

## Report

**Subject:** : ICT Disaster Recovery – Update on Progress & Possibilities for Sharing Arrangements.

**Report to** : The Cabinet

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**Cabinet Member for Resources** : Councillor Don Culver

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### ICT Disaster Recovery – Update on Progress and Joint Purchasing Situation

#### 1. Purpose:

1.1 To inform Cabinet of the current position with regard to implementation of the ICT disaster recovery plan, and to inform of the current situation with regard to joint purchasing opportunities for future contracts.

#### 2. Background:

2.1 In December 2005, Cabinet approved the sum of £90,000 from the capital programme to enable the creation of an ICT disaster recovery site at the Churchfields Depot, along with the purchase of 3<sup>rd</sup> party provided emergency cover, to enable replacement/repair of the councils servers, and rebuild of ICT systems, should an emergency situation occur.

#### 3. Current Position:

- 3.1 The creation of the facility at the Churchfields Depot is now well advanced. At the time of writing this report it is estimated that it will be complete and usable by the end of June 2006.
- 3.2 The cost of providing the facility will be almost exactly the previously estimated figure of £90,000, with the 3<sup>rd</sup> party 'insurance' type cover for the current year accounting for approximately £12,500 of this. The rest of the expenditure has been incurred in building/conversion costs, including a contribution of £10,000 towards ensuring that the power supply to the Depot is adequate for the councils needs.
- 3.3 Following a process of competitive tender, the contract for 3<sup>rd</sup> party emergency cover was awarded for the period 2006/7 to an organisation called 'Adam Continuity'. This company provided the most competitive quote commensurate with adequate on demand cover for the councils systems.



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- 3.4 Since placing the contract however, the position with regard to risk to the councils ICT service has changed significantly, inasmuch as the decision has been taken by Cabinet on grounds of cost, efficiency and in an effort to minimise disruption to customers and staff, to carry out a wholesale decant of the Borne Hill offices. This will mean that the server room will need to be kept running in its present location at Bourne Hill for up to 2 years, whilst the house is refurbished and the extension built.
- 3.5 Clearly it is vitally important that any changed or increased risks are managed effectively. In this case it is intended that this will be achieved partly through the work of the Design Team, including recommended protection measures for the server room based on their experience with similar projects at other sites, and also through the maintenance of adequate, up to date and regularly reviewed disaster recovery arrangements.

#### **4. Opportunities for Joint Working:**

- 4.1 Discussions around joint procurement/provision of disaster recovery services have taken place with every District Council in Wiltshire. In all cases some form of provision has already been made, often as with ourselves, with 3<sup>rd</sup> party specialist providers. Most councils are effectively mid-term with regard to these contracts.
- 4.2 The exception is Kennet District Council, who have apparently made their own internal provision, which will involve them having to purchase replacement servers as and when they are needed, and then locating them at a previously identified stand-by site within the District. However, their chosen recovery site is so remote from Salisbury as to effectively discount any form of reciprocal shared provision with them, at least for the foreseeable future.
- 4.3 Discussions also took place over an extended period with the County. Initially this option looked promising, as they were in the process of letting a large ICT support contract which included the provision of disaster recovery arrangements, and it was intended that this would be set up in such a way that partner organisations such as ourselves could join in at a suitable time, if they so wished.
- 4.4 Recently however it has emerged that the disaster recovery element at least, of the County contract, has evolved into a service that is apparently much more specific to their own needs than originally envisaged. They are currently uncertain as to whether or not any facilities might be capable of being extended to any of the District Councils, and are unclear as to when this position may be resolved.

#### **5. Shared Services Position:**

- 5.1 Since the beginning of the year, much work has taken place with other Councils in Wiltshire around developing a shared services model of service provision for a number of services, including some elements of the ICT Service, in line with the recommendations of the 2004 Gershon Efficiency Review.
- 5.2 Although it was originally intended that this project would include work around the joint provision of Hardware, Software and Consultancy, possibly including the joint provision of disaster recovery arrangements, following a feasibility study undertaken by the group, it was decided that it was best to concentrate at the present time on the Hardware and Software elements only, with work on shared consultancy provision being deferred until a later round of this initiative. The timeframe for this is currently unclear, but it will probably not take place until either late this year or early next.

#### **6. Conclusions:**

- 6.1 For the reasons detailed in the report it is clear that at the present time options for sharing ICT disaster recovery arrangements amongst our partners in Wiltshire is limited.
- 6.2 It is crucial that suitable emergency cover arrangements are kept in place, particularly during the rebuilding of the Councils offices at Bourne Hill.

6.3 Due to the currently competitive nature of the market, even if we continue to act on our own for the time being, it should still be possible to obtain 3<sup>rd</sup> party ICT emergency cover at an advantageous price to the Council, particularly if a contract is entered into that lasts for more than 1 year.

**7. Recommendations:**

- 7.1 Authorise the Head of ICT to continue to make appropriate arrangements, in accordance with financial regulations, to ensure that adequate levels of 3<sup>rd</sup> party emergency cover continue, on the most cost effective basis that it is possible to achieve for the Council.
- 7.2 Authorise the Head of ICT to continue negotiations with all potential partners, including under the Shared Services initiative, with a view to entering into a joint purchasing arrangement at the most appropriate time in the future, should this prove the most cost effective option, commensurate with an adequate level of cover for the councils ICT systems.

**8. Implications:**

<b>Financial :</b>	The ongoing revenue costs of this project should amount to approximately £15k per annum. This cost can be contained within existing budgets. Within the portfolio plan for 2006/7 there is a saving of £44k per annum attributable to ICT Services. This was originally offset by the anticipated costs of running homeworkers lines. The cost of these is now lower than previously thought, amounting to approximately £29k per annum, once fully taken up, leaving enough budget to cover the anticipated additional £15k per annum costs of disaster recovery.
<b>Legal :</b>	None.
<b>Human Rights:</b>	None.
<b>Personnel:</b>	None.
<b>ICT:</b>	Contained in report.
<b>Environmental:</b>	None
<b>Community Safety:</b>	None
<b>Environmental:</b>	None.
<b>Councils Core Values:</b>	Excellent service.
<b>Consultation:</b>	Other authorities, etc.