

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

JOINT INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date: Thursday, 29 June 2023

Time: 6.00pm

Place: Council Chamber, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage

Present: Stevenage Borough Council - Councillors Loraine Rossati (Chair),
Richard Henry and Jeannette Thomas.
East Herts Council – Councillor Vicky Glover-Ward.

Start / End Start Time: 6.00pm
Time: End Time: 7.05pm

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Ben Crystall (East Herts Council) and Joseph Dumont (East Herts Council).

2 ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

It was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Loraine Rossati (SBC) be elected Chair of the Joint Committee, and Councillor Joseph Dumont (EHDC) be elected Vice-Chair of the Joint Committee for the 2023/24 Municipal Year.

3 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Terms of Reference for the Joint Committee, as approved by the constituent councils, were noted.

4 MINUTES - 7 MARCH 2023

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Committee held on 7 March 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

In relation to Minute 5 – Action Lists, the SBC Strategic Director (CF) advised that the 13 actions that were being tracked on a monthly basis were operational issues.

The Chair suggested the introduction of a dashboard to report actions and progress on a quarterly basis. She asked for the Quarter 1 2023/24 dashboard to be sent out to Committee Members for comment rather than wait until the next meeting in the Autumn. The content of the dashboard would need to be determined, but should be at a strategic level, as well as containing information on IT outages/fix times.

The Chair asked Members to advise officers on what they felt should be included in the dashboard.

5 INTRODUCTION TO ICT SHARED SERVICE FOR NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The Assistant Director and Chief Technology Officer gave a presentation which provided an introduction to the SBC/EHDC Shared ICT Service.

The Assistant Director and Chief Technology Officer advised that the Shared ICT Service was set up in 2012. In June 2019, a review of the Shared Service was completed by 31 Ten. During the Covid-19 pandemic in 2023, demand for IT services increased by 350%. In February 2022, the Shared Service was further reviewed by the Society for Innovation, Technology and Modernisation (SOCITM).

The Assistant Director and Chief Technology Officer stated that the SOCITM report had highlighted three key areas of activity:

- Fixing the foundation of the Service (resources and technology);
- Transitioning to a new ICT and Digital Service Partnership; and
- Working through options for savings and convergence (a Shared Service roadmap).

The Assistant Director and Chief Technology Officer commented that, since 2020, the number of calls to the IT Helpdesk had increased from 4,000 to 14,000 calls per year. In 2020, the Service had issued 150 laptops, and there were currently 950 laptops in circulation (primarily due to increased homeworking during and since the Covid-19 pandemic).

It was **RESOLVED** that the presentation be noted.

6 IT FOUNDATION PROJECTS UPDATE

The Assistant Director and Chief Technology Officer gave a presentation updating the Joint Committee on the IT Foundation projects.

The Assistant Director and Chief Technology Officer explained that the Foundation projects included upgrading the IT Network (work had started two years ago and was now nearing conclusion); Upgrading the Wi-Fi Network (this was 10 years old and needed updating); and Upgrading the Firewalls (these were 9 years old and required updating). There were also projects to refresh telephony, produce a Cyber Security Treatment Plan, and Resources (medium and long term plans for capital, revenue and workforce investment).

The Assistant Director and Chief Technology Officer advised that the main corporate firewalls had been replaced, and that the internal firewalls were in the process of being upgraded. The final part of the Network upgrade was being finalised. Both projects were scheduled for completion by Quarter 3 2023/24.

In respect of the Wi-Fi network upgrade, the Assistant Director and Chief Technology Officer stated that soft market testing had been completed, and that the procurement process had commenced and would be completed by the end of Quarter 3 2023/24, with implementation being completed by the end of Quarter 4. With regard to telephony, he commented that soft market testing was currently

underway, resources were being reviewed and the procurement process should commence in Quarter 3 or 4.

In reply to a series of questions, the Assistant Director and Chief Technology Officer stated:

- hardware generally lasts for 4 – 7 years, and should be reviewed every 4 years. Software packages should be reviewed every 3 years;
- it was still intended to migrate many services to the cloud, however this also meant that the capital funding requirement moved from capital to revenue, the impact of which was being assessed;
- all of the Wi-Fi network components were out of date (band width, connection speed, etc.);
- Microsoft was one of the main players regarding file sharing facilitation, and had a number of UK Data Centres. Depending on the application, the dominant players in the public sector providing systems and software included Civica, Serco and Northgate.

In response to requests from the Chair, the Assistant Director and Chief Technology Officer agreed to provide Committee Members with details of using MS Teams as the basis for a future telephony system versus any other provider; and a briefing note detailing the implications of the Wi-Fi network upgrade, together with costs.

It was **RESOLVED** that the presentation be noted.

7 SOCITM REPORT UPDATE

The Assistant Director and Chief Technology Officer gave a presentation updating the Joint Committee on the Society for Innovation Technology and Modernisation (SOCITM) report produced for the Shared Service in 2022.

The Assistant Director and Chief Technology Officer advised that the SOCITM report included the proposed creation of a new Target Operating Model (TOM) for the IT Service (new staffing and roles and governance structures); the application of a Target Application Map across both Councils, and agreement to a 3 to 5 year roadmap to get to a position of convergence and rationalisation of systems; and an options appraisal for considering what the ICT Partnership of the future should look like in terms of governance and service scope.

The Assistant Director and Chief Technology Officer explained that the SOCITM report had offered 3 options for the TOM:

- Core Roles – this option provided better support for business-as usual work and reduced the risk of outages and single points of dependency;
- Enhanced Service – builds on the Core Roles option and provides transformation delivery capacity; and
- Optimal Model – build on the Enhanced Service option and supported policy and strategy, training and adoption, data analysis, business intelligence, PMO management and IT Business Analysis capacity.

In terms of the next steps, the Assistant Director and Chief Technology Officer commented that the final SOCITM report would be completed in July/August 2023; a report would be drafted for consideration by the Joint ICT Committee in September/October 2023; and the agreed option would be implemented, subject to the growth being approved as part of both Councils' budget setting process for 2024/25.

In response to a number of questions, the Assistant Director and Chief Technology Officer stated:

- the IT and Finance Teams were carrying out work on the cost of each of the options. SOCITM had provided some provisional costings, but these needed to be reviewed and then translated into how much additional cost each Council would pay;
- the ultimate option selected would be also dependent on the level of budget and resources available; and
- the salary figures for staff recommended by SOCITM were generally higher than the existing local pay scales, and these would be subject to the Stevenage Borough Council job evaluation process.

The Assistant Director and Chief Technology Officer informed Members that the intention was to take the report to the Leadership Teams of the two Councils in September 2023, prior to consideration by the Joint ICT Committee. This would enable the financial growth figures to be fed into the Medium Term Financial Strategies of both councils, prior to forming part of the 2024/25 budget process.

In order to fulfil the above timetable, it was agreed that the Joint Committee's next meeting should be moved from 14 September 2023 to 2 October 2023.

It was **RESOLVED**:

- (1) that the presentation be noted; and
- (2) that the Joint ICT Committee's next meeting be moved from Thursday, 14 September 2023 to Monday, 2 October 2023 (6.00pm at SBC Offices, Daneshill House, Stevenage).

8 URGENT PART I BUSINESS

None.

9 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in Paragraphs 1 – 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act as

amended by Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

2. That the reasons for the following reports being in Part II were accepted, and that the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

10 IT FOUNDATION PROJECTS - PART II UPDATE

The Joint Committee considered a Part II presentation from the Assistant Director and Chief Technology Officer in respect of ICT Foundation Projects, with particular emphasis on cybersecurity issues.

Following the conclusion of the presentation, the Assistant Director and Chief Technology Officer answered a number of Members' questions.

It was **RESOLVED** that the presentation be noted.

11 URGENT PART II BUSINESS

None.

CHAIR