Overview and Scrutiny Committee Report

Ward(s) affected: All

Report of Director of Resources

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ICT Refresh Project Review

Executive Summary

On 28 November 2017 the executive considered an approval to spend capital funding of £1.25million on ICT Infrastructure Improvements. The project, known as the 'ICT Refresh programme', presented a business case to upgrade and improve the core ICT technology that the Council used to deliver services.

The submitted report and associated business case report included the implementation of Microsoft Windows 10 and other sundry end user computing technologies. The improvement scope set out in the reports required the project to deliver several aims and objectives which were roughly defined as benefits of migration to newer platforms. The benefits included;

- An improvement to IT security as older operating systems are more vulnerable to attack.
- An improvement to staff collaboration where using the new platform will enable the use of collaboration tools across the council, helping drive up productivity and meet growing customer and user expectations.
- An improvement to service levels ensuring the council benefits from higher levels of service availability, a stable operating system and supported software. With an estimated 20% reduction in outages.
- Greater integration with Cloud technologies enabling the council to adopt Cloud-first principles
- A reduction in risk where the project seeks to eliminate and mitigate many legacy risks to the network and applications in addition to those directly linked to out of date operating systems

This review has found that all the proposed benefits have been approached and most have been met.

In line with good project governance, this report was initially intended to be a post project implementation review of the project. However, the project is still not complete. As a result, an independent interim review of the project has been completed and is reported at Appendix 1. The review found that the business case submitted to Executive for approval in November 2017 focussed too narrowly on the implementation of Windows 10 and other sundry end user computing technologies. Despite what it reported to do, it specifically excluded refreshing other assets including infrastructure (servers, storage etc), network / communications

(routers, switches, cabling, desk phones etc.) or other devices (mobile phones, PDAs, tablets, printers, MFDs etc.). The phasing of the proposed project was spread across 3 phases taking an estimated 18 months to complete at a cost of £1.25million.

Today, the project includes all the previously excluded components. It appears that over time the project has increased in scope but has not been redefined in order to manage organisational expectations or to align ICT staff capacity or capabilities.

There are successes from the ICT refresh project but it is also recognised that there have been issues. A series of recommendations have been set out in Appendix 1 which are currently being costed to address the issues raised. It is proposed that the additional costs to complete the programme are funded from the ICT renewals reserve. Section 3 of Appendix 1 also sets out some key learning points for consideration.

Recommendation to Overview and Scrutiny Committee

That the Committee review the project update report at Appendix 1, consider the recommendations and learning points and comment as it feels necessary.

Reason(s) for Recommendation:
Post project implementation and mid-project or gateway reviews are core parts of good project governance. The overview and scrutiny committee has a key role to play in ensuring good project governance of Council projects.

1.   **Purpose of Report**

1.1   In accordance with good project governance, this report was intended to be a post project implementation review of the ICT refresh project by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. However, as the project is still in progress it is instead a project update and sets our a series of recommendations for completing the project.

2.   **Strategic Priorities**

2.1   The ICT strategy and a sustainable modern ICT infrastructure underpins all of the Council's strategic priorities by enabling the Council to deliver services for the Borough, residents and visitors. In particular, an improved ICT infrastructure contributes to the emerging strategic priority of 'Improved Council – using new ways of working to improve value for money and customer service' as agreed by Executive on 21 January 2020.

3.   **Background**

3.1   On 28 November 2017 the executive considered a new ICT strategy and business case to spend capital funding on ICT Infrastructure Improvements. The project, known as the 'ICT Refresh programme', presented a business case to upgrade and improve the core ICT technology and infrastructure that the Council used to deliver services. The report set out a business case to deliver the ICT strategy that had been adopted in January 2017.

3.2   The 2017 report correctly identified that the Council's ICT infrastructure (defined as networks, routers, switches, servers, storage and operating systems and end user devices) was relatively old and end of life presenting a number of risks to business operations such as no longer being supported by the relevant suppliers and risk of physical failure. In addition, there were information security risks associated with the continued use of end of life firmware, operating systems and application software. The Council's on-going access to the Public Sector Network (PSN) for secure exchange of sensitive data with other public bodies is dependent on maintaining security accreditation for the infrastructure, firmware and software deployed within the Council. To ensure future continuity to the PSN Officers identified that the Council needed to investment in refreshing its ICT infrastructure, firmware and software as well as its cyber security protection.

3.3   To help deliver the ICT strategy, Officers had commissioned an independent ICT consultancy to provide a review of the Council's ICT infrastructure and to develop options and a business case for investment in improvements to address the identified issues and risks.

3.4   The business case attached to the report purported to contain a detailed proposal for the implementation of a full ICT infrastructure refresh to deliver a secure, sustainable and customer focussed ICT delivery platform. Three options were presented in the business case and the recommended option sought to create the most optimal way forward in 3 phases which were:-

        Phase 0/1 – pre-requisites and essential infrastructure
        Phase 2 – Improved management and Office 365 implementation
        Phase 3 – Optimise and cloud

3.5   The report proposed one of the largest ICT projects in the history of the Council, was estimated to cost £1.25million and be completed over an 18-month period. The project formed the base layer upon which the technology proposals, agile working, and business process improvements put forward under the Future Guildford programme would be possible. The refresh programme was the base on which Future Guildford could build. Delivery of the ICT refresh programme was meant to have been completed prior to the implementation of Future Guildford, particularly, Phase A.

3.6   As the project progressed, it became apparent that certain items which should have been addressed in Phase 0/1 had not fully been addressed or had been excluded as they were deemed too high risk. As a result, there was a need to increase the scope of the project to bring into scope items which had been previously excluded. In addition, application packaging issues meant that the roll out of the end user devices stalled in Summer 2019. This resulted in significant time delays and some resulting cost delays. Of particular concern was the fact that the project did not complete prior to the start of the Future Guildford Implementation as planned. As a result of issues and delays, the Council commissioned SOCITM Advisory to undertake a review of the project and propose a way forward.

3.7   SOCITM Advisory's report is included at Appendix 1. The main conclusion from the report is that '*without doubt, the project is, the largest that the council*

ICT Team have ever undertaken at any one time. This was and still is a highly ambitious, specialised and complex mix of improvements'.

3.8   As part of the review, we found that the ICT refresh project had stalled due to application packaging required for the roll out of end user devices. Additional resource was made available to ensure that the roll out of end user devices is completed by the end of February 2020, and so in time for Future Guildford Phase B to be consulted on (Appendix 1, section 2.2).

3.9   The SOCITM Advisory report sets out a series of prioritised improvement recommendations which the Council needs to consider. The main areas identified for improvement are around:

  a. ICT governance and project management
  b. Telephony resilience and wifi coverage at remote sites
  c. ICT asset management, security and disposal
  d. Completion of the core network upgrade
  e. Movement of staff shared drives to cloud storage
  f. Decommissioning of Citrix

3.10   SOCITM Advisory has identified a second phase of the Refresh project will be required to complete the cleaning up and decommissioning of various legacy technology.

3.11   A lessons learnt section has been proposed in section 3 of the report. It is worth noting that one of the lessons learnt relates to the timing of the ICT service restructure under Future Guildford. It is worth re-iterating that the original programme for the ICT refresh project envisaged the completion of the refresh programme by spring/ early summer 2019 given that approval for the project was provided in late November 2017 and it was supposedly an 18-month project. Therefore, the project should have been complete by the time the consultation on Phase A of Future Guildford commenced mid-July 2019. The project issues identified relating to inadequate skills, scale & complexity of the project, robustness of project planning & foresight, unanticipated project interdependencies, communication and delivery of the external technical contract are thought to have had more of an impact on the success of this project than a restructure that started after the project had already been delayed.

4.   Consultations

4.1   The Leader of the Council and Lead Councillor for Governance has been consulted about this report.

5.   Key Risks

5.1   Appendix 1 sets out a series of recommendations and actions for the Council to consider. There is a risk that if these are not implemented that the full benefits of the ICT refresh programme will not be achieved.

6.   Financial Implications

6.1 The original budget for the ICT refresh programme was £1.25million approved by Executive in November 2017. Since the budget approval, three virements have been approved taking the revised budget to £1.485million as follows:-

- February 2019, £75,000 vired from ICT renewals hardware/software budget for additional costs of upgrading the firewall
- June 2019, £50,000 vired from ICT renewals hardware/software budget for additional licencing costs of migrating software applications to cloud technology
- November 2019, £110,000 vired from ICT renewals hardware/software budget for SOCITM Advisory resources to build and complete the rollout of end user devices by end February 2020

6.2 Spend to date on the project has been £1.561million, forecast spend to the completion of the project is anticipated to be £1.685million representing an overspend against the revised budget of around £200,000. The overspend predominantly relates to increased costs of the external technical contract and a higher cost of the acquiring the end user devices.

6.3 A number of the recommendations within the report will require additional expenditure to implement the recommendations which is currently being costed. The Director of Resources will seek to fund these items from the annual ICT hardware/software budget within the ICT renewals reserve.

7. Legal Implications

7.1 There are no legal implications arising as a result of this report

8. Human Resource Implications

8.1 The refresh review report from SOCITM Advisory recommendation P2R6 states consideration should be given to employing a permanent End User Computing or Desktop Engineer to the ICT Team. This role is critical to the safe operation of the asset life cycle and to ensure there is a connecting role between ICT Infrastructure and Caseworkers. As the service has just undergone a restructure as part of the Future Guildford programme, the Director of Resources will discuss with Ignite and the business improvement team if this activity was accounted for within the mapping of activity to the existing casework or ICT infrastructure team to assess whether this is an additional requirement or whether it should be accommodated within existing roles. There is currently no budget to increase staffing in the ICT area.

9. Equality and Diversity Implications

9.1 There are no equality and diversity implications arising from this report.

10. Climate Change/Sustainability Implications

10.1 There are no Climate Change implications arising from this report.

11. Executive Advisory Board comments

11.1 This report has not been considered by EAB.

12. Suggested issues for overview and scrutiny

12.1 Overview and scrutiny committee are invited to comment on the review of the ICT refresh project and consider the recommendations within Appendix 1

13. Summary of Options

13.1 Not applicable

14. Conclusion

14.1 Appendix 1 sets out a review of the ICT refresh project. The review found that the business case submitted to Executive for approval in November 2017 focussed too narrowly on the implementation of Windows 10 and other sundry end user computing technologies. Despite what it reported to do, it specifically excluded refreshing other assets including infrastructure (servers, storage etc), network / communications (routers, switches, cabling, desk phones etc.) or other devices (mobile phones, PDAs, tablets, printers, MFDs etc.). The phasing of the proposed project was spread across 3 phases taking an estimated 18 months to complete at a cost of £1.25million.

14.2 Today, the project includes all the previously excluded components and remains incomplete. It appears that over time the project has increased in scope but has not been redefined in order to manage organisational expectations or to align ICT staff capacity or capabilities.

14.3 There are successes from the ICT refresh project but it is also recognised that there have been issues. A series of recommendations have been set out in Appendix 1 which are currently being costed to address the issues raised. It is proposed that the additional costs to complete the programme are funded from the ICT renewals reserve.

15. Background Papers

Executive 28 November 2017 agenda item 9: ICT INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS: APPROVAL TO SPEND CAPITAL FUNDING
http://www2.guildford.gov.uk/councilmeetings/documents/g608/Public%20reports%20pack%2028th-Nov-2017%2019.00%20Executive.pdf?T=10

16. Appendices

Appendix 1 – SOCITM Advisory report – Refresh project review Report v1.2