

CHIEF OFFICER GROUP
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NETWORK AND MOBILE PHONES – CONTROL AND GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

Introduction

There are growing challenges around the procurement, provisioning and managing of the Council's network and the mobile phone estate.

Current governance arrangements are fragmented, resulting in sometimes costly and inefficient provisioning. Further more the infrastructure is increasingly unable to deliver against the Council's transformation programme, along with the drivers from Central Government including –

- New Ways of Working,
- Gershon efficiencies,
- Building Schools for the Future,
- Secure electronic data sharing with other agencies.

This paper sets out the challenges and issues we face along, with a series of recommendations to reinforce the control and governance arrangements.

1. Mobile Phones

The Council currently has close to 2000 mobile phones (excluding schools) split between Orange, with 940 mobiles, and Vodafone with 750 mobiles and 160 data SIMs for telemetry devices. All phones and SIMs are provisioned using the xxxxx – **OGC** - Framework contracts.

Comment [D1]: Please include full name rather than acronym

However, a new OCG Framework is scheduled to be introduced in early 2009 and this new framework is expected to be much more flexible, particularly around new tariff structures and corporate arrangements for managing calls, data bundling and billing. Our advice to departments is not to accept handset upgrade offers, as these may reset the two-year contract, which would leave us in a difficult position, should we wish to retender under the new framework.

As an organisation we do have a significant number of mobile phones, along with other hand held devices, as well as contracts for SIM cards for telemetry devices. We spend around £2220 per month with Orange and £3035 per month with Vodafone – the latter including a significant spend on data contracts. There are significant anomalies in call spend, with some handsets generating spends of between £200 – £300 per month and many having no spend whatsoever.

2. Issues We Face

- Two thirds of our fixed calls are to mobile numbers – with Vodafone we have a fixed link for mobiles that costs 4p a minute, for Orange these calls cost 8p a minute, as there is no fixed link.
- Having two mobile operators is needlessly expensive in terms of cross-network charges of 25p per minute, and in the overhead of managing billing separately (we can have mobile and fixed network billing consolidated by one operator).
- New Ways of Working will require a partaken shift in how we use our mobile estate, how we use mobiles, how we configure them and how we integrate mobiles (and reduce the requirement for mobiles) within the new VOIP Network.
- Currently there is little analysis and control of mobile phone usage. We don't have robust processes in place for the management of personal use of mobiles. We don't always encrypt the devices holding email, and we have a fragmented and inconsistent approach to ceasing and providing mobiles.

3. Wide/Local Area Network

The Council currently has a corporately controlled and funded network core. Departments have historically funded their own wide area network connections and infrastructure (LES/EES circuits and switches), procured through Central IT and managed by the FM provider. Children and Young People Department has a totally separate wide-area network connecting schools; a combination of an expensive BT managed service for secondary schools and around 30 primary schools, and broadband and radio links to primaries and surestarts which, owing to the technologies employed, cannot assure quality of service.

These networks are currently not corporately managed which does provide for difficulties in security arrangements around accessing corporate applications. The security of the network is becoming increasingly important where central government are mandating electronic data exchange for example Government Connect and N3. The security standards for the housing and sharing of highly sensitive data require very strong governance arrangements to be consistently applied and particularly around network security. Fragmentation of the network represents a significant area of risk for the Council.

The recent BT prices increased for managed LES/EES circuits (up by an average of 140%) has highlighted the costs of a managed network service. The BT price increase for unmanaged circuits (managed within the IT FM Contract) average just 13%.

The new BT pricing structure puts a significant barrier on provisioning new circuits, for example a link into one leisure centre would have cost £9k with annual rental of £3k per annum, now it would cost £22k with annual rental of £7.5k.

Building Schools for the Future – BSF - will require a high capacity resilient network. The BSF ICT specification is calling for a minimum of one gigabit links to schools. For 13 schools rental alone would be in the region of £0.5m per annum.

There is therefore an affordability, capacity and resilience challenge for the Council's wide area network. At the moment departments fund their own lines and infrastructure. This lends itself to very short term tactical provisioning of "sub prime" connectivity, typically putting in standard broadband ADSL or a fixed kilo stream circuit. The end result, not surprisingly, is ineffective and revenue expensive connectivity along with a significant loss of staff confidence in their systems with poor times and unreliable connections.

Inadequate network provision will also impact on and frustrate our New Ways of Working Programme, particularly from the roll out of Voice over Internet Protocol – VOIP - an initiative designed to support New Ways of Working as well as to deliver cashable efficiency savings.

4. Issues We Face

- Escalating costs of the existing network estate matched against the ever growing requirements for capacity and resilience mean we are facing a real sustainability issue.
- For sites that have inappropriate connectivity, the fragmented departmental funding model leads to the deployment of inferior technology which inhibits opportunities for aggregated cost savings.
- The increasing requirement for securely sharing and storing confidential information electronically produces a significant risk for the Council to manage.
- As an organisation we should be seeking to manage our network as a strategic corporate asset. We should have aggregated requirements delivering economics of scale with strategic capacity planning and management.

5. Recommendations

With immediate effect:-

- (i) All mobiles, 3G cards and sims to be ordered from Vodafone through the Central IT Network and Telephony Unit.

- (ii) Allow all existing mobile contracts to expire pending a Council wide tender for a new mobile contract under the new OGC Framework during 2009/10.
- (iii) No device upgrades to be accepted as this will lock users into new two-year contracts, missing out on the new OGC framework.
- (iv) Develop a set of guidance notes on standards and justification for ordering new mobile phones and data services.
- (v) Undertake a review of mobile phone usage to –
 - a. Identify low use phones
 - b. Develop a process for recovery of personal usage
 - c. Analyse the bill to identify optimum tariff bundles.
- (vi) Review current rolls, responsibilities and resources (corporate and departmental) for the management and administration of mobile phones and develop a business case justification for a new mobile co-ordinated post to manage the new corporate contract and on an ongoing basis to analyse, manage and control provision and usage of mobile phones.
- (vii) Bring the entire Council network under the corporate control of the Head of Strategic Infrastructure
- (viii) Undertake a full review of existing network budgets with a view to consolidating
- (ix) Review organisational/staffing structures across the Council with a view to consolidating resources into one unit
- (x) All network assets to be grounded, provisioning and managed corporately as a strategic asset for the Council.
- (xi) Align the network requirements with the accommodation and New Ways of Working strategies with a view to going out to tender for a new Council wide network to include supporting the schools BSF requirements, home working and secure electronic sharing of data.
- (xii) All new/replacement network infrastructure to be approved and ordered via the Head of Strategic Infrastructure where after the Central IT Network and Telephony team will procure, provision and manage the network in conjunction with our IT FM partner.