REPORT OF THE REVIEW COMMITTEE ON THE OPERATION OF THE ICT CONTRACT

1   SUMMARY

1.1   At its meeting on 7 October 2014 the Review Committee approved a final report on its review of the operation of the ICT Contract, which included recommendations for consideration by the Executive.

1.2   A copy of the final report, as approved by the Review Committee, is appended.

2   RECOMMENDATION

2.1   It is proposed that the Executive considers the final report and its recommendations, as follows:-

(1)   That some form of trend analysis of past incidents is included in the comments on the monthly management information reports.

(2)   That the first table purporting to show the top 20 users for the month is deleted from the Management Information report as it is incorrect and adds little value.

(3)   That the user survey included with the incident closure e mail is stopped and instead a random number of users, that have logged a call in the last month, are sent a questionnaire on the service they have received. Completion of this survey should be mandatory.

(4)   That the user satisfaction survey is reworded to make it quicker to complete.

(5)   That multiple device users are challenged as to the need for more than one device and, where possible, a system of hot desking for the more casual users is introduced.

(6)   That a pool of devices be created for officers to take to meetings and save on the Council's printing costs.

(7)   That a provision or a specific reserve is created for the replacement of devices as they reach the end of their useful life. (HPT)

REVIEW OF THE OPERATION OF THE ICT CONTRACT

1   SUMMARY

1.1   This report contains the Members of the Review Committee project team's observations on the information provided to them during their review of the Council's ICT contract and the conclusions that they came to.

2   INTRODUCTION

2.1   This topic for review was originally proposed during the last Municipal year but it was not possible to commence the review at that time. The Committee received a report from the Head of Planning and Transportation on the 8 July after which a project team was agreed to look at the subject in more detail. A number of questions came out of the project team's examination of the paperwork supplied after the Committee meeting. The responses to these questions and subsequent team discussions have led to the recommendations at the end of this report.

3   GENERAL

3.1   ICT at Rochford District Council (RDC) is outsourced to a company called Capita who are based on site and act as if they were RDC's technical ICT section. Capita are responsible for installation, support, maintenance and removal of all hardware and software as defined within the contract. They are also responsible for the network and infrastructure. All of the hardware and software is owned by RDC.

3.2   RDC also has support/maintenance agreements and licences for specific software (for planning, environmental health, etc.) and hardware with a number of third party companies.

3.3   Following a joint procurement process with Braintree, Castle Point and Colchester the existing contract commenced on 1 April 2013 and runs until 31 March 2017.

3.4   The team have found the large volume of paperwork supplied to enable them to undertake their review, whilst containing the information required, unhelpful in that a summary of the relevant information could have been provided.

3.5   Various reports relating to the monitoring of the contract were made available to the team and what follows is the observations made by the team.

Key Performance Indicators report

3.6   According to the contract the targets for the Service Desk answer and resolution times should be achieved 100% of the time. Until recently the resolution time has not been within the target time but for the most recent

months this has now been achieved. Whilst it obviously preferable for all the targets in the contract to be achieved the team acknowledge that there is a system in place to penalise the contractor when targets are not achieved.

3.7 It was noted that the overall performance for the most recent months of the study had improved as there had been a reduction in the total service credits.

3.8 Looking at the backup and recovery line of the KPI Summary it shows a 100% figure for the last 12 months. One of the reports that the team received was for a server failure in August 2013. When the team queried why August 2013 was showing as 100% yet there had been a server failure they were advised that the backup request was fulfilled within the SLA but the data restored was older than required.

3.9 Whilst the team are happy with the subsequent actions that were undertaken to correct the matter they find it odd that this is not fully reflected in the figures.

Management Information Report

3.10 In respect of the Incident Call volumes data that is contained within this report, whilst it is a monthly report and the team acknowledge that the ICT Web Manager would be aware of previous incidents, the team felt that for anyone picking up the report without prior knowledge a useful addition would be for some form of trend analysis in that it would save referring back to previous reports etc.

3.11 Within this report is a table that purports to show the top 20 users in terms of incidents raised in descending order with 12 month history counts. There are two tables in the report with the same title the first of which appears to be of very little value as the accuracy of the information it contains is questionable.

SOCITM Scores

3.12 At the current time the Management Information report contains details of users' responses to a web based survey. When a call is closed an e mail is sent to the customer confirming the closure of the incident and asking them to complete a short survey. Members of the team were disappointed to see there had only been 1 response to the questionnaire in May despite there being 152 calls resolved. In April there were 7 responses from 321 calls resolved.

3.13 With this level of responses it is difficult to see how the Council will ever evaluate the user experience. It is understandable that when a problem has been resolved the user probably just wants to get on with their job rather than complete a questionnaire.

3.14 The Members of the project team would like to suggest that a better method of evaluation would be for a given number of surveys to be sent to users that

have been selected at random but have logged calls in the previous month. Completion of these surveys should be mandatory.

3.15 The Members of the team considered the questions on the survey and felt that the questions were to wordy and probably put people off from completing them.

Cost of Contract

3.16 The contract that has been agreed is related to a number of items which are then charged by volume. There are three levels of tariff for each item and the volume level then determines which pricing band is applied. This type of contract means that the less equipment or items being measured the less the charge becomes. Whilst the team understand that some work has already been undertaken to reduce the inventory of items it was felt that a more robust campaign of challenging staff with multiple devices and where use is of a more casual nature then a system of hot desking would be more appropriate.

3.17 The cost for service calls is currently in the higher charging band and the team would recommend that some form of control to eliminate unnecessary calls be introduced. The team do acknowledge that because the higher band tariff is being charged at the current time the per call charge is consequently lower than the base level charge. Without a significant reduction, any reduction in the number of calls could mean that the base level tariff is charged which could increase the cost rather than automatically lowering it.

Third Party Software

3.18 A list of the third party contracts has been supplied to the team but it was felt that there was insufficient detail regarding what they were used for. The team felt that it would be necessary for this to be looked at as a separate issue by a new team if the Members of the Review Committee agreed.

Other Issues

3.19 The issue of iPads to Members was based on a business case put forward to the Executive on 17 July 2013 to comply with CoCo. This stated that the on-going support costs would be approximately of £4,400 per annum, however, the project team have been advised that the support costs for an iPad are £276.83 which equates to £10.796.37 for the 39 iPads purchased for Members.

3.20 The original business case stated that officers were not expected to be issued with iPads instead relying on the use of a 'cryptocard' and Ericom Blaze software.

3.21 In addition it is believed that the iPads purchased by the Council have an operating life of approximately 3 years and will have to be replaced at that time and this was not included within the original business case.

5.4

3.22   Whilst the contract covers the replacement of hardware if it is wholly or partly defective, if items reach the end of their useful life or are not fit for purpose then it falls on the Council to replace them. At the current time there is no specific budget set aside for this purpose.

3.23   Since then a further business case has been submitted to the Executive on 16 July 2014 to go paperless which included a net saving of £4,553 but no details of the savings in paper or printing costs were included.

3.24   With the introduction of paperless meetings for Members the team felt it would be appropriate that officers should also adopt this approach. It was felt that if a number of pool machines were available to officers then they would be able to bring these devices to meetings rather than bringing paper copies which would save on printing costs as well.

3.25   The project team have concerns relating to the costs, operation and software relating to the devices and whilst they realise that it would be impractical at the current time to replace them, the lessons need to be learnt when the iPads come to the end of their useful life and replacement devices are considered.

3.26   It is therefore suggested that a team is formed to look at this particular issue in more detail.

4   RECOMMENDATION

4.1   It is proposed that the Committee **RECOMMENDS** to the Executive that:-

(1)   Some form of trend analysis of past incidents is included in the comments on the monthly management information reports.

(2)   That the first table purporting to show the top 20 users for the month is deleted from the Management Information report as it is incorrect and adds little value.

(3)   That the user survey included with the incident closure e mail is stopped and instead a random number of users, that have logged a call in the last month, are sent a questionnaire on the service they have received. Completion of this survey should be mandatory.

(4)   That the user satisfaction survey is reworded to make it quicker to complete.

(5)   That Multiple device users are challenged as to the need for more than one device and where possible a system of hot desking for the more casual users is introduced.

(6)   That a pool of devices be created for officers to take to meetings and save on the Council's printing costs.

(7)   That a provision or a specific reserve is created for the replacement of devices as they reach the end of their useful life.

4.2   It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES** that:-

(1)   The Review Committee form a team to look at the third party software contracts as a separate project.

(2)   The Review Committee form a team to look at the issues around the iPads.

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