

MEETING:	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE:	15 MARCH 2010
TITLE OF REPORT:	INFORMATION COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGY SERVICES UPDATE
REPORT BY:	JOINT DIRECTOR OF ICT

CLASSIFICATION: Open

Purpose

To provide a further progress report on Information Communication and Technology (ICT) service issues requested following the scrutiny review of ICT and subsequent updates.

Recommendation(s)

THAT (a) the report be noted, subject to any comments the Committee wishes to make;

and

(b) the Committee considers the content and frequency of any further progress reports it wishes to receive.

Key Points Summary

- Progress has been made on two key council ICT projects: Data Centre Refurbishment and Community Network Upgrade
- Progress has been made in the areas highlighted in the previous report: encryption, schools website security and technical links between health and council networks
- Work is ongoing in the following areas: reduction in ICT systems, broadband infrastructure across the county and governance links between health and social care.

Alternative Options

1 None.

Reasons for Recommendations

2 The report is provided for information.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Zack Pandor, Joint Director of ICT on (01432) 347611

Introduction and Background

- 3 In September 2009, the Strategic Monitoring Committee (SMC) received the latest progress report on the scrutiny review of Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) Services, conducted in November 2008. SMC resolved that a further report be provided in six months with a focus on a number of key areas. This report provides an update on those key areas.

Key Considerations

- 4 The Data Centre Refurbishment at Thorn Office Centre has been completed. The two main elements of the work carried out are a new fire suppression systems to comply with the latest legal standards and best practice and new and more efficient air conditioning units. The total budget set aside for the work was £400k. The final invoice from the contractors has yet to be sent to the authority, however the cost is expected to be well within the budgeted amount.
- 5 The existing contract for the community network (the councils internal computer and telephony network between sites), held with Siemens, expires in March 2010. A new supplier (Update Infrastructure Services) will take over provision of network connections, with the management of the network being provided in-house. The new contract has been let for a minimum period of three years, and will result in cash savings of £720k over that time period.
- 6 The encryption project has to date encrypted 92% of the originally identified 781 devices. The remainder are being worked on over the next few weeks, with a planned completion date of 31 March 2010. In addition over 125 encrypted memory sticks have been distributed to departments. The enforcement of being able to use council only provided memory sticks is planned for completion June 2010, and further formal communications will be sent out accordingly.
- 7 Work has progressed on connecting the Council and NHS Herefordshire networks in a manner that satisfies nationally mandated security standards (separate for health and local authority). This connectivity will allow appropriate authority staff to access NHS applications and data, and vice versa. The council and PCT are concluding the agreement of a (revised) Information Sharing Protocol that will provide the legal framework in which individual departments and services will be able to access data. The agreement is out for consultation until 5 March and planned to be ratified by 31 March 2010. Following this, individual agreements and data flows between the organisations will need to be mapped on an as required basis.
- 8 A number of ICT systems have been decommissioned as a result of ICT initiatives. Translating this into cashable savings have resulted in £72k recurring savings. In addition a number of data sets (previously held in spreadsheets and standalone databases) have also been decommissioned.
- 9 The council's Economic Regeneration team have been taking a lead in discussions with BT and other stakeholders in highlighting relatively poor broadband infrastructure across the county and adopting solutions to overcome this. BT has provided some details of new technologies that extend the reach of broadband over longer distances. Further discussions have been held with the West Midlands regional bodies and the rural broadband consortium. A broadband strategy paper was taken to cabinet on 18 December and a Herefordshire broadband summit has been planned for Mid-March to discuss implementation.

- 10 A provision that staff be asked to reimburse to the Council a specified percentage of training costs if they decide to leave the Council within a specified time of receiving the training has been included in a draft policy on study support. However, the policy has yet to be approved.
- 11 The Committee also made a number of specific recommendations. The position on these is as follows:
- All service areas have been advised (via team talk and first press) of the need to keep content on the internet and intranet updated
 - Members have been reminded of the opportunity to take up individual ICT training
 - The outcome from the school websites security audit in Autumn 2009 was as follows: three issues were highlighted as a result of the audit: i) insufficient general access control to some sites, ii) ability to penetrate one site using non-sophisticated hacking techniques and iii) ability for some web content to be amended without needing to log-in. Once these vulnerabilities were identified, remedial action was taken and counter-measures have now been put in place to address the underlying weaknesses.

Community Impact

- 12 Continued investment in ICT ensures the authority is able to deliver effective and efficient services to its customers. Pursuing the broadband agenda with community, business and industry stakeholders has the potential for significant community benefit.

Financial Implications

- 13 ICT schemes referred to in this report have been budgeted for as part of the authority's financial plans.

Legal Implications

- 14 None.

Risk Management

- 15 The refurbishment of the data centre reduced the risk to the authority of data loss caused by inadequate computer facilities.
- 16 The award of the community network has reduced the risk to the authority of being unable to continue to deliver ICT services, applications and data to the authority and the citizens, businesses and other organisations served.
- 17 The ongoing laptop and device encryption programme has reduced the risk of data leakage from the organisation which can result from mislaid or stolen laptops (or memory sticks.) This also reduces the risk of reputational damage and increases confidence in the authority to manage its data security.
- 18 Universal access to health and social care data by all appropriate staff is not fully enabled, the risk therefore remains that clinical and other professional staff groups do not have straightforward electronic access to the complete patient/citizen record, and time is expended in searching for relevant information.

Consultees

19 None.

Appendices

20 None.

Background Papers

- None.