

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

AUDIT COMMITTEE - 18 SEPTEMBER 2013

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND SUPPORT SERVICES

OUTSTANDING SIAS HIGH PRIORITY ICT RECOMMENDATIONS

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

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**Purpose/Summary of Report**

- This report should be viewed in the context of the SIAS Progress Report for September 2013 being considered elsewhere on this committee's agenda. It provides a detailed update on the outstanding ICT recommendations set out in the SIAS report.

<b><u>RECOMMENDATION FOR AUDIT COMMITTEE: That:</u></b>	
<b>(A)</b>	<b>The Committee notes the progress in implementing the outstanding high priority recommendations set out in Essential Reference Paper B.</b>

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1.0 Background

1.1 SIAS provide an update to Audit Committee on the implementation of high priority recommendations in their regular progress reports. Pending a decision being made on the implementation of shared ICT Services a number of recommendations have been outstanding for some time. This report provides a detailed update set out in **Essential Reference Paper "B"** of proposals to implement these recommendations following the recent decision on Shared Services and appointment of a Head of Shared ICT, Business Improvement and Print and Graphic Design Services.

2.0 Report

2.1 The majority of outstanding recommendations focus upon the need for an effective business continuity/disaster recovery solution covering ICT services. While solutions are in place locally

in East Herts to deliver business continuity in the event that single systems fail, the plans in place to address a serious incident, such as a fire or flood, are not clear and have been untested recently. Furthermore the ability of the ICT service to deliver an effective comprehensive business continuity solution depends upon strong underlying infrastructure solutions. As noted in the report on ICT Infrastructure approved by Executive on 23 July 2013, investment in improved infrastructure is required in East Herts (irrespective of a decision around shared services). For these reasons it was determined that the significant work required to deliver a full business continuity solution was best deferred until decisions about infrastructure and shared services had been made. To have done so earlier would have led to significant additional costs being incurred and abortive work being undertaken by an ICT Team struggling due to lack of capacity.

- 2.2 The Business Continuity solution to be delivered through shared services is based around the existing infrastructure solution provided (and proven) in Stevenage. The shared service will deliver a shared infrastructure for both authorities that is physically in two separate data centres connected by an existing high capacity network link. This solution allows all systems to be recovered and delivered with only minimal performance implications from either data centre should one fail, within four hours. This is a solution which is far more effective and economic than traditional, insurance type, ICT business continuity solutions based around third party companies agreeing to reinstate infrastructure in the event of a disaster occurring, normally within one to two days.
  - 2.3 The timeframes set out in **Essential Reference Paper “B”** are driven by the work required to set up the new data centre arrangements themselves. These need to be rigorously tested before they go live and involve deploying the new solutions in a structured way across the whole authority. Some communication around the new infrastructure has begun but more is planned to explain how risks are to be managed and what the project will mean for Members and Officers. The business continuity solution is designed in to the new solution and will be delivered as a by product of the overall project.
- 3.0 Implications/Consultations

3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

Background Papers

SIAS Audit Committee Progress Report – Audit Committee 10 July 2013.

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