
BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE

**Held on Tuesday, 18 January 2011 at 9.30 am in
Anglia Room, Conference Suite, Elizabeth House, Dereham NR19 1EE**

PRESENT

Mr W.H.C. Smith (Chairman) Lady Fisher
Mr P.D. Claussen

Also Present

Mr P.J. Duigan

In Attendance

Dominic Chessum	- Marketing & Communications Officer
Monica Coffey	- Customer Programme Manager
Mark Finch	- Head of Finance
Helen McAleer	- Senior Committee Officer
Maxine O'Mahony	- Director of Corporate Resources
Jane Osborne	- Committee Officer
Kevin Rump	- ICT Project Manager
Kevin J Taylor	- Head of ICT

1/11 MINUTES

The following points were noted:

The Emergency Planning Manager would provide a brief report to the next meeting on the back-up generator/status of Emergency planning activities.

The Marketing & Communications Officer was in attendance to update Members on the new website. He advised that the launch would actually be taking place the next day (19 January 2011). The delays had been due to an underestimation of the amount of data to be checked, cleansed and migrated. This had taken much longer than expected as there had been a huge amount of information on the old website, including many redundant and non-visible pages. That work was now complete. All web editors had received training and would meet regularly. Pages had a maximum one year display without checking, although editors would be encouraged to check more regularly. A Google analytic tool would pick up problems encountered by the public.

It was clarified that the project had dealt with the look of the website and the ease of accessing information, however, transactability had not been part of this phase of the development.

The new website was currently being developed off-site – based

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on a 12 month hosting contract. A decision would be needed shortly on whether this was to continue or whether the service would return to Breckland officers. The Marketing & Communications Officer asked Members to consult the Council's Web Officer for further advice on that issue.

The Chairman thanked the Marketing & Communications Officer for his update.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 2 November 2010 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2/11 APOLOGIES

None.

3/11 URGENT BUSINESS

None.

4/11 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Lady Fisher declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the housing example quoted in Appendix A to Agenda Item 11, by virtue of land owning interests in Thetford.

5/11 NON-MEMBERS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE MEETING

Mr P Duigan was in attendance.

6/11 BISC/CPWG OPTIONS

This item was deferred to a later meeting.

7/11 ICT SERVICE INSOURCING

The Head of ICT advised Members that an independent review of the Citrix infrastructure had been carried out by independent, external consultants. A full update on their findings would be presented to the next meeting.

There may be a need to consider the wider compatibility with devices such as iPads and systems used at South Holland District Council.

8/11 CAPITAL FUNDING REQUEST FOR ARP/VM WARE AT THETFORD

The ICT Project Manager presented the report which sought additional funding to complete the virtualisation project at Thetford. The additional funding was required to cover price increases which had occurred during the life of the project.

It was clarified that the cost of the Comino and Academy upgrade would be the responsibility of the ARP.

The Head of ICT pointed out that the virtualisation could provide a

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Disaster Recovery facility as the servers in Dereham could be replicated in Thetford.

Options

Option 1

Do nothing – this will not resolve any of the issues. The procurement of the IT equipment and services will not be made.

Option 2

Release capital to procure necessary IT software and services to allow the virtualisation to take place onto the SAN hardware environment.

Reason

Option 2 is the only course of action available to Breckland Council in working towards allowing the Academy and Comino software applications to be upgraded and virtualised.

RESOLVED to release £12,040.66 for the procurement of virtualisation software, back-up solution software and implementation of virtualisation for storage attached network (SAN) solution for Breckland Council office – Thetford.

9/11 CAPITAL FUNDING REQUEST FOR REPLACEMENT PRINTERS / MFDS

The Head of ICT presented the report and explained that the original intention had been to replace devices on a like-for-like basis using the Refresh funding. However, to maximise internal revenue the devices would be bought with capital funding.

Lady Fisher asked if the new devices had any green credentials and it was noted that they were cheaper to run (reducing costs by about two thirds) and defaulted to black and white duplex printing, which saved paper and toners.

Options

Option 1

To do nothing. This would provide the same service at the same cost but with an increasing maintenance overhead, and potential service disruption due to hardware failure.

Option 2

To remove but not replace faulty devices, thereby removing some costs of printing. However, the current MFD devices have been located to support c30+ users per device, therefore the outcome of removal of an existing MFD would be to overload one of the remaining devices (therefore hastening wear and tear), but with overall print costs transferring (and not reducing), and the added time/productivity expense of staff crossing the building to collect prints. Likely overall impact would therefore be negligible.

Option 3

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To divert all prints to a high volume printer in Reprographics. Again, net effect would be negligible as costs would transfer to another cost centre, with the added impact of potentially delaying/impacting on time critical high volume print runs from Comms/Member Services.

Option 4

To adopt a lease model rather than capital – however, the Authority is very keen to reduce where possible its on going revenue commitments – therefore the recommendation is that the MFDs are funded from the Capital refresh pool (which has money allocated for hardware refresh already.)

Reasons

There is a clear business case for adopting the proposal. Although Breckland will be tied into a three year contract, this isn't expected to impede any other printer/scanning proposal/model and will deliver a good return/cost avoidance on investment.

Procurement using capital is also recommended to maximise revenue reductions year on year, thereby supporting the overall aims of the Authority.

RESOLVED to release capital to support the purchase of two multi-function devices (MFD).

10/11 JOINT AUDIT/SCRUTINY PANEL

The minutes of the JASP meeting held on 14 December 2010 were noted for information.

The Chairman expressed a reluctance to purchase iPad devices in the current economic climate, without the requisite information to ensure they would provide value for money.

The Director for Corporate Resources noted that the Panel had hoped that the devices could be acquired on loan for the trial period. The Head of ICT explained that he had not been able to find a supplier willing to loan iPads. However, he would be receiving some similar Dell devices on loan, which could be used for the trial.

It was clarified that such devices did not necessarily need 3G cards, which would help to control the on-going costs.

The Chairman suggested that a brief, informal meeting might be needed to discuss the business case, before making a decision could be made to purchase any devices.

11/11 PROJECT APPLICATIONS (STANDING ITEM)

(a) **Housing Hometrack**

The Principal Housing Officer (Strategy and Enabling) presented the report which included the project application form and some examples of what the system could do. No Proforma B had had been provided as the

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cost of the project was within the existing budget and cost neutral. This was confirmed by the Head of Finance.

Hometrack would provide market intelligence to assess the viability of development schemes and support the activities of the Housing team. The system could not only provide information on site values but also advise on the types of housing required in specific areas.

The expensive Housing Needs Surveys currently carried out, would no longer be required, and further value for money would be achieved from the savings in officer time which could then be focussed on bringing empty homes back into use and encouraging new housing delivery.

The system was maintained and regularly updated by Hometrack. The Council would have licences to use the system and would be entitled to unlimited free training sessions held in London.

It would not be possible to share the information with South Holland, as licences only extended to geographically adjacent, neighbouring authorities.

Options

Option 1

Do nothing and continue using the current system which is more expensive and time consuming.

Option 2

Purchase the Hometrack system which will improve the ability of the Council to ensure that appropriate viability assessments of sites are undertaken. This can only be supported with up to date robust data. The delivery of new housing (private and affordable) will be a valuable commodity in future years with the New Homes Bonus.

Reasons

The purchase of Hometrack is proposed as the best option for the delivery of up-to-date and robust information to support the activities of the Housing team

RESOLVED to approve the purchase of Hometrack.

(b) **ICT Helpdesk (for Information)**

This item was for information only. The Helpdesk would replace the current service at the end of the Steria contract. No additional funding was required.

The report was noted.

12/11 PROJECT PROGRESS

(a) **Licensing Programme**

The ICT Project Manager informed Members that he and other members

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of the team had been on a four day trip to give presentations at Lalpac workshops. They had been invited to participate as Lalpac had been impressed by the way the Licensing project had been handled by the Council.

Discussion ensued on the possible opportunities and benefits to the Council from this kind of involvement, and the knock-on effects it had on other work whilst the officers were away.

There was the possibility of Breckland Council being used as a reference site by Lalpac in return for reduced maintenance costs or free development days. These benefits needed to be confirmed and the Director of Corporate Resources was having a meeting with Lalpac representatives to discuss these matters.

Moving on to the project itself, all plans had now been scanned in and a barcode scanner had been delivered which would scan licences and retrieve all information. The next stage would be to acquire scanning jackets for Blackberries to run a trial.

All taxis were on the system and the focus had moved to premises licences. Training had been carried out and the licensing team were now able to self-support this work.

Mr Claussen saw Lalpac expanding in the future and he asked to be briefed on how it worked and where else it could be used within the Authority. The Chairman suggested that Environmental Health would be a good starting point.

The report was noted.

13/11 SERVICE PERFORMANCE

No issues to report.

14/11 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

The Head of Finance introduced the report and made the following observations:

- No money had been spent on some projects – would they be finished by year end?
- There was an amount of unreleased money – there was a risk this money would be lost – a request to roll the money over to the next year might need to be made to Cabinet
- There had been a small overspend on the Refresh budget – funds should be transferred from the unreleased Refresh budget to cover this.

The Chairman agreed that money should be vired to cover the overspend and the three projects not yet started should be moved forward or the money could be lost.

The Customer Programme Manager advised that the Tender for Telephony had been completed and the order would be placed before the

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end of the financial year.

It was also confirmed that the Gov-Connect money would be spent before 31 March. New projectors for the Conference Suite would be installed and the Chip PC roll out would commence soon.

The Head of Finance was concerned that in the demanding economic climate any request to roll funds forward to the next year would be subject to discussion. He suggested that the time of both Project Managers could be capitalised to release some money to resources to continue projects.

The Director for Corporate Resources asked if the speakers in the Committee Suite were also being replaced and the Chairman had no objection to changing the sound system as long as it was not too expensive.

He advised Officers that there was only ten weeks until the end of the financial year and they should move projects forward, or money could be lost.

15/11 NEXT MEETING

The next scheduled meeting would be on 1 March 2011 at 09.30 in the Anglia Room.

The meeting closed at 10.50 am

CHAIRMAN