

THREE RIVERS & WATFORD SHARED SERVICES JOINT COMMITTEE

Date of meeting: 13/06/11

PART A

AGENDA ITEM

8

Title: HARMONISATION OF ICT SYSTEMS

Report of: Avni Patel - Head of ICT

1. **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This summary gives options and proposed timescales for the harmonisation of business system applications across Watford Borough and Three Rivers District Council.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That the Joint Committee agrees for the recommendations made in this proposal for the approach to harmonisation of ICT systems.

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Report approved by:

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1. UPDATE ON HARMONISATION OF ICT SYSTEMS

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 In November 2010, SSICT presented a paper outlining a proposal for the harmonisation of applications across Watford Borough and Three Rivers District Council. (Appendix 1)
- 1.1.2 Harmonisation of systems has already begun across Watford Borough Council and Three Rivers District Council through the recent procurement and successful implementation of the E-Petitions system. In addition to this, the implementation of a shared Income Management system is underway and due to be completed in October this year.
- 1.1.3 Consolidation advantages to be considered are:
- Capital hardware replacement budget could be reduced; however this has not been included within this report as it is part of the ICT review.
 - Other associated hardware costs could be reduced e.g. ongoing maintenance, power consumption. This has not been included within this report as it is part of the ICT review.
 - Reduction in licensing costs, this would depend on supplier solutions offered.
 - Reduction in ICT/Service skill sets required to maintain different applications for each Council.
 - Depending on the chosen solution, the number of upgrades could be reduced saving effort for officer and supplier resources.
- 1.1.4 It should be noted that the Actica Infrastructure Review has been finalised with a number of recommendations made in order to mitigate immediate risks associated with current hardware at both Councils. Timescales for these recommendations to be actioned are to be confirmed, but will be considered in line with the harmonisation proposal.
- 1.1.5 Future harmonisation of ICT systems will also be considered as and when further services are shared.

1.2 Outline Timescale

- 1.2.1 Outline Timetable: (These projects need to be prioritised in line with other projects requested from ICT)
- 2011-2012 – Options appraisal for the alignment of Uniform systems
- 2011-2012 – Options appraisal for the alignment of TRDC CRM (Customer Relationship Management) system with WBC
- 2011-2012 – Implementation of agreed option for TRDC CRM. (Note: The alignment of TRDC CRM system with WBC CRM system is ideal; however, we need to ensure that WBC CRM fits TRDC CSC business requirements.)
- 2011-2012 – Options appraisal for the alignment of Three Rivers Housing system
- 2012-2013 – Implementation of agreed option for Uniform systems
- 2012-2013 – Implementation of the Three Rivers Housing system

1.3 **Outline Options**

1.3.1 There are four possible approaches for harmonisation of business systems. These are detailed in the section below and would be dependent on:

- a) Supplier support and options
- b) Outcomes and timetable for hardware replacement (Actica Infrastructure review)
- c) Future shared services timetable

1.3.2 **Full system alignment:**

- One single server, one database instance and one application front end.
- Includes the alignment of business processes, business system and hardware – Full shared service e.g. Finance, ICT.

Impact on costs and resources:

- Reduction in hardware.
- Reduction of operating system licenses.
- Reduction on support services including hardware maintenance licenses due to reduced number of servers.
- Reduced supplier side annual maintenance fees.
- Making assumptions that through the efficiencies created by shared services, further costs savings through maximum reductions in software licenses could be realised. In addition to this there may be the potential to rationalise staff resources within the services using these systems, but this will become clearer as this work progresses.

Risks:

- Single point of failure, which would need to be considered when designing the system.
- It would be difficult to split the database and application if there were changes to shared services in the future.

1.3.3 **Partial alignment:**

- Shared database instance on a single server, with two separate application front ends.

Impact on costs and resources:

- Reduction in hardware.
- Reduction of operating system licenses.
- Reduction on support services including hardware maintenance licenses due to reduced number of servers.
- Some cost reduction for shared application licenses.
- Reduced supplier side annual maintenance fees.

Risks:

- Single point of failure, which would need to be considered when designing the system.

- Both authorities would need to agree the upgrade and patch management roadmap for the application itself and deviation from this would not be practical.

1.3.4 **Alignment of hardware only:**

- Consists one server, two separate databases and two separate application front ends.

Impact on costs and resources:

- Reduction in hardware.
- Reduction of operating system licenses.
- Reduction on support services including hardware maintenance licenses due to reduced number of servers.
- Allows flexibility within both authorities.

Risks:

- Single point of failure, which would need to be considered when designing the system.
- Maximum efficiencies will not be realised due to separate processes and procedures (this option may appear more attractive to the Councils as it gives the services involved more flexibility).

1.3.5 **Hosting by the supplier (with or without full system admin)**

This is still under investigation with suppliers; however, it should be noted that there is an increasing offer for this from suppliers and an increasing take-up from customers, both in the public and private sector.

Further detail will be provided in future reports to Joint Committee.

1.4 **Major applications impacted by the harmonisation proposals**

1.4.1 **WBC:**

Uniform – Software solution - in use by:

- a) Planning (inc Total Land Charges Team & Building Control)
- b) Environmental Health and Licensing
- c) Environmental Services

Lagan – CRM – in use by:

- a) Customer Service Centre
- b) Environmental Services & environmental health

Note: Both these systems have a degree of integration with each other.

1.4.2 **TRDC:**

Uniform – Software Solution – in use by:

- a) Planning (including Total Land Charges Team)

Proactive - CRM – in use by:

- a) Customer Services department
- b) Other departments e.g. Environmental Health and Environmental

Protection

M3 – software solution - in use by:

a) Environmental Health

Note: Proactive and M3 systems have some degree of integration with each other.

1.5 Application Detail: Uniform (Idox)

- 1.5.1 Uniform is owned by Idox Solutions Ltd and provides a range of modules within the application itself e.g. Building Control, Planning, Environmental Health, Land Charges, Housing, Estates, Trading Standards, Anti-Social Behaviour, Contaminated Land, Licensing.
- 1.5.2 WBC currently spend £108,208.49 per annum for 60 Uniform licenses, including additional applications e.g. Public Access for Planning, Planning portal connector and Gazetteer connector. The reason that the costs are higher for WBC is due to the integration of the Uniform product with the WBC CRM - Lagan.
- 1.5.3 TRDC currently spend £62,309.72 per annum for 60 Uniform licenses, including additional applications required e.g. Public Access for Planning, Building Control and Local Development framework, Consultee Access, Planning portal connector and Gazetteer connector.
- 1.5.4 Idox do not currently offer any form of cost saving for the alignment of systems unless a single database instance is utilised, meaning that both Councils would need to be a true shared service for the services using these systems.
- 1.5.5 It is our recommendation to look at the alignment of hardware only, with consideration of costs for a hosted and managed service for this system.
- 1.5.6 The annual cost for server hardware maintenance contracts is in the region of £24,000. These will be reduced as a result of the work to implement the ICT review recommendations. The amount this will reduce by is currently unclear as the work is currently in the planning stages.
- 1.5.7 Idox have supplied costs for hosting and managed services (this does not include licensing fees; however the savings could still be made if these services were shared).
 - Hosting service - £60K
 - Upgrade and patch management – £28,800K
 - System Supervisor Service - £60K
 - Based on a 3 or 5 year commitment
 - Total annual cost £148,800

This option should be considered in line with harmonisation of business systems as well as the infrastructure review outcomes. (See appendix 2 for the full supplier proposal.)

- 1.5.8 We are currently in discussion with the supplier and further details will be fed into the options appraisal and business case for the harmonisation of this system. The impact on staffing will also be considered during this process.

1.6 Application Detail – Lagan & Proactive

- 1.6.1 Lagan is owned by Lagan Technologies Ltd which provides CRM (in use by the

WBC Customer Services department), plus a light version which is in use by various Council departments. Lagan and Uniform products are integrated using a connector called UFIS to pass cases work from the front to the back office.

- 1.6.2 The Lagan application, full and light version cost £25,924 in licensing and annual maintenance charges.
- 1.6.3 Proactive is owned by Northgate Information Solutions which provides a CRM in use by the customer services department in TRDC. The Proactive system has come to the end of its life and Northgate Information Solutions have ceased to develop the application further. This system has a degree of integration with the M3 system at TRDC.
- 1.6.4 License and maintenance costs are £25,078. Costs for other Council departments to access the Proactive system are £17,395 giving a total licence cost of £42,473 per annum.
- 1.6.5 The day to day maintenance of the Proactive system continues to be outsourced to Northgate Information Solutions at a cost of £850 per day with a maximum of 1 day per week through the year.
- 1.6.6 The Lagan system is maintained in-house by ICT staff and scripting work is performed by a specialist within the WBC CSC.
- 1.6.7 Lagan suppliers have confirmed that they support an option of one single database instance (using shared hardware) with two application front-ends. This would allow both authorities to retain their individual ways of working whilst harmonising hardware and software.
- 1.6.8 Due to the nature of the licensing agreement with Lagan, there is some dependency on the infrastructure architecture deployed but there are potential license savings in the region of £15,000 to £25,000. Full details of this proposal can be found in appendix 3.
- 1.6.9 Annual maintenance charges for the Lagan CRM solution could be split across both authorities - £13,000 each. Full details of this proposal can be found in appendix 3.

1.7 Application Detail – M3

- 1.7.1 M3 is owned by Northgate Information Solutions. As with Proactive, M3 has come to the end of its life and Northgate Information Solutions have ceased to develop the application further.
- 1.7.2 TRDC currently use the M3 application costing £9,393.61 within the Environmental Health section.
- 1.7.3 The use of M3 would need to be included within the procurement process for Proactive (TRDC CRM) given the integration between M3 and Proactive. There is also the potential to migrate to Uniform for this service in line with WBC – see above.

1.8 The harmonisation roadmap is still a work in progress and we are liaising with suppliers to obtain further quotes for hosting and managed services.

The outcomes of options appraisals and business cases for each system harmonisation will be reported to future Joint Committee meetings.

The infrastructure review has identified a number of applications in use by both authorities that are not yet harmonised. In addition to the work to harmonise the major systems detailed in this report, ICT will develop an action plan to harmonise the remaining applications in line with the future shared services programme as it develops. Where there are opportunities, such as products coming to end of life, harmonisation will be discussed with services and accelerated where possible.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Harmonisation paper submitted November 2010

Appendix 2 – IDOX (Uniform system) hosting and managed service costs

Appendix 3 – Lagan technologies (Lagan CRM system) – Proposal for sharing Watford Lagan services

Background Papers

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report. If you wish to inspect or take copies of the background papers, please contact the officer named on the front page of the report.

- Shared Services Programme Detailed Business Case