

Report to the Resources Select Committee

Date of meeting: 28 March 2017



Portfolio: Technology & Support Services

Subject: Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Update

Responsible Officer: David Newton (01992 564580).

Democratic Services Officer: Adrian Hendry (01992 564246).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

To note the progress on ICT projects during 2016/2017.

Executive Summary:

Work on projects within the ICT Strategy for 2013/2018 is still on-going and this report gives an update on progress. Last year 91% of projects were completed on time. This year has seen ICT concentrating on strengthening the resilience of both systems and infrastructure with a number of key systems being out hosted.

As this existing strategy nears completion, work has already started on the next iteration of the ICT Strategy 2018/2023 which will be presented to Cabinet in due course. Cloud based options for both systems and infrastructure are already featuring heavily. In the near future, most software products will only be available via subscription payments. Historically, software has been purchased outright from capital but this change in supplier behaviour will necessitate a switch to revenue expenditure.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

The terms of reference of the panel include – ‘to monitor and review progress on the implementation of all major ICT systems’.

Other Options for Action:

Members’ could ask for further detailed information on any of the schemes summarised on the following pages.

1. Desktop printer replacement

Project description; At the commencement of this project, there were approximately 140 printers in the EFDC estate, a ratio of approximately 1 printer for every 4 members of staff. The cost of both consumables and ICT support had become unsustainable.

Situation Report; As part of the ICT Strategy and the Transformation Programme, these individual desktop printers have now been replaced with 26 high performance Multi-Functional Devices (MFD's) generating a saving of £20,000 per annum. All the MFD's are now in place and the majority of desktop printers and spare cartridges removed awaiting disposal. Due to the number of printers and cartridges involved, a number of companies have been approached to sell these on our behalf. Approximately 15 desktop printers remain in place due to letter template issues associated with some of the more complicated core systems. ICT are confident that any issues can be resolved and that the remaining printers will be removed within the next 4 months. This is the first major project of the transformation programme to have been completed.

2. UAV (Drones)

Project description; Following a report to Cabinet the council agreed to purchase 2 Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) under the 'Invest To Save' scheme. The report highlighted many areas where cost savings can be achieved through innovative technical solutions (such as various aerial surveys, 3D modelling and compliance uses) and savings to officer time, along with potential for income generation by selling services, photos and videos.

Situation Report; EFDC now have one Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) qualified 'pilot' and an additional staff member will be CAA qualified shortly. This process has taken approximately 6 months and involved the production of detailed procedure and flight manuals, a written examination and finally a test flight monitored by qualified examiners.

The first flight for Planning Enforcement has now successfully taken place. There are 30 pending Planning Enforcement flight requests. Each flight needs careful planning, with permission required from owners to use their land for take-off and landing sites and in a lot of cases, approval from Stansted Airport to fly in their airspace. UAV flights are publicised on the EFDC website on the day the flights are due to take place.

It is anticipated that at least 2 flights a week will be achievable in the near future. As well as Planning Enforcement, requests have been received from Housing for roofing surveys and external organisations have also expressed interest in hiring the UAV service, with ICT receiving approaches from both Essex County Council and the Forestry Commission.

3. Website out hosting

Project description; To enable the continued dissemination of information in the event of losing internet connectivity to the Civic Offices.

Situation Report; The website is now completely hosted at an external site. In the event of a disaster recovery situation members, staff and residents can be kept informed as the website will be unaffected. The website has been out hosted for 2 months, with only a 2 minute interruption to availability during this time.

4. SIP trunking – telephone system out hosting

Project description; To enable telephone communications to continue in the event of a

disaster at the Civic Offices.

Situation Report; SIP trunking is effectively a process of sending and receiving telephone calls using the internet. This has replaced our traditional and expensive ISDN connections for the telephone system. As well as generating a £12,000 per annum saving, this solution has the added advantage of enabling telephone extensions to be redirected very quickly to any alternative number. Priority numbers would typically be redirected in less than one day.

5. Mod.Gov – Committee Management system out hosting

Project description; To ensure that the democratic process can continue in the event of the loss of the Civic Offices.

Situation Report; The out hosting project proved problematic for our supplier, with the transfer taking longer than anticipated and a number of issues causing access problems following the system going live. These problems have been resolved and the system is now stable.

6. GOOD/Blackberry – product development

Project description; Improving remote access to emails and calendars.

Situation Report; GOOD has recently been acquired by Blackberry and is now known as 'Blackberry WORK'. The product is currently undergoing a number of changes. ICT have now implemented the first stage, which although mainly cosmetic, has introduced faster response times, better search facilities and the ability to share calendars.

Further enhancements such as the ability to print locally and the ability to use other applications such as Microsoft Office within the secure Blackberry container are planned for future releases.

7. Storage solution for public facing servers

Project description; With the increase in remote working and system integration with external partners, the secure environment which holds our public facing servers will need to have sufficient storage space available. This project will add capacity and improve performance and resilience.

Situation Report; The new storage solution has been successfully implemented and has increased the disk storage available by 9 Terabytes.

8. Upgrade of the general ledger system

Project description; E-Financials is our general ledger system, the current version was unsupported and required a chargeable upgrade to get us onto the latest supported version, which also offered greater functionality.

Situation Report; The E-Financial system has been upgraded and is now on the most recent, supported version. The additional functionality allows spreadsheets to be seamlessly uploaded into the system and allows for an improved bank reconciliation process.

9. Essential security enhancements

Project description; A number of security devices and appliances are in use to protect our ICT infrastructure from external threats. Two key items needed replacement in order to meet the

requirements of the PSN (Public Sector Network) code of connection, and also to ensure the safe operation of our systems.

Situation Report; All devices are now in place. These have not only improved security, but have also reduced the load on our internet gateway by approximately 40% increasing the resilience of this vital connection.

Resource Implications:

The proposed ICT Work Programme and resource requirements are presented to Cabinet each year.

Legal and Governance Implications:

None

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

None

Consultation Undertaken:

Liaison and presentations to Leadership Team.

Background Papers:

ICT Strategy – 2013/2018

Report to Cabinet October 2015 (for 2016/17)

Impact Assessments:Risk Management

All projects are assessed on an individual basis and a risk capture sheet is contained within the latest ICT Business Plan.