

**Committee:** IT Working Group  
**Date:** 7 January 2009  
**Title:** Government Connect (GC)  
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**Agenda Item**

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Item for  
Information

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**Summary**

1. This report is to advise Members of the progress on Government Connect (GC) and the implications for this Council.

**Recommendations**

2. Members note the content of this report.

**Background Papers**

None

**Impact**

Communication/Consultation	Staff are being consulted throughout the implementation process
Community Safety	None
Equalities	None
Finance	The funds required are available from a mix of both capital and revenue budgets.
Human Rights	None
Legal implications	None
Sustainability	None
Ward-specific impacts	None
Workforce/Workplace	Without the new connection electronic communication with the Department for Work and Pensions will cease on 31 March 2009.

## **Situation**

### **What is GC?**

3. GC is a secure connection between local authorities and Central Government. It provides;
  - secure e-mail
  - secure browser access to applications
  - authentication (of citizens): this would enable people to use a single secure log-on to access Local and Central Government services
4. It is also planned for GC to provide;
  - secure file transfer and data exchange
  - secure employee authentication.
5. Central Government already has a secure network. GC gives us access to that network. So GC itself is really just a connection – like an Internet connection, but to a private network – and a box that allows traffic from our network to go out over that connection.
6. The thing that makes GC complicated is the Code of Connection (CoCo). This is a set of policies and procedures that the council must adhere to before it can be granted access to the Government's secure network.
7. Even though the GC connection will only be used by Housing Benefit staff the requirements are that the whole council must satisfy the requirements of the CoCo before connection will be allowed.

### **CoCo Progress So Far**

8. As expected the first formal CoCo submission was returned with additional questions from the DWP. Officers are currently working through these and addressing the issues raised.
9. A revised CoCo will be submitted mid January. We are expecting issues to be raised especially in the area of home / remote working. In effect DWP are trying to stop us providing access to corporate systems to anyone who has a wireless network at home. This course of action is contrary to the council's agreement around home access for both Members and Officers. A business case, which is a DWP requirement for exemptions, is currently being prepared but we are expecting significant challenge.

### **Work Completed to Date**

10. In addition to the large amount of work completed in respect of the CoCo document itself there has already been a significant amount of progress in introducing and implementing the changes required. To date Officers have:
  - a. Introduced complex passwords

- b. Changed the administrator password for all systems and amended code as necessary
- c. Installed, configured and tested complex log file software across all servers
- d. Made significant firewall changes and during January 2009 will take over the day to day running of the firewall
- e. Rolled out the 'device lock' software to stop unauthorised use of the cd/dvd drive and USB ports
- f. Implemented additional external penetration testing
- g. Written a number of policies and guidance notes

### **Work to be done**

11. By 31 March 2009 there are a number of pieces of work still to complete:

- a. Laptop/mobile device encryption software
- b. Patch management software
- c. Test and introduce Blackberries
- d. Citrix Suite Upgrade
- e. Document Imaging systems merger
- f. Introduce and Test the new Gsx telephone lines
- g. Commission a new exchange server
- h. Undertake user checks. We have to verify identity from passports and driving licence

12. It is envisaged that it will take two Officers, working full-time on the project, up until 31 March 2009 to complete the work outstanding.

### **Costs**

13. There is no external funding available to assist with the costs of this project. It is estimated that the cost of the project, including purchasing of software, specialist assistance and at least one additional server and firewall will cost in the region of £30,000 to implement.

14. Whilst most of the cost is one off set-up there is a requirement for an annual 'health check'. This has to be undertaken by an external specialist and it is estimated that this would cost about £3,500 per annum. There is no budget for this on-going cost and savings will therefore have to be identified within the existing budget.

15. The funds required to achieve compliance are available in the transformation government capital budget. The consultancy costs have to be met from the revenue budget which will use the remaining 2008/9 consultancy budget.