

Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C-004-2011/12

Date of meeting: 06 June 2011



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Planning and Technology

Subject: ICT Disaster Recovery

Responsible Officer: David Newton (01992 564580).

Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) To confirm that Parsonage Court (Careline) should be used as the off-site location for an ICT disaster recovery suite;**
- (2) To endorse the feasibility study into cabled and wireless broadband solutions; and**
- (3) To receive a further report on completion of the feasibility work.**

Executive Summary:

The current Information and Communication Technology (**ICT**) Disaster Recovery (**DR**) plan is essentially a stand alone document. A number of assumptions have had to be made, as historically it has not been possible to fully integrate this document into the Corporate DR Plan without an off-site ICT DR site having been identified. A site is vital to accommodate storage area network (**SAN**) servers and for the implementation of critical technical services such as Internet and Network connectivity.

With the involvement of the Emergency Planning Officer, a secure location has recently been identified at the Council's Careline facility. Careline is a control centre which offers 24 hour emergency access to trained professionals, for the elderly and vulnerable people within the Epping Forest area. There is now an opportunity to use this facility to develop a co-ordinated approach to DR. All staff require access to computerised systems for their daily work and it is essential that the ICT DR plan becomes more intrinsically linked with the Corporate DR plan.

Following the completion of the virtualisation project, the number of servers required to run essential systems has been drastically reduced, as has the space required to store them. A fully air conditioned room is no longer required as the smaller number of servers can be cooled using a rack with integral cooling. This reduces the storage footprint and is substantially cheaper to run.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

The existing ICT DR solution consists of 2 separate computer suites located at different ends of the Civic Offices complex. Although this offers a substantial form of resilience, having both suites on the same site is not ideal.

Currently, recovery time for key systems from a major DR incident (assuming total loss of both Computer suites 1 and 2) , is estimated at a minimum of 40 days, as this timescale incorporates issues such as hardware lead time, restore of data and systems from off-site tape back up etc. This timescale could be reduced substantially if an off-site ICT DR facility is available.

Other Options for Action:

Continue with current setup and accept minimum 40 days recovery time, but this would fail to address the risk from a major DR incident.

Report:

1. The DR project was initially identified as a 2 year project in the 2010/2011 ICT Business Plan and has been included in the last two ICT Update reports dated 12 January 2010 and 9 December 2010.
2. There are both Capital and Revenue cost implications within this project. Major expenses are for the initial purchase of hardware and a budget of £80,000 has already been included in the Capital programme. A 100Mb connection would be required to allow fast, error free data replication between the sites. The monthly cost of this connection could be in the region of £2000 per month. However, recent advances in wireless broadband technology may offer a cheaper alternative solution and this is currently being evaluated. In addition, any wireless connection sited at the Civic Offices, could also be used to benefit EFDC residents, by supplying wireless broadband to areas which currently have no, or very slow, broadband connectivity, at no cost to the Council. An invitation to quote for the potential supply of both types of connectivity will be published using the Buying Solutions framework shortly.
3. Since the server virtualisation project has been completed, the running costs of Computer Suite 1 have been greatly reduced. However, this facility cannot be completely shut down unless alternative, off-site DR accommodation is available. Once this has been achieved, saving on energy costs and accommodation overheads can be fully realised. At this stage it is not possible to quantify the exact amount of savings.
4. Careline is part of the Parsonage Court complex and could potentially be used to house essential staff to access systems either by network cable or wireless VPN connectivity, in the event of a major DR incident.
5. The complexities already identified in the first year's analysis mean that the original completion date of March 2012 is likely to slip. A further update will be included in the next ICT update report to Cabinet.

Resource Implications:

Setup costs are within the existing allocated budget. Savings from the decommissioning of Computer Suite 1 can be offset against the initial setup costs of a DR suite. There will also be revenue budget implications with regard to line rental, but it is not possible to ascertain the exact costs until an evaluation of all available options has been completed.

Legal and Governance Implications:

None.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

None.

Consultation Undertaken:

None.

Background Papers:

None.

Impact Assessments:

Risk Management

There is a risk to the Council should the whole Civic Offices site be lost in a major DR incident. The loss of accommodation, at least partial, has been identified repeatedly as a major concern, with the ICT risk matrix identifying the likelihood as significant and the impact as critical.

Equality and Diversity:

Did the initial assessment of the proposals contained in this report for relevance to the Council's general equality duties, reveal any potentially adverse equality implications? No

Where equality implications were identified through the initial assessment process, has a formal Equality Impact Assessment been undertaken? N/A

What equality implications were identified through the Equality Impact Assessment process?
None.

How have the equality implications identified through the Equality Impact Assessment been addressed in this report in order to avoid discrimination against any particular group?
N/A.