

AGS – Action Plan 2019/20 Update

<u>Recommendations/Actions</u>	<u>Current Position 17 February 2020</u>
<p><u>TSS Improvement Plan – Governance</u></p> <p>Management should complete the review of the IT policies and tailor them to the needs of both Councils. The purchased IT policy software should be deployed without any further delay and the policies should be made available to all members of staff. Management should track and monitor staff attestation and responses.</p> <p>Furthermore, management should review and, where necessary, revise the Service’s IT procedures so that they are consistent across both Councils. The procedures should be documented and communicated to all members of staff.</p> <p>Representatives from both Councils should agree a shared set of expectations for how technology will be used to achieve their respective strategic objectives.</p> <p>These expectations should form the basis for a defined IT Strategy for the Shared IT Service, which should include as a minimum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ The expectations for the levels of service to be provided</li><li>○ The metrics for monitoring the performance of the Shared IT Service.</li><li>○ The performance of the Service should be reviewed on a routine basis by the ICT Partnership Board and measured against the defined metrics and key performance indicators.</li></ul>	<p>The IT Strategy was approved by the Executive at Stevenage Borough Council in October 2019 and by Council at East Herts in December. This is an extensive document which far exceeds the minimum requirements contained in the recommendations. Performance of the Service is reviewed on a routine basis by the ICT Partnership Board and measured against the IT Strategy.</p>

## Cyber Security

Management should establish a network access control to block unknown or unauthorised devices from connecting to the Council's IT network. This should include restricting the ability to physically connect to the IT network.

Where there is a demonstrable need for a device to connect to the IT network, the Service should require:

- The purpose for the connection has been recorded
- Appropriate security controls have been enabled on the device connecting to the IT network
- The period of time that the device will require the connection
- All connections are approved before being allowed to proceed.
- Devices connected to the IT network should be reviewed on a routine basis.

There should be a record of the configuration of the Council's firewalls, which includes but is not limited to:

- The purpose of all of the rules
- The expected configuration and activity for each rule
- The member of staff that requested and approved the rule
- The configuration of the firewall should be reviewed on a routine basis.
- The Service should develop a Firewall rule policy to provide the list of controls that are required to secure firewall implementations to an approved level of security

The Council has created a Security & Network Team who have been tasked to look at security/network tools. There is also a planned upgrade to office 365.

Intune MDM has been installed and will be rolled out to manage all mobile devices and Windows 10 laptops. A plan is in place to upgrade all laptops to Windows 10 to ensure control via Intune encryption using Bitlocker.

Financial and resource restrictions have delayed the procurement of network tools to financial year 2020/21.

It is very rare (if ever) that someone connects an external device to the IT network. The Zero Clients do not allow the transfer of data to anything plugged into them.

The Security & Network Team have been tasked to look at replacing the entire Firewall (and switch) estate. As part of this work all firewall configurations will need to be reviewed and recorded.

Replacement of all firewalls scheduled for April 2020. Configurations and creation of new network environment is being worked on as part of that plan.

<p><u>Incident Management</u></p> <p>Management should update the Council’s IT disaster recovery plan to include the procedure for establishing all IT services at a single data centre.</p> <p>A complete IT Disaster Recovery scenario test on all applications and systems should take place to provide assurance that recovery could happen within the expected time frame.</p> <p>The Service should document the results of the test to determine the further actions required to improve the efficacy of the plan.</p> <p>Management should define the processing capacity threshold at which it is no longer possible for a data centre to operate as the single data centre.</p> <p>This should be monitored and, where exceeded, appropriate action should be taken.</p>	<p>We have started a project to install a secondary microwave link between our data centres. This will give us a resilient link where either can be down and connectivity remains.</p> <p>Also, with our upgrade to Horizon VDI, we are installing hardware which will allow either site to run 100% of capacity. This will allow the complete downing of one site for upgrade work and for full capacity in the event of one data centre being offline.</p> <p>Implementation was scheduled for January 2020 but is now expected to complete in April. Grant funding has been secured for an external review of disaster recovery post implementation.</p>
<p><u>S106 Spend Arrangements</u></p> <p>Record keeping of S106 contributions, the spend arrangements and associated timeframes be reviewed to confirm fitness for purpose. An effective master record is adopted for monitoring and reporting purposes.</p> <p>The Council establish a sound legal position in respect of any time expired contributions. Contributions due to expire in the near future are subject to urgent consideration and remedial action where required.</p>	<p>To take forward the recommendations and provide oversight of S106 contributions a role was created of Infrastructure Contributions &amp; Spend Manager.</p> <p>A review of all received financial contributions from 1996 to date was undertaken to create a Master Received Contributions Spreadsheet. This spreadsheet has information confirming the planning application, location, obligation wording, timescale for allocation and RAG rating for each unallocated contribution. Additional columns identify current and future project information and spending. The spreadsheet has been used to identify and confirm agreement wording to allow distribution of unspent contributions to internal projects and other external bodies for community use, as well as transferring funds to named recipients and identifying ongoing revenue payments. One time expired contribution has been returned to the provider.</p>

<p><u>Digital East Herts</u></p> <p>We recommend that management should conduct a robust review of active projects at risk, or likely to become at risk, to determine if strategic intervention is needed by Leadership Team. This should include making sure the financial savings targets set are actually viable and likely to be met by the deadline of 31 March 2020. Any projects identified as highly likely not to produce the minimum financial savings expected should be escalated to Leadership Team so that remedial action to adjust or re-assign targets can be taken in a timely manner.</p> <p>We also recommend that management should develop a new list of potential digital projects for Leadership Team to consider, as a way to find solutions to cover the £50,000 shortfall presently being forecast.</p>	<p>The issue in most cases is that project delivery (in terms of outputs) is on track. However, the cashable savings linked to the project are at risk of not materialising. For example, where new systems have been implemented the work has been completed but no direct savings have been realised. In some projects also, savings are being discussed as part of a review of shared budgets between East Herts and Stevenage.</p> <p>As part of the year end close down process, each Head of Service discussed their 18/19 and 19/20 budgets. Savings were validated at that point. A wider piece of work also took place afterwards looking at efficiency targets for 19/20 where the remaining shortfall was identified.</p> <p>Savings included in the 2020/21 budget will be monitored by Leadership Team.</p>
<p><u>Joint Waste Contract</u></p> <p>The four performance indicators in place have a significant weighting within the PMR and therefore measuring these allows management to assess service delivery. We recommend that management undertake an exercise of prioritising the remaining indicators and determine which the next most important service measurement indicators are. This should be part of the project currently underway.</p> <p>In addition, we recommend that priority is given to formally agreeing the service failure types to be measured. A clear and defined record of all adjustments to the PMR should be maintained and appropriate approval retained.</p> <p>A contract variation notice should be raised to formalise any locally agreed changes to performance criteria, with the support of the Legal Commercial Team Manager.</p>	<p>A clear structure including timescales for the full implementation of PMR criteria was in place at the time of the audit. This has now been concluded with all 64 criteria now live and operational for the Urbaser contract.</p>