Leicester
City Council

CABINET   **10ᵗʰ December 2007**
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Data Centre Environmental Utilities Refresh
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Report of the Corporate Director, Resources

1.   Purpose and summary

The council's ICT is almost all provided from the council's data centre. The data centre is secured and environmentally controlled, but is showing its age. Plans were in place to move the centre during 2006, but difficulties prevented this happening. Other options have been explored, but no suitable site has yet been identified. We now need to invest moneys in modernising the existing arrangements.   This report seeks Members approval to release funding for this purpose.

2.   Recommendations

Members are recommended to:

2.1   Note that Pilot House is no longer considered suitable as a location for the council's data centre.

2.2   Recognise the need to modernise the environmental controls in the existing data centre and support the use of CLABs funding, with a contribution from the council's risk management fund, to meet the costs.

2.3   Ask officers to approach Northgate (our ICT partners for BSF) and offer them the option of LCC hosting the bsf data centre. Any income to be refunded to the CLABs budget.

4.   Report

4.1   The Council's data centre hosts over 330 servers and the council's telephone switch. As well as extensive security controls, the room is equipped with a range of environmental control and monitoring systems.   The centre is supported by an uninterruptable power supply and a generator.   The equipment is regularly tested and fully maintained but most is now past its recommended replacement date.

4.2   During 2005 Cabinet approved plans to relocate the data centre and it was hoped the work would be complete by the Spring of 2006.   Following Cabinet approval more thorough risk assessments were commissioned which recommended that the chosen building would need considerably more work than first anticipated in order to make it a

suitable location for a data centre. A range of alternative sites were then considered but nothing has yet been identified that would meet our needs.

4.3   The council needs to maintain a modern data centre reflective of the demands placed on it. Modernising the main items of environmental control, including replacement air conditioning units, fire suppression equipment and additional UPS capacity will cost in the order of £300,000 (exact costs subject to procurement). This will extend the life of the centre a further 3-5 years whilst the longer term accommodation arrangements are considered as part of the CLABs review.

4.4   The Building Schools for the Future project includes plans to set up a data centre. Our ICT partner, Northgate, is currently looking to buy space from a third party, but have indicated they would be agreeable to the council hosting the equipment if suitable accommodation is available. The bsf budget includes £50,000 per year for this service. If we can urgently modernise our data centre we could host bsf and use the charges to contribute to our costs. Northgate would need access to the centre from March 2008.

4.5   The environmental controls within the Data Centre use a significant amount of energy. We will involve the Energy Team in Adults and Housing in the procurement and implementation of the replacement equipment.

5.   FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1.   Financial Implications

The estimated cost of modernising the existing arrangements for the Council's ICT Data Centre is £300,000. This is required urgently, but is likely to be an interim solution for the medium term only, (probably for a period of approx 2 – 5 years) until a final decision is implemented for the CLABS review.

It is proposed that the £300,000 can be underwritten from within the overall £29.676 million for CLABs and more specifically from within the £1m provision for works originally proposed for the data centre at Pilot House which was previously approved by Cabinet in March 2006, and of which £936,000 is uncommitted.

The arrangements proposed within this report are temporary and a replacement Data Centre will still be required.

Of the total budget for CLABs of £29.676 million, £7.333 million has been released by Cabinet and of which £4.627 million had been spent as of period 8. It should be noted though that a further comprehensive report on the options for the CLABs review is planned for the new year, and that it is likely that the original overall budget will be insufficient whatever option is decided upon.

It is also possible however that the ICT partner for BSF, Northgate may wish to get the Council to host their equipment if suitable accommodation is available. If this is agreed, this could produce income of approx £50,000 p.a. which can be used towards the capital costs and thus reduce the call on the CLABs budget.   The length of the

Northgate contract is five years. Thus, five years of funding would contribute £250,000 towards the costs. There is also potential additional funding of £10,000 from risk management.

It is not yet known what the final solution for the siting of the data centre will be, indeed it is possible that in several years time technology may have advanced to give the Council greater flexibility.

Nick Booth, Principal Accountant, Financial Services, Ext. 7460

5.2 Legal Implications

It is a statutory requirement of the Data Protection Act 1998 that all personal data held by the Council is kept securely. Principle 7 of the Act states:- "Appropriate technical and organisational measures shall be taken against unauthorised or unlawful processing of personal data and against accidental loss or destruction of, or damage to, personal data." Other third party data is also likley to be subject to statutory, contractural or common law requirements to keep it secure. Data loss arising from inadequate or insecure premises could lead to significant financial or other penalties."

Carolyn Howard, Solicitor, Legal Services, Ext. 6498

6. Other Implications

OTHER IMPLICATIONS	YES/NO	Paragraph References Within Supporting information
Equal Opportunities	No	
Policy	No	
Sustainable and Environmental	No	4.6
Crime and Disorder	No	
Human Rights Act	No	
Elderly/People on Low Income	No	

7. Risk Assessment Matrix

Comments from Susan Masters

It is generally accepted that central ICT is now the most critical business activity conducted by the Council due to the heavy reliance on this unit. Any significant disruption to network, server running, or email facilities would render the Council unable to provide many critical services across the Council.

In the case of any such disruption, the Corporate Business Continuity and the ICT Disaster Recovery Plans will enable the Council to restore service as quickly as possible. However the disruption and costs that would inevitably be incurred if ICT operations were to be compromised, are to be avoided.

A risk assessment on the suitability of Pilot House identified that significant change to the property would be required in order to provide the 'safe and secure environment' that is essential to the our ICT operations.

In the absence of alternative suitable premises, it is essential to undertake work previously scheduled to sustain the resilience of the current arrangements

Move to Pilot House – the key risks that made the project unviable

Difficulties in gaining existing tenants agreement to move out (i.e. hazardous multiple-tenancy activities in relation to fire)

High costs for the re-engineering of Pilot House

Imprudent use of council funds for the conversion of a wooden-floored ex factory building into a 21st century ICT facility

Inadequate fire protection/ detection for even the current occupancy, let alone a critical cross-functional activity on which all Departments rely heavily.

10.   Report Author

Jill Craig
Service Director, Information