

OUTLINE STRATEGIC BUSINESS CASE

Directorate	Corporate Services – ICT Services
Scheme Name	Wide Area Network (WAN) replacement
Budget Holder	- Director Resources

Project aims and objectives:

As the digital world is constantly changing, it's paramount to keep on top of technological developments to introduce digital modernisation into the Council. Replacing the Wide Area Network (WAN) at Herefordshire Council offers several strategic, operational, and financial benefits, helping ensure that the Council's network infrastructure is future-proof, secure, and able to meet the growing demands of modern service delivery

Our current aging WAN solution's support contract is set to expire in 2025. By modernising our existing solution this project will support the Council in delivering its strategic "ambition to digitalise and become a digital-first organisation." This will support the Council with its Digital Data & Technology strategy 2024 – 2028 & planning towards digital transformation by providing a stable, modern and fit for purpose infrastructure.

Project Aim:

The primary objective for the project is to support the council in making our network more secure (due to an ever-increasing likelihood of a Cyber-attack taking place) and reliable (as we provide infrastructure services to external partners and in order to support the increase post covid of the number of staff working from home or none council sites). Modernising our network platform will provide additional benefits such as enabling the introduction of AI Capabilities which will facilitate the council's broader goals i.e. improving public services, enhancing digital transformation, and achieving cost efficiency.

The change in system will enable an improved customer service delivery across HC, modern ways of working and will present new opportunities via digital technology which can be facilitated by a new WAN.

Procurement will be through an approved Local Government Procurement Framework (CCS or similar) to ensure that best value is demonstrated.

Commissioning and migration activity will be carried out by the Councils contracted IT provider – Hoople Ltd.

Estimated costs and funding sources:

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	Future Years	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Capital cost of project					
Implementation costs (including supplier and equipment costs)	286				
TOTAL	286				286
Funding sources					
Corporate Funded Borrowing	286				286
TOTAL					
Revenue budget implications					
New - £140k	-32	-32	-32	-32	
Current MLL Contract - £172k					
Overlap of contracts (migration parallel run)	50				
TOTAL	18	-32	-32	-32	

Benefits and risks:**Benefits: -**

An introduction of a replacement WAN will provide:

- **Faster Connectivity:** A modern WAN infrastructure can significantly enhance data transmission speeds, enabling faster access to applications, services, and information for both staff and residents.
- **Reduced Downtime:** Moving to a more reliable WAN can decrease network outages, leading to improved availability and continuity of critical council services.
- **Enhanced User Experience:** Improved network performance will enhance the user experience for staff, residents, and external stakeholders accessing Council services.
- **Cloud Integration:** A modern WAN supports seamless integration with cloud-based services, enabling the Council to leverage Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) applications and cloud storage effectively.
- **Remote and Flexible Working:** A replacement WAN solution would enable better remote access for our staff, supporting flexible working policies and improving productivity.
- **Smart City Initiatives:** Replacing the WAN lays the groundwork for future initiatives like Internet of Things (IoT) implementations, AI-powered services, and enhanced citizen engagement platforms.
- **Increased Network Security:** Newer WAN technology will come with built-in advanced security features like encryption, firewalls, and intrusion detection systems that protect Council data and networks from external threats.
- **Compliance with Regulations:** Replacing our WAN ensures that the Council remains compliant with data protection regulations such as GDPR and cybersecurity frameworks.
- **Centralized Security Management:** A replacement WAN supports more effective, centralised management of security policies across all locations, ensuring consistent security controls are applied throughout the network.
- **Lower Operational Costs:** Modern WAN solutions, offer optimized bandwidth usage and lower costs for long-distance data transfers, reducing overall operational expenses.
- **Scalability:** A modern WAN will provide scalable solutions, allowing the Council to easily expand services as needed without major investments in new hardware.

Risks:

- **Implementation Risks:** Potential challenges during deployment, such as integration issues with existing systems.