

**IT WORKING GROUP held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD
SAFFRON WALDEN at 5.00 pm on 15 MAY 2006**

Present: Councillor R F Freeman - Chairman
Councillors R M Lemon and A R Thawley.

Officers in attendance: M Brean, V Harvey, A Webb and N Whitman.

Also present: Councillor J P Murphy and Geoff Rich the Councils telecommunications consultant.

ITWG50 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Artus.

ITWG51 **TELEPHONY PROCUREMENT REPORT**

The Executive Manager (Customer Services) provided details on the progress of the new telephone system. Members, staff and Geoff Rich visited Siemens at Milton Keynes on 28 April 2006 to see a demonstration of the telephone system functionality. Appended to the report was the proposal from OGCbuying.solutions' on a managed telecommunications service (Mts) to UDC.

Further clarification had been requested from Global Crossing on the revenue costs of the managed service so a comparison could be made with the current system revenue costs.

Geoff Rich went through the report voicing his concerns and recommendations on the report. He said the revised report had no major problems and offered 85% of the picture. There were many positive points, including the adoption of a contact centre, voiceover IP and email. The paragraph on optional email and web handling did not clarify cost.

The report mentioned free calls but did not say it was subject to any conditions and there was an absence of a service level agreement.

It was indicated there would be no more than 4.5 hours downtime per annum, which was a very low percentage.

Remote Working

The remote working could link Voice Over IP with other services. One drawback could be logging on for the remote user. Flexible working in the office at present included hot desking, this could become problematic as the system resets the users computer after a set time; it would do this to compensate for users not logging out. This would be an automatic feature included in the price.

The report made no reference to offering Voice Over IP to remote users, but there was potential to have home work agents at a later date.

Call Centre

Simplicity could be gained by integrating CRM and Siemens agent desktop. The report made no reference to any training given to staff outside of the Call Centre. IVR, speech recognition, would allow callers to be directed by following the automated system.

Councillor Freeman said callers should be able to choose, early in the call, whether to remain with an automated response or to ask to talk to a human. This option had not been included in the current figures.

The length of the contract was unclear, but a number of years would be assumed. Members asked about the reliability of the supplier, to which the Executive Manager (Customer Services) said Global Crossing were a large organisation and OGC would not work with them if they were under performing. OGC signed the agreement with Global Crossing 10 years ago and would be signing another contract.

The Head of IT said this agreement was not commonly used within local authorities and UDC would be the first Local Authority to take the agreement.

Geoff Rich would prepare a list of questions to give to OGC and Global Crossing to answer before this working group made a recommendation to the Operations Committee.

AGREED that a list of questions would be presented to OGCbuying.solutions' and this item would return to the working group.

ITWG52 EXCHANGE (EMAIL RESILIENCE)

The Head of IT had prepared a report outlining recent problems with Exchange (the Microsoft system which supported Outlook) and the proposed improved, more resilient replacement infrastructure.

Members viewed the simple diagram of the current Exchange system and the way it integrated with both remote and internal users and the proposed infrastructure. The new Exchange Servers and Storage Area Network (SAN) would make redundant a number of existing servers. Two of these would be recycled to make the MSAM server and UDCHome server to provide resilience for all remote users.

The new infrastructure would have many benefits for the Council, including 2 RAIDED servers with dual processors, 6 disk SAN, monitoring software and higher resilience.

The total cost of the new infrastructure would be £36,123. The 2006/07 IT Capital Programme included a sum of £35,000 with £4,000 revenue consequences to fund an extension to the existing SAN. It was proposed to re-designate this money to fund this programme of work.

Councillor Thawley asked what the line situation with the Dunmow office would be. The Principal Technical Officer said the current connection was with BT, it was a good service but expensive; this service offered 2 MEG broadband.

Councillor Murphy said that many councils had a fast backbone network that everyone could access. The Head of IT said this would entail a set up cost and space would need to be found for a server room. Councillor Murphy then suggested the servers were housed in two separate rooms; this idea would be put to the external consultants. Asking this question would incur no extra costs, as the Council had already purchased 10 consultancy days, some of which remained un-used.

The Head of IT then went on to explain that if this SAN was adopted UDC would have a more robust email and server system. This would be achieved by the storage database being split over 10 databases alphabetically and they would be mirrored. Any downtime would be a maximum of 15 seconds.

Councillor Freeman asked about software failure. He was told there would be monitoring software on the databases and it would be able to predict any problems.

If this was to be agreed the implementation would start on 1 June 2006 and take only a few days to set in place.

RECOMMENDED that:

- 1) Members approved the proposed Exchange Server infrastructure as shown in Appendix Two;
- 2) Members approve the re-designation of the 2006/07 Storage Area Network IT Capital Programme item to fund this project.
- 3) Operations Committee on 29 June be asked to approve the changed use of the Capital Programme provision.

ITWG53

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman brought to the table RSA and Councillor Murphy suggested that the Council move away from it. The Head of IT said there were not many problems with the system and MSAM was now using a new version. The Principal Technical Officer said the Council would look into alternatives.

The meeting ended at 6.35pm.