

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 18 DECEMBER 2018

REPORT BY HELEN STANDEN (DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE)

SHARED IT SERVICE UPDATE

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

Purpose/Summary of Report

- To provide an update on IT shared services following the report in July 2018 as requested by Overview and Scrutiny Committee

RECOMMENDATION FOR OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:

That:

(A)	Members review the progress to-date within the Shared IT Service.
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1.0 Background

- 1.1 East Herts and Stevenage Councils have operated shared IT Service (including Print and Design Services) since 2013, which has successfully delivered both revenue savings and service improvements to the benefit of both authorities.
- 1.2 Following 3 significant connectivity failures, in April 2018 two new directors were appointed to the IT Partnership Board; Helen Standen, Deputy Chief Executive – East Herts and Tom Pike, Strategic Director – Stevenage.
- 1.3 A new focus was established and during the summer a Strategic ICT Partnerships Manager was successfully recruited. He commenced leading the ICT team in September 2018.

1.4 Since September 2018 a number of options to improve connectivity and resilience have been examined, challenged and reviewed.

2.0 Progress to date and resulting budget implications

2.1 Following a comprehensive examination of our current position, the ICT Partnerships Manager has put forward some initial priority recommendations for the Shared Service and these have been categorised in respect of business critical impact.

2.2 Our shared IT vision has been established
`A Reliable, Effective and Professional Service that will enable both Councils to deliver and grow their digital vision.

By:

- Utilising standard approaches to products, processes and development
- Using appropriate partners to deliver services for standardised products
- Building internal and external capability to enable the digital vision to be attained`

2.3 Connectivity is a critical requirement. As such investigations have taken place to establish the most cost effective and business effective solution. Original estimates last year to provide a second link between the data centres by way of dark fibre were in the region of £500k. The solution being put forward is the installation of a roof top microwave link which will provide far greater resilience as well as being costed at £80k for installation with ongoing rental at £15k pa. This cost would be shared between Stevenage and East Herts.

2.4 Data storage has been a rumbling issue for around 18 months. A cost effectiveness exercise has now been completed where a rental model versus full procurement model were compared. As a result a recommendation has been made to invest in our own storage renewal programme costing under £400k over the next

five years rather than a rental option which is estimated to cost in excess of £500k over the same time frame.

- 2.5 Cyber security and resilience has been another priority for both councils. A recommendation has been made to both councils to renew our firewalls alongside a clean-up of Active Directory alongside the implementation of Office 365.
- 2.6 There are a number of advantages of doing this now. In order to move to 365/Cloud environment we require an Azure server. The server needs to be protected by a software firewall. By upgrading our physical firewalls, we can take advantage of free software firewalls to save costs. In addition, this is needed to enable `single sign on` within the new cloud environment.
- 2.7 Infrastructure costs will be shared with Stevenage with each council meeting their relevant cost of moving to Microsoft 365 (purchase of licences etc.)
- 2.6 The cost ratio to be apportioned is still being worked on by the Head of Strategic Finance and Property to ensure we continue to pay a fair portion of costs arising from the Shared IT Partnership.

3.0 Staffing

- 3.1 In order to deliver the proposed improvements a business case has been brought forward to improve the councils` resilience in particular around security and project management. An audit has shown that ICT is involved in the delivery of over 100 projects. In order to maintain momentum and ability to delivery to deadlines, it has been proposed that a project manager is recruited alongside dedicated Network and Security Officers. It is expected that these posts will be established and recruited to quickly in order to commence the programme of works needed to provide a stable, reliable IT platform.

- 3.2 Plans are in place as part of the improvements to enable staff to `self-serve` on simple processes such as password reset. This in turn will enable the Service Desk to improve their knowledge and concentrate on more complex priorities.
- 3.3 Any additional budgetary requirements will be met through the current MTFP. The Head of Strategic Finance and Property has been included in all discussions and decisions relating to finance, in conjunction with the Stevenage S151 Officer.

4.0 Governance

- 4.1 The make-up of the Partnership Board has been refreshed and is working well. The newly appointed Strategic Partnerships Manager now sits on the Board along with a finance colleague and senior input from East Herts and Stevenage. Board meetings are focussed on strategic direction for the Shared Services.
- 4.2 An IT Steering Group has been established which includes critical service leads from both councils and focuses on project work and future requirements. The ITSG has met monthly since September and is ensuring that key services are included in planning discussions across the Shared Service. Early feedback is that this inclusive approach has been welcomed and is supported
- 4.2 Significant investment in supplies and services has taken place in the IT Shared Service since 2016/17 due to need to ensure licensing compliance, improved cyber security, the replacement of legacy systems and purchase of new business applications, and enhanced service governance.
- 4.3 PSN compliance is imminent with almost 100 corrective actions being put in place since September 18. 3 final required actions are expected to be completed by the end of December 2018.

5.0 Digital Print and Post

5.1 Following a successful procurement exercise CFH were appointed as joint supplier of Digital print and post and the implementation project has commenced with a pilot in Revenue and Benefits to be followed by Elections. This will result in a significant number of transactions being made directly from the supplier and result in increased resource capacity for the council and lower printing and postage costs.

6.0 Future IT Service Improvements

Timeline for Improvements from Q3 2018 to Q4 2019/20

Item	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Security Staff						
PMO						
Edge Firewalls						
AD Cleanup						
Federated AD						
MS Office 365						
Storage Replacement						
Inner Firewalls						
Switch replacement						
Hosted Desktop Upgrade						

7.0 Implications/Consultations

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

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