



FINANCE COMMITTEE

11th MARCH 2019

AGENDA ITEM NO: 9

IT SUPPORT SERVICES PROPOSAL

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To consider a proposal for a more secure and hosted IT service provision within the Community Council in order to comply with the General Data Protection Regulation 2018. *The proposal will be emailed separately to Members as it contains contractual information.*

2. BACKGROUND:

General Data Protection Regulation

Members will recall that in May 2018 new regulations were implemented as part of the General Data Protection Regulations.

The EU regulation known as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) came into force on 25 May 2018. The Clerk and Financial Officer has since revised all Council policies and introduced an updated publication scheme and retention schedule which have subsequently been approved by Council. A Data Protection Officer (DPO), David Bridge, GDBR was appointed to act as a DPO but new legislation dictated that Community and Town Councils were NOT required to appoint a separate DPO.

The UK's decision to leave the EU will not affect the requirements of the GDPR.

Paperless Office

Over the last couple of years, the Council has made an attempt to move towards a more paperless office and increase the accessibility of on-line office systems.

This process has been a little “hit and miss” and the Clerk and Financial Officer would like to review options to assist in a more streamlined process for members to access their agenda’s electronically, if Members so wish.

Regrettably the legislation in Wales differs to England in relation to the distribution of summons. In Wales, the summons to council meetings must still be delivered by post, although I am aware that colleague Councils have opted, and agreed locally, to receive this electronically.

Business Continuity/Risk Management

This is an area that the Clerk and Financial Officer has not considered fully previously but during the Clerk’s research it has become evident that there is a need to ensure the continuity of the council’s business in the event of extreme weather conditions, fire and theft etc.

3. CONSIDERATIONS

GDPR - The GDPR has had an impact on document retention and updated Data Protection and Retention Policies have been introduced. The security of electronic data is paramount in avoiding data breaches and the attached proposal provides an illustration to install a “hosted” system of core IT services. This is a “specialist” service in that no other company provide the same service. (This has been evidenced over the last six months, during research and speaking to data companies like iData, Edge etc at national conferences and conversations with colleague Clerks). The company, Microshade, have specifically designed this service for our sector. Access to the Council’s systems would be via Citrix. Mold Town Council and Bae of Colwyn are two North Wales Councils who currently use this system. A list of advantages of using this system are attached as an appendix.

Paperless - The Clerk has contacted her fellow Clerks in North Wales to discuss the subject of issuing electronic summons (agenda) and a number of other Clerks address this by posting out a paper copy of the summons (agenda) only but then send electronically all the associated documents.

This reduces the weight and amount of paper being sent out in the post and the relative postage costs.

Business Continuity/Risk Management - Currently officers are not able to access their emails remotely away from the office and have no access to their work/documents/software etc. Indeed, the way in which the current IT systems are established the Clerk and Financial Officer cannot access the Administrative Assistant's files and vice-versa. This is neither efficient nor effective and can be time consuming when needing to access each other's' files.

In the event of extreme weather and the officers being unable to get to the office they would be unable to continue to carry out their day to day duties with the current IT set up.

The telephone system does not currently allow for office calls to be redirected should the office be un-manned which is inconvenient. If the Council were to approve the attached proposal it would enable a large proportion of the service to continue to operate in the event of poor weather, fire etc. resulting in an un-manned office.

The Council currently pays Vision ICT (the Council's website provider) for monthly back-up of the office systems and the Clerk and Financial Officer manually backs up the Council's payroll and financial systems. It is essential that all data is backed-up 'off site' so that in the event of a fire or flood in the offices the data will be secure and accessible.

Since the introduction of GDPR we are instructed **NOT** to save data on memory sticks/laptops for security reasons. The current "back-up" is via this method as there is no alternative. The Council also pays another company for the hosting of the email addresses.

The customer service/telephone support is provided by Microshade from 7.00 a.m. to 11.00 p.m. 7 days a week.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The illustration attached to this report highlights the breakdown of the costs however, in summary, the costs to move over to this hosted solution would be a one-off payment of **£250** to migrate the two office computers and then a monthly cost of **£85.50**. The monthly back-up cost to Vision ICT of £10 per month (£120.00 per year) would **not** be required.

As the office serves both the Community Councils of Hawarden and Broughton and Bretton, the monthly cost would be charged at 50%, therefore, **£42.75** per Council.

In addition, as part of the Service Level Agreement, Shotton Town Council would also provide 5% towards this amount which equates to **£2.13**.

The net monthly cost to Hawarden Community Council would therefore be **£40.62**.

If approved, a Standard Agreement would be for a period of 3 years.

There is sufficient budget allocation within the subscriptions section of the Council's budget for this purpose.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS:

In order to properly comply with the requirements of the new GDPR may 2018 and, in the interests of business efficiency and business continuity, Members are asked to endorse this new IT solution.

Sharron Jones
Clerk and Financial Officer

Microshade Hosted Service

Introduction:

Microshade Business Consultants Ltd offer a dedicated Local Council hosting service based in a purpose built Data Centre situated in the Plymouth Science Park.

Benefits:

- ✓ Very low hardware costs – represents savings of £200-£300 per desk top computer replacement.
- ✓ Pay as you go – moves all the costs from capital to revenue budgets by taking away the need to replace expensive file servers and software upgrades on a 3 to 5 year cycle.
- ✓ Potential for significant savings in stationery and post by linking staff and members by supplying reports, minutes and agendas electronically via VSM share our secure web interface.
- ✓ Flexibility of working – Increase staff efficiency with permanent access to shared files, available from anywhere with an internet connection, at any time.
- ✓ Security – System is backed- up on a daily basis and copies are kept in a separate location to the file servers.
- ✓ Governance – Ticks all the boxes for Business Continuity and Succession Planning.
- ✓ We provide a Local Council specific service backed up by 20 years working in the sector and deliver specialist applications covering the following:
 - Minutes and Agendas
 - Cemeteries and Allotments
 - Finance
 - Hall and Facilities Bookings
 - Asset Management
 - Digital Mapping
 - Governance and Administration
- ✓ Accessible Advice and Support – relevant to your systems available over the phone throughout the day. Most problems are fixed on line during your phone call.
- ✓ We offer an integrated One Stop Shop for all your requirements, no need to shop around for hardware in one place and software in another we become your IT department.

Our Service is Different

- ✓ You are procuring a total service.
- ✓ You are dramatically reducing your hardware costs
- ✓ You pay a single monthly fee for the service rather than paying up front for the different components.
- ✓ The service is scalable – users can be quickly added or dropped depending on you level of activity. Users can access the system from multi devices at no extra cost by means of desk-top computers, lap-tops, home computers, tablets and smart phones, across a variety of operating systems, including: Windows, Apple Mac, Android etc.