ANGUS COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 1 SEPTEMBER 2015

SCOTTISH WIDE AREA NETWORK

REPORT BY SHARON FAULKNER, HEAD OF HR, IT AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

ABSTRACT

This report seeks Committee approval to adopt the Scottish Wide Area Network (SWAN) to deliver core network services.

1.   RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Committee:

(i)   approves the move to a new model for our network infrastructure based on SWAN (Scottish Wide Area Network)
(ii)   authorises the Service Manager Information Technology to gain membership of the Pathfinder North SWAN HUB
(iii)   approves the pooling together of existing network budgets from directorates to an "other services" budget managed by the Service Manager Information Technology.

2.   ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS COMMUNITY PLAN/SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT/COPORATE PLAN

COMMUNITIES THAT ARE LEARNING AND SUPPORTIVE - Our children and young people are confident individuals, effective contributors, successful learners and responsible citizens
Adults maximise their potential through learning opportunities
COMMUNITIES THAT ARE CARING AND HEALTHY - We have improved the health and wellbeing of our people and inequalities are reduced
Individuals are supported in their own communities with good quality services

The alignment with the Council Plan is to:

Design and Implement support services which are "fit for purpose" as the Council changes.
Deliver a resilient IT and communications infrastructure to support the change agenda.
Develop and embed mobile and agile working into our services delivery models.

3.   BACKGROUND

Angus Council's Digital Strategy which was approved by the Policy and Resources Committee in April 2015 (Report 177/15) includes a commitment to engage with SWAN and the SWAN value added services in support of transformation, collaborative working and efficiency. The Scottish Wide Area Network (SWAN) Programme is designed to deliver a single public services network available for the use of any, and potentially all, public service organisations within Scotland. The SWAN initiative aims to enable infrastructure and service sharing that will produce cost efficiencies and facilitate the creation of public services that are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local needs. The national contract value for SWAN Connectivity Services is estimated to be up to £325m over 9 years.

Initially the SWAN programme will deliver services that fit broadly into two categories:

Core Infrastructure Services - The core infrastructure includes the development and deployment of the network itself and the provision of support services such as a help-desk,

service portal, service monitoring, reporting, billing and technical design support. These are services that will be required by most, if not all, service users.

Catalogue Connectivity Services - Connectivity services will allow service users to connect to other service users and gateways with a variety of bandwidth, resilience and security options available.

The SWAN Programme is a major milestone from the Digital Public Services strategy. It is one of the first major initiatives to be launched by Scottish Ministers in support of the Scotland's national digital public services strategy 'Scotland's Digital Future – Delivery of Public Services' and is aligned with the McClelland Review of Scottish Public Sector ICT Infrastructure, taking forward its recommendations on public sector collaborative procurement, aggregation of network demand and use of common standards.

4. CURRENT POSITION

The existing council wide area network has a high speed core based on fibre optic cables that are supplied by British Telecom. This network is built around secondary school nodes in each burgh with local offices and primary schools connecting to the core at these nodes using a mix of technologies. Rural provision is less structured and is provided via a mix of broadband technology, satellite and radio. The complexity of the network and the mix of technologies used means that there is a significant overhead in terms of the overall management of the network. The intention is to simplify this by adopting SWAN circuits in the burghs where there is a shared benefit with other public sector partners including NHS Tayside, Police Scotland and Scottish Fire and Rescue.

At present there are a number of business drivers that will require access to the SWAN architecture, key amongst these are the integration of Health and Social Care and delivery of education services via SEEMIS. In addition there are number of strands of the Local Government ICT strategy that will use SWAN as the enabling technology to deliver shared services and reduced costs. The structure of the SWAN contract allows for the delivery of additional value added services that have the potential to reduce the cost of ownership of the council's network. Development of the value added services is controlled by the SWAN board and is directed by the board members based on customer need.

The initial phase of the SWAN programme is now delivering services to three of the four Vanguard Partners: NHS Scotland, Education Scotland, Pathfinder North (a consortium that comprises the Highland Council, Argyle and Bute Council, Orkney Island Council, Moray Council and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar) and Pathfinder South (a consortium that comprises Dumfries and Galloway Council and The Borders Council). NHS Tayside are in the process of migrating to SWAN as part of the replacement of the existing national NHS contract.

5. PROPOSALS

It is proposed that the council enters into a contractual agreement for SWAN services via the Pathfinder North (PFN) collaborative HUB. Membership of the hub avoids the need for Angus Council to apply directly to the SWAN Board for membership and provides access to programme management and contract management services via the Pathfinder North programme office. This will reduce the internal costs of managing SWAN delivery within Angus Council and accelerate delivery of SWAN services; the costs of service delivery via PFN have been included in the cost model and savings projection.

SWAN circuits will be used to deliver the core network and connectivity to council offices in Arbroath, Forfar and Montrose. The remainder of the Council's estate will be connected via high speed radio links that will be the subject of a procurement exercise in conjunction with Tayside Procurement Consortium, building on the existing collaborative radio wireless network contract. This procurement will be the subject of a future committee report.

In addition it is proposed that the existing devolved network budgets are pooled together under a single, corporate "other services" budget. This model allows strategic decisions on

network provision to be made without the complexity of realigning budgets which would be required due to the different cost models for the same speed of connection under the two different technical models outlined above. This budget model will be particularly relevant in the context of planned agile working arrangements, where building occupancy will increase, some existing offices will be declared surplus and many council employees will be able to work from a range of locations. Any long term savings released from the network budget would be delivered at a corporate level as tier one savings and would therefore reduce the level of any future required departmental savings across the council. The principle of pooling the network budgets was accepted by EMT in May 2015 subject to committee approval.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The existing costs of Angus Council's network architecture over a five year period are estimated at £2,756k including the existing network switch replacement programme. The adoption of the network proposals in this report will deliver a 5 year saving of between £37k and £316k. The actual figure is dependent on the value the council obtains from using SWAN core services and taking advantage of the efficiencies available through the value added services provided under the contract. The costs of the network will be contained by the pooling of directorate revenue budgets.

In addition to the cost savings identified there are significant areas of cost avoidance relating to the delivery of Health and Social Care Integration through use of a single shared network architecture.
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7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS (IF APPLICABLE)

The proposed SWAN network design includes new services that will improve resilience from the Council's data and communication centres reducing the risk of major failures that result in the loss of outbound and inbound internet traffic.

Delivery of application services via the SWAN shared network will enable access to national systems and data centres positioning the council to realise full benefit from the work being delivered via the Local Government ICT strategy. This includes the ability to offer services hosted by Angus Council to other public sector bodies that are connected to the SWAN architecture.

8. CONCLUSION

The adoption of the hybrid network model outlined in this report enables Angus Council to take advantage of the benefits provided by connecting to the national public sector network (SWAN) whilst managing the long term costs within the constraints of the existing budget provision.
The additional recommendations allow the council to engage effectively with the SWAN Board via an existing collaborative HUB and also make strategic decisions about local investment to ensure flexibility of network provision that meets or exceeds business requirements.

NOTE: No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

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