Creating Central Bedfordshire

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Interim Chief Executive
Jaki Salisbury

TO EACH MEMBER OF THE
CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE SHADOW EXECUTIVE

27 October 2008

Dear Councillor

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE SHADOW EXECUTIVE - Tuesday 28 October 2008

Further to the Agenda and papers for the above meeting, previously circulated, please find attached the following supplementary report(s): -.

Agenda Item	Description
CR3A	**IMPLEMENTATION PLAN MONITORING REPORT – SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT ON ICT TRANSITION ISSUES**
	(To consider issues emerging from an independent review of the ICT transition programme of works) (Report of the Director of Corporate Resources Contact Officer: Clive Heaphy (01462 611421)

Should you have any queries regarding the above please contact Democratic Services on Tel: 01525 842033

Yours sincerely

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SHADOW EXECUTIVE
28 OCTOBER 2008

SUBJECT	IMPLEMENTATION PLAN MONITORING REPORT – SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT ON ICT TRANSITION ISSUES (To consider issues emerging from an independent review of the ICT transition programme of works)
REPORT OF	**Director of Corporate Resources**
Contact Officer: Clive Heaphy (01462 611421)	

IMPLICATIONS

SUSTAINABILITY	N/A
FINANCIAL	Additional costs from the continuing work of Deloitte, yet to be determined.
LEGAL	None arising from this report
PERSONNEL/EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES	None arising from this report
COMMUNITY DEV/SAFETY	None arising from this report
TRADES UNION	None arising from this report
HUMAN RIGHTS	None arising from this report
KEY ISSUE	No
BUDGET/POLICY FRAMEWORK	No

OTHER DOCUMENTS RELEVANT TO REPORT
Report of Deloitte & Touche – attached as Appendix A.

RECOMMENDATION(S):
See main report.
Reason for Recommendation: *To provide assurance to Shadow Executive that the ICT programme will deliver the necessary systems and applications support to Central Bedfordshire Council to enable it to provide a full range of services from 1 April 2009.*

Background

1. The successful launch of Central Bedfordshire Council on 1 April 2009 is highly dependent upon its ICT infrastructure, network and applications being established and operational from the outset.

2. It is also highly dependent upon the transfer of relevant data from its predecessor bodies to Central Bedfordshire in a timely and accurate manner.

3. Because of the high dependency of this area of transition and known issues around two major applications (SAP and Swift), members of the Shadow

Executive at their meeting of 30 September 2008, requested that a further report be considered in wider transition issues in relation to the overall programme of works.

4. Deloitte were asked to undertake a short piece of work from an independent perspective to review the programme of works, the management of that programme any factors which may jeopardise the implementation of that programme and hence cause operational problems after 1 April 2009.

5. Their report is attached at Appendix A.

Summary of Key findings

6. The report was undertaken in short time at a high level and was not intended to be a thorough review of detailed project elements.

7. Positive aspects of the findings were the extensive nature of the work undertaken to date, the adoption of leading practice and future-proofing (which enable future services transformation to take place / cost efficiencies to be recognised) and the security and sizing of the infrastructure.

8. However, the report was less positive when it came to the prioritisation of the critical elements of service solutions, visible programme co-ordination activities and plans and the closeness of working relationship between the three Councils, particularly around shared service activities.

9. The report made 6 recommendations, all of which were accepted by the Officer Programme Board at its meeting of 22 October 2008.

10. Central to the actions proposed was an immediate review of the programme in order to reaffirm the critical elements required by Vesting Day, a de-scoping of certain non-critical projects to a later phase of the ICT programme and stronger leadership of the programme by the new Management Team through the Director of Corporate Resources.

11. Deloitte will be asked to maintain a continued high level presence acting as a critical friend to the ICT Team in ensuring that resources are applied in a way which ensures that there is no deviation from the agreed programme and that issues are resolved without undue delay.

Background Papers: None specific
Location of Papers: Director of Corporate Resources' office, Priory House, Chicksands
File Reference: CG3A

ICT Strategy Review for
Creating Central Bedfordshire

Report to Shadow Executive

23rd October 2008

Deloitte.

Contents

1 ICT Strategy – Report to Shadow Executive

1.1 Introduction and Background

Deloitte have been commissioned to undertake a high level review of the ICT Strategy for transitioning between the existing Bedfordshire authorities and the new unitaries. The purpose of the review is to determine if the necessary activities and arrangements are in place for Vesting Day and to determine approaches to any risks identified.

This high-level review has focused not just on the technical elements of the Strategy, but also the financial, organisational and operational elements. We have explored both the Strategy being devised for Central Bedfordshire and the approach being taken to delivering it. We have also specifically considered the issues that arise from splitting aspects of the current County ICT Service and areas where the two new authorities anticipate that they will provide joint/hosted services.

This report focuses only on the key findings, risks and mitigation strategies for Central Bedfordshire Council; however the ICT Strategy review is a joint commission between Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) and Bedford Borough Council (BBC).

1.2 Key findings

The findings from this review are focused around the key steps which form good practice for developing a 'business-led ICT Strategy'. Because of the timescales and levels of change required by the creation of the new authority we have focused this report primarily on the short-term.

1a) Current ICT environment - What is the ICT environment you wish to change, and how well does ICT currently support your requirements? This question also needs to consider the legacy environments of Mid and South Bedfordshire District Councils combined with the relevant environments of Bedfordshire County Council.

1b) Future ICT environment - What are the ICT requirements for the new Central Bedfordshire authority and what must be in place for Vesting Day?

2) Delivering the future ICT environment – What changes need to be made, and based on your priorities and constraints, how much will it cost and what resources will you need?

1.2.1 Current and Future ICT environments

- Extensive work has been undertaken by the CBC ICT Team to identify the need for widespread change to deliver a fit for purpose ICT environment for Central Bedfordshire. It is widely recognised that ICT will play a key role in helping to deliver the aims and objectives of the new authority and build on the progress already made across South and Mid Bedfordshire District Councils.

- The CBC ICT Team is adopting leading practice and are planning ahead to ensure that the new Authority's ICT provision will provide a high level of service and in particular be secure and properly sized. There are some good examples of where

the ICT Team are considering future compliance issues, i.e. Government Connect and its impact on the Revenues and Benefits service.

- The requirement for change is being driven by two key factors i) a view that some elements of the existing MBDC, SBDC and BCC ICT systems and infrastructure are not fit for purpose. For example the existing County Network is not planned to be used by CBC, and the SAP implementation is proposing to use new hardware. ii) convergence of solutions across the existing districts is being made inevitable through the creation of a new unitary. In respect to both factors, the ICT team have undertaken due diligence to enable evaluation of a range of options, but they should now ensure that they communicate their decisions more effectively to provide greater transparency and facilitate opportunity for challenge. In some cases, viable alternatives may still be available and should be revisited where time allows.

- Although service areas have been consulted on their future requirements, there is not yet a shared understanding of the critical elements of the ICT solution required for Vesting Day. In some areas the CBC ICT Team has not had a clear enough steer from service areas to determine what they require. There are plans to merge some of the different systems across Mid and South Beds for Vesting Day. For example, the reasons behind the merger of the Planning systems for Vesting Day need to be understood.

1.2.2 Delivering the future ICT environment

- Due to the splitting of some existing BCC services and the timescales involved, it is inevitable that some parts of the ICT service will need to be shared post Vesting Day until a future solution is determined and implemented. This may include large applications such as SWIFT and a large number of minor applications. A strategy for all systems needs to be developed which will ensure minimum impact to users during the transition period.

- The core focus of the planning activities to date has been to identify the tasks required to deliver the new solutions. However, the plans have not yet been adequately challenged to ensure that they are feasible, neither have the plans been incorporated into an overall programme plan to ensure that the dependencies and capacity constraints are fully understood.

- Engagement between the CBC, BCC and BBC teams has to date not reached an agreement on a shared technical and management solution for Vesting Day and the costs associated with joint operations. A number of key areas have not yet been addressed such as strategies for providing support of certain shared systems, how the authorities will work together to provide a shared solution, the financial model for such services and how each authority will withdraw from joint arrangements in line with implementing independent solutions. Some progress has been made on identifying a way forward for the SWIFT system, however appropriate governance is now required to ensure that the identified tasks are undertaken. Effective collaboration will be required to ensure that there are no adverse effects on service delivery.

- There is not yet an adequate understanding of whether the new CBC ICT organisation will have adequate skills and capabilities to meet the needs of the Council. Furthermore, the transfer of staff from the County Council may not

adequately address the skills and capability gap, necessitating recruitment or hiring of temporary resources.

1.3   Recommendations

Our review has identified that the CBC ICT Team have undertaken extensive work to understand how ICT can support the new Authority. However we have identified that the Team now need to communicate more effectively, particularly in focusing the strategy on the critical requirements for Vesting Day and how aspects of the solution will be delivered on a shared basis, at least in the short term. The Strategy also needs to ensure that transition and future operating model costs are transparent to facilitate the prioritisation exercise.

It is therefore recommend that the following mitigation strategies are addressed:

1. Clarify and challenge the critical ICT requirements for Vesting Day based on an understanding of service area requirements, feasibility of delivery and financial and resource constraints. A fully costed IT programme will enable the new authority to make appropriate decisions whilst also allowing greater challenge and scrutiny.

2. With urgency, ensure that suitable programme management support is acquired and deployed to coordinate activities across the different ICT projects and manage engagement with Service Areas. In particular, the programme management support should focus on the critical systems for Vesting Day and planning of the critical systems.

3. Ensure appropriate challenge is given to the Vesting Day solution and explore alternative and lower risk options where possible. This is not to say that viable alternatives can be identified, but it will help to ensure that the solution is accepted and the decisions become more transparent.

4. Work with the newly appointed CBC Service Directors to resolve any outstanding requirements from Service Areas for ICT. This will be particularly key in areas which the existing Mid and South Bedfordshire authorities do not currently provide the service, e.g. social care.

5. Now that a Director of Corporate Resources is in place, provide executive leadership and sponsorship to enable faster decision making. This should be combined with the use of experienced support to help expedite a design around the joint solution and the arrangements for managing it. This process should adopt a similar methodology used in transferring an ICT service between suppliers, and ensure that appropriate consideration is given to:

   o The financial and commercial aspects of any shared or hosted arrangements. Transparency will be required on the costs involved and the commercial model will need to be robust and agreed by each party involved. In some cases, negotiation may be necessary.

   o The new authority should ensure that any Service Level Agreements created are in the best interests of users and that appropriate operational and commercial controls are put in place to support any issues or disputes which may arise.

- A service management approach should be adopted to maintain an appropriate level of service to users. Aspects such as the Service Desk will need to be considered for example, to ensure a seamless service can be provided to users despite their being more than one party involved.

- A due diligence exercise should be conducted to ensure that the current levels of service provided by the County Council can be maintained or exceeded post Vesting Day.

- A skills and capability mapping exercise should be conducted to ensure that the new authority will have the appropriate resources to support the ICT service.