East Herts Council Report

Committee: East Herts Council and Stevenage Council Joint Information Communication Technology Service Committee

Date of meeting: 28 July 2022

Report by: Councillor Linda Haysey– Leader of the Council; Cllr Geoff Williamson Executive Member for ICT (East Herts)

Councillor Sharon Taylor – Leader of the Council; Councillor Mrs Joan Lloyd, Executive Member for Resources (Stevenage)

Report title: ICT Improvement Plan – Progress Report

Ward(s) affected: All

Summary: This report provides progress report on actions being taken to improve the shared ICT service, following a review by SOCITM consultancy in 2021/2022. This is the first meeting of the Joint Information Communication Technology Service Committee, following its formation by both Councils in May 2022. The Terms of Reference for the Committee specify that it should meet, as a minimum, twice annually in January (to conduct service planning) and October (to review the budget position and mid-year progress against the service plan). Given the extensive improvement programme in place, East Herts and Stevenage have agreed in principle to increase the frequency of meetings during 2022/2023 to provide effective oversight of the improvement plan. This report will be accompanied by a presentation from the Shared ICT Partnership Manager.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR: East Herts Council and Stevenage Council Joint Information Communication Technology Service Committee

a) To agree to establish a programme of meetings on a bi-monthly basis for the remainder of the year

b) To receive a progress report on the ICT Improvement Programme

1.0   Proposal(s)

1.1   As above. The primary focus of this meeting is to receive a progress report on the ICT Improvement Programme, to discuss any priority areas of focus, scrutinise activity, to support implementation of priority actions.

2.0   Background

2.1   East Herts Council and Stevenage Borough Council jointly commissioned a service review by ICT specialists, SOCITM, to assess the focus of the ICT Strategy (agreed 2019/20), progress against the Strategy, delivery of the infrastructure programme, support to the objectives of both organisations, and levels of customer service.   T

2.2   Following this review, the Shared ICT Partnership and SOCITM have worked to develop a prioritised Improvement Programme, to complete the vital work to stabilise the ICT infrastructure, and to commence work to update the vision and focus of the Partnership to enable digital improvements for both Councils, provide stability and support savings and transformation programmes. A summary of the programme themes is provided below.

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2.3   To support the implementation of this Improvement Programme, both partners agreed to form a new Committee to provide oversight of key activities. Both partners agreed the required Terms of Reference in May 2022. Prior to this formal agreement,

Leaders, Portfolio Holders for the service, and nominated Members had met as a working group to oversee the SOCITM review, the findings of the review and the implementation programme that follows.

2.4.   The terms of reference of the committee are as follows:

a)   To recommend the ICT Strategy to the constituent Councils;
b)   To approve the annual service plan for the Shared ICT Service;
c)   To receive explanations of variances in service performance against the agreed service plan;
d)   To approve the budget of the shared service and where so delegated determine requested virements within that budget;
e)   To give initial consideration to future development of the shared service and any changes in legislation that may affect service delivery and make recommendations thereon to the Executive or officers; and
f)   Where it is considered appropriate, report to the Executives of the constituent councils.

2.5   As set out in the Terms of Reference for the Joint Committee, *'the Joint Committee shall at its first meeting each year, elect one of its Members to be Chair and one of its Members to be Vice- Chair, with the chair from one Council and the Vice Chair from the other. These positions shall be rotated annually.'* It is recommended that as this is the first formal meeting of the Joint Committee, Members elect the Chair and Vice Chair for the year ahead.

2.6   The ICT Improvement Programme includes a substantial programme of work during the financial year. As such it is recommended that the Committee meets on a bi-monthly basis, to receive progress reports, to oversee completion of the infrastructure and to shape future direction. It is at the discretion

of the Committee if they opt to rotate the location and clerking of meetings of the Joint Committee between partners during 2022/23.

ICT Improvement Programme

2.7   In 2021/2022, SOCITM undertook a review of the Shared ICT Partnership. This review identified three themes for an ICT Improvement Programme:
- Transition to an ICT & Digital Service Partnership
- Identify opportunities for Convergence & Savings
- Continuing to Fix the Foundations via the Infrastructure Programme

2.8   SOCITM and the Shared ICT Partnership have been working through a high level 12 month implementation plan. The agreed priority are of focus is to accelerate and complete 'Fixing the Foundations' as the most urgent and highest priority. Key actions have been:

- Network: A key priority has been to engage additional specialist resource from the Partnership's Network Supplier (Maintel). A contract is now in place with Maintel to increase resourcing and capability for the new network to be implemented by 2 November.

- Completing the new virtual desktop and Microsoft implementation: A significant focus has been the acceleration of the roll out of the Microsoft 365 project and implementation of the new virtual desktop for users (VDI).   Key actions have included increasing the size of the team by bringing in One Technical project manager, One Training and Adoption Manager and two fixed term contractors to support roll out. As at 13th July 2002, 135 staff and 40 Members have been successfully migrated onto the new Microsoft 365 environment. The target completion date for this programme

was 30 September. Officers are currently reviewing the roll out plan, and engaging suppliers, to address some of the operational challenges that arose for a particular cohort of users in July, and to ensure adequate change management plans are in place to migrate larger groups of 50 users at a time. This could mean the programme could complete in December, though work is underway to accelerate this. Taken together with the installation of a new, high-quality network, this brings significant improvement in the stability and reliability of core ICT services, and improved experience for users.

- Recruiting a permanent lead role: Work us underway to recruit a new permanent Chief Digital Officer. A Role Profile has been developed, with the support of SOCITM and recruitment is expected to commence 1st August 2022

- Cyber: Process to appoint specialist implementation support contract via the National Cyber Security Centre.

- Implementation to remediate our cyber treatment plan progresses at various levels including engaging with suppliers.

- Key projects: The ICT Partnership is also working on the scope and business case for a new telephony contract, and options appraisal for the replacement of firewalls and replacement of the WiFi.

- Support to service area priorities: There is extensive focus on the steps described above. In addition, the Partnership team is working to support projects such as scoping the requirements for an enlarged Revenues and Benefits shared service, Hertfordshire Theatre

2.9   The delivery of the ICT Improvement Plan uses a range of internal and external resources. To support the acceleration of the 'Fixing the Foundations' element of the programme, the Partnership has put in place an additional contract with Maintel to deliver the network project and early stage maintenance, recruited additional project management capacity to support the Microsoft365 roll out, securing dedicated capacity to work on cyber related projects, and is contracting with SOCITM for additional technical support through a procurement framework (G-Cloud).

2.10   The contract with SOCTIM is being finalised and includes their support for

- The appointment of the Chief Digital Officer (CDO) and supporting the recruitment and selection of the individual

- Creating a new Target Operating Model for the IT service (the new structure and roles and governance structure), ahead of CDO arrival

- The application of a Target Application Map across both Councils and agree the 3-to-5-year roadmap to get to a position of convergence and rationalisation

- The options appraisal for considering what the ICT Partnership of the future should look like, from a governance and service scope perspective (to follow after the steps above)

2.11   As the Improvement Programme continues to move at speed, a presentation will be provided by Officers on 28th July 2022.

3.0   Reason(s)

3.1 This report is intended to support the established of the new Joint Committee, provide an overview of the progress of the ICT Improvement Programme and to note that this area will be subject of detailed oversight during 2021/22.

4.0   Options

4.1 In addition to the course of action above, an alternative option is to 'Do Nothing'. This is not recommended as it would potentially limit the speed and focus given to the vital ICT Improvement Programme.

5.0   Risks

5.1 The table below provides a short summary of the key risks associated with the delivery of the ICT Improvement Programme

Risk	Impact	Control
Failure to deliver the ICT Improvement Plan and infrastructure improvements	Reputational impact related to potential for service disruption	Full implementation of the Plan, supported by external capacity and expertise
Delay in delivery of the Plan	Potential for service disruption, as the existing infrastructure is inadequate	Accelerating network roll out and cyber attack
Limited resilience of the ICT Partnership leadership team, if key roles are not recruited to	Potential for delay to the Improvement programme, if critical roles are not filled	Use of interim roles to provide temporary capacity, and recruitment campaigns to attract key permanent post holders

Implementation of cyber enhancements	Potential for disruption to services	Implementation of cyber programme

6.0 Implications/Consultations

6.1 The formation of this Joint Committee followed engagement with both Leaders, Portfolio Holders and Executive Members.

Community Safety

Not applicable.

Data Protection

Not applicable.

Equalities

Not applicable.

Environmental Sustainability

Not applicable.

Financial

This report does not include any requests for additional funding. The capital and revenue allocation to support implementation of the Strategy and Improvement Plan will be reviewed during 2022/23.

Health and Safety

Not applicable.

Human Resources

Not applicable.

Human Rights

Not applicable.

Legal

Not applicable.

Specific Wards

Not applicable.

7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

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