've looked at ICT in the home and within the community, but ICT also has an important role to play in connecting the TMC with the wider world.

The TMC Network will be a gateway to local services such as:

- Local government (integration with online services provided by the Borough of Telford and Wrekin and Shropshire County Council)
- Library services and information services
- Health facilities and providers
- Public transport providers
- Employment information

The TMC will make an important contribution to the economic development of the area. Some residents may operate small businesses from their home or connect remotely to their place of work. Others will commute to work in the surrounding areas. Access to skill development and opportunities for learning will be important.



TMC is already becoming known as the “Learning Community”. The ICT network will provide access to a number of learning opportunities for individual and community purposes. These will include:

- Links to local schools and colleges (including the Hadley PFI scheme) for student support and learning materials
- Links to local learning partnerships and learning networks – see www.telford.gov.uk/Learning/CommunityLearning/
- Access to national government initiatives to support lifelong learning (e.g. the National Grid for Learning www.ngfl.gov.uk, learndirect www.learndirect.co.uk)
- Access to HE and FE establishments offering distance learning

It is also worth noting that as an online community, the TMC network is not necessarily restricted to the physical site of the TMC - it could also include neighbouring communities within its remit.

When thinking about connections with the wider world, these are some of the questions which need to be asked:

- What ways can the TMC Network help ensure employment opportunities for residents?
- How can the TMC Network help contribute to economic development?
- What schools and colleges should we be linking to? What kind of partnerships can we create?
- What other kinds of information can the TMC Network provide e.g. health, public transport?
- Should all or part of the TMC Network and its services be available to residents in areas surrounding the development? How would this be managed?

And Finally....

Thank you for reading this far and considering the many issues and questions they raise. Here are just a few final questions!

- What do you think is the best way for the Community Group to be involved with these issues and decisions?
- Should we have a sub-group of interested people?
- Who else outside the group needs to be involved?

I hope that this document has provided you with plenty of food for thought. If you have any comments before the meeting on 3/11/03 then do please get in touch.

Ian Cairns
14 October 2003