

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 16 June 2016

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Community & Resources

PORTFOLIO: Resources

SUBJECT: ICT & Support Services Capital Programme

WARDS: Borough-Wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To outline to the Executive Board the ICT & Support Services Capital Programme, highlighting the proposed programme of activities which support the maintenance and development of the Councils technology infrastructure. Full Council agreed the Capital Allocation at its March 2016 meeting.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Executive Board notes and approves the programme and IT Capital Programme spend profile for 2016/2017.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Supported by last year's capital programme the authority's technology infrastructure has undergone a considerable upgrade with major changes to:

- The Internal Network
- The Wi-Fi infrastructure
- The Server infrastructure
- The Storage infrastructure
- Server Infrastructure Licensing through a VMware Enterprise Agreement.

These changes have given the authority what is now a multi-site resilient technology architecture that will enable the delivery of a true cloud based service to all of its users. At the same time this new architecture has allowed the consolidation of the authority's server infrastructure and this split solution (Municipal Building/Picow Farm) enables the two data centre locations to work as one, seamlessly spreading the load on the services and creating greater resilience of the Council's vital IT infrastructure.

Server infrastructure licensing is now dealt with under a five year Enterprise Agreement with VMware. This has delivered a 75% discount to the Council through negotiation and a competitive tendering process.

The storage infrastructure along with its associated network and server solutions are also being dealt with under negotiated 5 year support agreements

some of which are based upon the most heavily discounted contracts for 2015/16 from a number of vendors reducing the authority's total cost of ownership over this period. Software licenses presented one of the biggest ongoing costs of IT for the Council. Obtaining the most cost effective arrangements in place is crucial.

The authority's prudent use of its Capital Programme has allowed this architecture to incrementally grow into what is now a cost effective facility using the best of breed technologies. This facility will now serve the authority's need for change and innovation over the coming years.

Key Programme Areas for the 2016/2017 ICT Capital Programme:

It is proposed that the Capital Programme for this year will be split into 3 distinct areas: Licensing, Desktop Development and Cloud Services.

Licensing

The 2015/16 programme was focused upon the technology infrastructure the 2016/17 programme will focus upon the refresh of the authority's desktop environment and the associated departmental and user requirements.

The drive for greater efficiencies increases the focus upon the individual user's requirements. Many officers throughout the authority require greater flexibility and the ability to access many new in-house systems as well as major third party software packages that in many cases can be shared with external organisations and partners of the authority. Sharing can help reduce the costs to the Council.

This complex requirement linked to the need to use Microsoft server and desktop application licensing has always been a complex and expensive aspect of any IT solution. Licensing rules are constantly evolving which means that the need to set prices and requirements for extended periods becomes essential.

Negotiations have been underway to complete what will become an Enterprise Licensing agreement with Microsoft to compliment the previous year's infrastructure focused agreements. This negotiation with Microsoft and its resellers is now complete and will cost approximately £300,000 per annum under an agreement offering the authority a 55% discount on the standard Government pricing model.

This will offer associated server software, database software, telephony (Lync), desktop operating system, Microsoft Office and the associated Client Access Licenses required to deploy Microsoft solutions.

Desktop and EUC Development

In order to allow the vast array and often complex requirements of many of our user base, innovative and new ways of working will be introduced allowing every desk based work station within the authority the ability to allow any user to sit at that location and access their customised workspace and applications.

This EUC (End User Compute) development project has been underway for the last 12 months creating what will become the ability to access individual applications or a desktop interface on any work station or browser on any device in a secure manner.

This will enable external partners within restricted networks access to HBC based solutions and this will enable officers to access remote working solutions, be that at home or within client locations using an array of available devices.

It will also speed up access times to the desktop environment and improve the technology experience across the board.

Many people across the authority have been using what has been called a VDi desktop successfully for the last two to three years – this new project will develop this experience and takes what is an excellent solution and offers greater flexibility and increased security.

In order to compliment this solution considerable efforts have been made in the background to improve encryption and anti-virus/malware systems, improve SharePoint and expand and improve email facilities. All of these individual yet quite large projects will bring together the new EUC interface that will enhance flexible and remote working across the Council.

This project will include the upgrade and refresh of the McAfee Security Solution at approximately £160,000, again over a period, to compliment other developments.

A further 30 smaller software, infrastructure and maintenance developments supporting this solution will take approximately £160,000 to complete.

Devices:

In order to allow each workstation within the authority to become generic the programme will, over the next 18 months, start to remove and replace those Laptop's and PC based devices with terminal based devices, allowing those users that do not require their own device greater flexibility, also reducing the considerable replacement costs associated with fixed devices in the longer term. Those that require a mobile device will retain the use but those that do not require such flexibility will have the option to use any location or utilise pooled devices if required.

This is expected to cost in the region of £500,000 over an 18 month period, but the life expectancy of these devices can be between 7 – 10 years, so reducing the repair, maintenance and replacement impact long term.

Cloud Development

Digital storage is now the biggest concern associated with any centralised or cloud based technology solution. In summary file sizes are increasing as software solutions offer greater and improved functionality. Fast secure access to digital data is now essential rather than desirable.

A project is in place to develop a low cost means of storing and accessing those documents that are essential and require archiving, due to legislative retention periods or business need. The Records Management Unit is proving invaluable in providing a central point for records for the Council.

As with all technical solutions fast access comes at a cost, so the storage used to house server based solutions is based upon fast digital disks and as such is expensive. All of this has to be backed up onto some form of disk on a daily basis with extended retention policies in place for many services. This means that the amount of storage space starts to become considerable and costly over a short period of time, particularly given the need to reduce office space, and greater use of centralised data increases.

Data retention policies are currently under review given the costs associated with records retention.

This review will look at the removal of inactive data in the context of both legislation and corporate policy. This project will also look at the media the authority's data resides upon as well, by looking into new technologies that will enable inactive data to be backed off to low cost slower media – whilst retaining the high value faster media for essential day to day operation. When discussing slower media it must be remembered that this is still enterprise class media but a user may wait 1 or 2 seconds to retrieve a document rather than gain the millisecond response expected with current data.

The cost of the project to release approximately 350 Terabytes of data will be approximately £200,000.

Proposed Financial Spend Profile:

Licensing:	£300,000
EUC Desktop developments:	£320,000
Device Replacement:	£500,000 (over 18 Months)
Cloud:	£200,000
Total	£1,320,000

As detailed above the projected spend profile exceeds the budgetary allowance of £1.1 million. However, the device replacement programme owing to the amount of work involved in replacing such a considerable number of devices, will be spread over an 18 months period, and as always, through negotiation and competitive procurement, the aim is to reduce costs at every opportunity, as shown through recent procurement and solution deliveries. The programme will be delivered within the budget allocated by the Council.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The ICT Capital programme will continue to be scrutinised by the ICT Strategy Board, monthly meetings with the Strategic Director, Community & Resources, monthly review with Financial Services and fortnightly meetings with the Resources Portfolio Holder.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

The proposal will support staff in delivering the service efficiently and in modern ways.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

The proposal will support staff in delivering the service efficiently and in modern ways.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

The proposal will support staff in delivering the service efficiently and in modern ways.

6.4 A Safer Halton

The proposal will support staff in delivering the service efficiently and in modern ways.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

The proposal will support staff in delivering the service efficiently and in modern ways.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 The key risk of the project is ensuring that there is an effective balance between supporting evolving business needs and supporting existing working practices. By implementing the correct technology, alignment with the Accommodation Strategy and effective training programme and project management, this key risk will be mitigated.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 No issues

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

9.1 None for the purposes of the Act