

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

14 JANUARY 2010

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

OFFICE RATIONALISATION: INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report presents Cabinet with the IT changes necessary to support the office rationalisation element of the Strategic Asset Review (SAR) and the implications for the future funding of desktop equipment.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The office rationalisation element of the SAR envisages a fundamental change in the way that office accommodation is used and this was outlined in the report to Cabinet on 27 November 2008.
- 2.2 The ICT Strategy 2009-12, approved by Cabinet of 3 September 2009, stated that “the coming year will see much effort directed to support and enabling of the Strategic Asset Review. Changes to networks and desktop environments are essential to achieving the Council ambitions concerning reduced office accommodation costs and more flexible service delivery and are reflected throughout the Strategy”.
- 2.3 Changes to the IT infrastructure are essential in creating a modern, flexible and more space efficient workplace.
- 2.4 It is proposed to trial the IT changes required in a small team within IT Services prior to rollout in Westminster House and other major sites.
- 2.5 The capacity of Westminster House will increase from 300+ seats to 500+ seats.

3 OFFICE RATIONALISATION

- 3.1 Office rationalisation requires a change to the way of working and the use of offices in the following ways:
- there will be fewer offices
 - the remaining offices will be used more intensively
 - more staff will be mobile

- more staff will work from home
 - more staff will work at home
- 3.2 In the traditional office, each member of staff occupies a given desk space with appropriate equipment including a PC.
- 3.3 In the new office environment envisaged by the SAR, a more flexible workspace is required in which:
- individual members of staff will not occupy a specific workspace
 - there could be eight desks for every ten members of staff
 - there will be a greater emphasis on open plan offices with fewer individual offices and with space set aside for meetings, one to one consultation etc.
 - staff will use any available PC and telephone.
- 3.4 In the new office environment, the traditional link between the staff member and “their” desk, PC and telephone will not exist and, in time, neither will the link between the Department and specific work places.
- 3.5 The environment envisaged is established as best practice in the creation of the modern workplace and IT change is essential to achieving this.

4 THE ICT ELEMENTS IN SUPPORT OF THE NEW OFFICE AND AGILE WORKING

- 4.1 The ICT infrastructure will have to be capable of delivering necessary information and systems to desktop PC's or appropriate mobile ICT equipment anywhere in the Borough in a secure manner.
- 4.2 Doing this will require changes and investment in the following areas:
- Desktop equipment
 - Central servers
 - Networks
 - Telephony
 - Mobile equipment
 - Security

4.3 Desktop equipment

- 4.3.1 Traditional desktop equipment in the form of the PC places a lot of power and functionality in the PC.
- 4.3.2 The environment envisaged in support of the SAR will require much of the power and functionality to be centralised in virtualised servers leaving a “thin client” device as the desktop equipment.
- 4.3.3 New equipment for this environment will be of lower cost than a PC and have a much longer life, typically twelve years as opposed to five.
- 4.3.4 Existing PC’s can be converted to thin client specification but will not have the life potential of a true thin client device.
- 4.3.5 Thin client devices will also be used for home working in which case they will reduce the amount of on-site support that would otherwise be required.
- 4.3.6 True thin client desktops reduce related power costs by about 50% locally but at the expense of an increase in power consumption in the data centre.

4.4 Central Servers

- 4.4.1 Some departmental systems use local Windows servers and these systems are not available across the whole network. Such servers will need to be placed in the data centre.
- 4.4.2 To support the thin client desktop environment will require the expansion of the existing centralised and virtualised Windows server environment.
- 4.4.3 Virtualised Windows servers share capacity, reducing the total processing power required and capitalising on the excess of processing power inherent in system specific servers.
- 4.4.4 A review of the data centres and disaster recovery/ business continuity arrangements is currently under way and the impact of the IT changes outlined and future office requirements will be taken into account.

4.5 **Networks**

4.5.1 Tenders have been invited via the OGC for a replacement of the existing broadband network for the following reasons:

- The core network equipment has reached the end of its useful life
- An enhanced quality of service across the network is needed to support the telephony requirements described below
- Schools require significant additional bandwidth to the Internet for curriculum delivery
- The existing CCTV network is to be integrated with the voice and data network to reduce the number of circuits in use
- BT is withdrawing the circuits that currently connect the traffic control.

4.5.2 Options are being explored for future network provision with other partners, for example, with the NHS.

4.6 **Telephony**

4.6.1 To enable a member of staff to use any telephone on the network but retain a personal telephone number requires the implementation of VOIP (voice over IP telephony). This will also enable the integration of desk phones, mobile phones, voice mail and e-mail.

4.6.2 The implementation of VOIP is essential to achieve real workforce agility and mobile working.

4.7 **Mobile Equipment**

4.7.1 Suitable equipment will be provided to enable mobile staff to remain in the field for extended periods of time without returning to the office. Where possible this will allow on line access to back office systems or for work to be downloaded to the device, completed and uploaded back to the computer system. The type of equipment provided will depend on the nature of the work and the back office system requirements.

4.8 **Security**

4.8.1 To comply with Government guidelines and best practice all mobile devices will need to be encrypted, have personal firewalls and anti-virus software installed and connect to the Council network via a Virtual Private Network (VPN) connection using two factor authentication.

4.9 Power consumption

- 4.9.1 True thin client desk tops have a lower power consumption than traditional PC's. However, the local saving is transferred to increased power requirements in the data centre.
- 4.9.2 VOIP telephony has a higher power consumption than the current telephone system.
- 4.9.3 Overall, it is expected that the introduction of thin client devices, centralised Windows servers and VOIP telephony will result in a net reduction in power consumption with a transfer of consumption from offices to the data centre.

4.10 Implementation

- 4.10.1 It is proposed to implement changes by way of a trial within a team in IT Services prior to equipping Westminster House followed by rollout as required by the office rationalisation programme.

5 FUNDING OF DESKTOP EQUIPMENT

- 5.1 The Council has approximately 4,500 PC's.
- 5.2 There is no programme for the replacement of PC's which are usually changed when they are either no longer capable of running the applications required or are proving expensive to maintain.
- 5.3 The ICT budget does not include the cost of PC purchases which are mainly met from departmental funding on an ad hoc basis, often supported by the use of grants, and estimated at £750,000 per year. There is little sustainable funding for PC replacement which is also true of departmental file & print and applications servers.

6 FINANCIAL AND STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Cabinet has agreed that changes to office accommodation should save £1m p.a. starting in 2011-12.
- 6.2 The gross revenue budget of IT Services is £12.25m of which £9.55m is for Council services and £2.7m is the cost of the IT service to schools which is paid for by schools from their budgets.
- 6.3 The Capital Programme includes a sum of £1.5m p.a. for the four years 2009 to 2013 for the ICT implications of the Strategic Asset Review.
- 6.4 Changes to data centres, server infrastructure and networks could be financed from the Capital Programme provision.

- 6.5 Replacement desk top equipment will be charged to revenue and will be considered in a report elsewhere on this agenda.
- 6.6 For the trial and rollout to Westminster House existing staffing resources will be supplemented by temporary staff at a cost of £163,000 who could be financed from the IT Reserve. Future requirements will be determined by the pace of the office rationalisation programme.

7 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

8 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

9 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The implementation of the changes described will result in a net reduction of electricity consumption in office buildings.
- 9.2 IT is a facilitator in further energy use reduction through increased efficiency in office use, reduction in heating and air conditioning required and a reduction in mileage covered by Council staff both to and from work and in the course of their duties.

10 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

11 PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

12 LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 There are no particular implications for any Members or wards arising out of this report.

13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 13.1. No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

14 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 14.1 That Cabinet approves the information technology elements of the office rationalisation strategy.
- 14.2. That the funding of £163,000 for temporary staff in support of the IT changes be met from the IT Reserve.

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DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

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