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

**1       SUMMARY**

1.1     At its meeting on 14 April 2015 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 the user survey included with the incident closure e mail is stopped.

   (2)    That no generic profiles be used for future installs of software on the Councillor iPads.

   (3)    That the issues around various apps appearing on Councillor iPads be referred to the Standards Committee so a full investigation can be undertaken.

   (4)    That the option of the issue of a Crypto Card be offered to Members who wish to access their Councillor e mails other than by the use of an iPad.

   (5)    That any built in increases in the contracts in respect of third party software should, where possible, be linked to CPI.

   (6)    That the use of the CMIS software provided by Astech is examined to see if there are additional benefits that could be obtained.  (ADTS)

# 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 reviews of the Council's ICT contract, iPads and third party software,  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 led to an initial report being submitted to the Executive meeting of the 15 October 2014. This was followed by a further exchange of questions and answers and a meeting with the Portfolio Holder and officers.

## 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.

**Issues from initial report**

3.4    Following submission of the initial report and its referral back to the team information was exchanged about certain areas in the report.

3.5    Although the team were initially informed that there was not a budget for replacing equipment the team have since been advised that there is an IT upgrades budget which is used for this purpose.

3.6    The team acknowledge that there is a better completion rate for the six monthly user survey than for the call closure surveys and would question therefore is there a need for both.

**iPads**

3.7    The issue of iPads to Councillors for the purposes of viewing their councillor e mails and related documentation was decided by the Executive on the 17 July 2013 following a report from the Head of Information and Customer Services.

3.8    In the report under resource implications there is reference to on-going support costs of approximately £4,400 per annum. This figure was based on the worst case scenario of 120 extra devices being required. At the time, from the information supplied to them, the team estimate that the support cost per device would have been £361.58 which actually results in an increase to the support costs of £43,389.60 or approximately £44,000.

3.9    It would appear that there was an error with the decimal point in the original calculation. It is unclear whether the decision would still have been the same if the correct figure had been included in the report.

3.10   The actual support cost for the 50 devices that were purchased based on the support cost for this year is £13,841.50 and as the iPads are said to have a life of two years the support costs in respect of the iPads are £27,683.

3.11   During the review the members of the team were advised that other devices had been considered prior to the selection of the iPads. It was disappointing that the July 2013 report did not include the details of the other devices and operating systems that had been considered and the reasons for their rejection.

3.12   It was noted that testing was not undertaken on the iPads by RDC officers prior to their purchase and there was not a detailed evaluation of the equality and diversity issues involved in their use.

3.13   Looking to the future the team have been advised that other devices other than the iPad will be considered when the existing machines come to the end of their lives and these will be evaluated prior to purchase. The team would hope that the possibility of a Windows enabled machine would be included in any trial. They would like to be kept appraised of any trials undertaken and would volunteer their assistance in evaluating any future devices.

3.14   In addition the team would like to see any usability trials include tests on suitability with large documents as this has caused problems for users of the iPads in relation to page numbering etc.

3.15   At the current time Members are experiencing issues with their iPads in that certain applications are appearing on councillors iPads even though they themselves have not downloaded these applications. The applications are not

related to Council business and do not give a professional appearance if a member of the public catches a glimpse of the front screen of the iPad. It also does not conform with the Council's definition of acceptable use.

3.16    The team members thought that this should be referred to the Standards Committee and steps should be taken to ensure that each user profile was unique and did not share any details with the other user profiles within the Council.

3.17    At the current time exempt documents are sent via e mail to Members and they are supposed to be kept within the Good software. Whilst Members are able to distinguish between normal documents and those that contain exempt information, the team thought it would be worthwhile for a reminder to be added to the e mail when an exempt document was being sent.

3.18    During the review the use of Crypto Cards was examined. The members of the team were concerned to see that some of the Crypto Cards had been issued for generic posts rather than to actual individuals. They were also concerned at how many cards had been issued as they were under the impression that they were manly for use as a bad weather contingency.

3.19    Despite the drawbacks expressed about the Crypto cards the team believed that this option of logging onto the network should be open to Members as well.

**Third Party Software**

3.20    A list of the third party contracts was supplied to the team at the start of the review but it was felt that there was insufficient detail regarding what they were used for. The team agreed that it would be necessary for this to be looked at separately and a further team was formed.

3.21    There are over 60 different pieces of third party software used by the Council and so it was decided that for ease they would look at all those pieces of software that cost over £4,000 per annum. This reduced the number being looked at to just over 20.

3.22    For each of these pieces of software the following questions were asked:-

- The annual cost of each service/software provided over each of the last three years together with a detailed description of the service provided in each of the three years with any increase or decrease explained and justified.
- To what extent can the service be restricted by RDC to save cost and what alternative software/services are available at reduced cost.
- To what extent can we join with other authorities to reduce costs?
- Have any suppliers been challenged to provide a lower cost service? When/Response?

- Where software is used to support a revenue/fee earning service to RDC what is the cost/ benefit in £ and ratio?

3.23   The responses to the questions were provided by the manager or the lead officer for the business area that used the software and the results were then discussed with the Portfolio Holder and the ICT and Web manager.

3.24   The team acknowledge that it is an on going area of work to reduce the costs of the software and to challenge the others parts of the business within the Authority as to the continuing need for each piece of software.

3.25   At the current time most contracts have built in increases related to the Retail Price Index (RPI), it has been acknowledged recently that RPI is not the most accurate measure of inflation and the Government as taken to using the Consumer Price Index (CPI) in this respect. The team thought that in line with the Government we should move over to using CPI where possible for any built in increases.

3.26   The members of the team were concerned to see the annual fee paid to Astech relating to CMIS. Whilst they appreciate the need for the system to keep records of meetings etc. those members of the team that had experience of the same system at Essex County Council were surprised by the difference in functionality between the two systems. It was felt that it was possible that the Authority was missing out on the benefits that could be provided by this system. In particular the system has the ability to provide e mail notification to members when Committee documents are uploaded.

3.27   Whilst time constraints did not allow for all the software contracts to be looked at during this review the team were of the opinion that it would be worthwhile to review those contracts that were less than £4,000 at a future date. This review should look at:-

- What the software is needed for,
- What the software does, and
- Have alternative pieces of software been considered.

## 4   RECOMMENDATION

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

(1)   That the user survey included with the incident closure e mail is stopped.

(2)   That no generic profiles be used for future installs of software on the Councillor iPads.

(3)   That the issues around various apps appearing on Councillor iPads be referred to the Standards Committee so a full investigation can be undertaken.

(4)      That the option of the issue of a Crypto Card be offered to Members who wish to access their Councillor e mails other than by the use of an iPad.

(5)      That any built in increases in the contracts in respect of third party software should, where possible, be linked to CPI.

(6)      That the use of the CMIS software provided by Astech is examined to see if there are additional benefits that could be obtained.

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

(1)      Look at the situation again in the new Municipal Year to see if it has been possible to reduce the third party software costs by 20%.

(2)      Extend the third party review to contracts costing less than £4,000.

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