

30 May 2017

ICT Infrastructure Investment Plan 2017/18 to 2019/20

Exec Summary.

This is an update of information sheet SR-2016/17-003, circulated to members in April 2017. To reiterate; Council has allocated up to £600k between 2017/18 and 2019/20 to upgrade the ICT infrastructure. The following is a summary of how these funds are to be utilised. It should be noted, that in order to obtain best value, some projects may be accelerated, whilst others deferred. This will be an operational matter.

Upgrade Servers

The current mix of servers are coming to their end of life. Their operating systems, whilst currently supported, will need to be upgraded during the period of this plan. As such, we will replace all the servers at Ebley Mill. New machines will be capable of running a significant number of virtual servers whilst at the same time reducing the demand for energy and cooling. Old, but functional servers will be re-utilised at our remote server room to enhance business continuity. This project is likely to be accelerated given the learning from the NHS Ranson-Attack. This will require a change to the way we work and an increase in the agility of staff.

Corporate Network

Like the servers, the network is showing signs of age and is also an area of vulnerability. It is planned to significantly reduce the reliance on the hard-wired network, floor boxes and switches, moving to Wi-Fi and facilitating a step change in physical security and promotes an agile work force.

Desktop Environment

The Council is committed to Microsoft for its server and desktop environments. Over the next 3 years, the Council will migrate to a Windows 10 operating system (wherever possible) utilising Office 365. Some back-office systems will not be able to transfer immediately, and possibly not in the medium term, and as such there will still be a demand for major systems to work within a Citrix environment.

It was initially thought that Office 365 could provide a secure environment to members to access their emails remotely. Unless the Council owns the device and can bolt down some very key aspects of the machine, we cannot do this for councillors. Instead we are installing Blackberry Works (BW), an updated version of a product used by the County Council. Members have been emailed by Cllr Braun with details of this project.

The Citrix software will be upgraded to add additional functionality and the current stable of Wyse terminals replaced by lightweight laptops. These replacements are funded, however where a service wishes to increase the agility of its teams, this will be a matter for them to fund separately.

Philip Skill – Head of ICT and Lead Business Consultant
Ext: 4390
Email: Philip.skill@stroud.gov.uk

30 May 2017

The shift to laptops is not only cheaper than a comparable Wyse terminal, but can operate wirelessly. Remotely and incorporate software telephony; similar to skype or Facetime.

Channel Shift

The Council wishes to move as many transactional processes to automated/internet based communications. This will require considerable expenditure on set up costs in installing and integrating systems. The cost estimates in the previous information paper are up costs only, with yearly maintenance being funded by reduced costs in the service areas as they switch to a transactional environment. Maintenance costs, including management costs will be repatriated to service teams who must identify savings in excess of these costs.

Agility

We have spoken about making staff and councillors agile. This is not the same as mobile, remote or even home-working. What it is, is a methodology by which the council provides a robust infrastructure so that services can utilise the benefits of new technology to place staff where they need to be, rather than tethered to a desk in The Mill.

In addition to making the workforce flexible, we are making our projects iterative. Projects where there are many unknowns are now being managed through a system known as Agile. Where Prince II methodology sets out all the deliverables and the timetable in advance, Agile forces the managers to repeatedly review their projects to cater for the inevitable changes.

As such, the ICT projects, and there are many of them, will adapt as the environment changes and other projects impose restrictions, or more likely open up opportunities; much the same as services will adapt as Channel Shift takes hold.