

Appendix L – ICT Briefing Note

The Councils ICT service is currently delegated to Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council who brought the service back in house from Sopra Steria on 1st January 2022.

The service has had its challenges through the year including;

- Recruitment of staff to key positions
- An ageing ICT infrastructure at Blaby
- Failure of key systems due to contractors cutting through power cables affecting our data centre at HBBC
- Lack of storage space affecting performance of servers and a 3 working day downtime
- Lack of documented information on hardware, software and licences meaning slower resolution to issues

The LICTP relationship management was given to the Communications Service Manager who was also charged with implementing the rollout of new agile equipment (laptops) for staff and members.

The rollout has improved remote and agile working and allowed the future staff footprint of the offices to be reduced.

In Q3 the ICT service resilience at Blaby has been affected with a serious incident occurring with a downtime of 3 working days. The partnership has responded with the following proposals being taken forward;

- A secondary server built and operational to provide operational resilience
- A new Broadband line to be installed for the first time
- A systems engineer to be engaged to work through some ageing equipment
- A temporary Infrastructure & Security Engineer to be engaged to add capacity and bring forward enhancements

In addition, there are four Capital schemes proposed for 23/24 which the above resource will be focussed on;

- Emergency Generator to ensure our applications and data can be closed down safely in the event of power outages
- Multi-factor authentication for our devices for enhanced security
- Uninterrupted power supply replacement due to ageing equipment
- Network load rebalancing hardware to ensure optimal systems performance

The contract cost is likely to come in on budget which includes the investment in the aforementioned four proposals committed to following the downtime. The supplies and services budget is currently being reconciled due to costs from 21/22 being brought forward but is likely to be over budget. These are spend to save initiatives to ensure our infrastructure and equipment is fit for purpose and as such we may need to spend more than originally budgeted.

The plans for 23/24 also include the following;

- A review of the delegation agreement and consideration of a partnership agreement to give the Council increased control over the service
- A service healthcheck/diagnostic to ensure the proposed future investments/roadmap meet the needs of Blaby as we progress our Transformation agenda
- The consideration of an ICT specialist post to be located within the new Transformation team
- The change of responsibility for the relationship management of the LICTP to the Transformation Service Manager.

At the time of writing the service is currently stable and staff are reporting very few system issues which is testament to a considerable focus on improving Blabys ICT performance by the partnership. However, the cost of down time throughout the year has been significant and this has been raised at all levels within the Partnership.

However, it is important to us at Blaby that we not only build an IT system that is fit for purpose, giving customers, staff, and members the right tools and infrastructure, but one that also builds upon our digital ambitions to improve customer access; improve staff efficiencies and have systems and processes that update and communicate with each other.