

Information and Communications Technology Strategy – Update

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

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1 Purpose of Report

This report provides Members with a summary update regarding implementation of the Service's Information, Communications and Technology (ICT) Strategy.

2 Recommendations

Members are requested to note the contents of this report.

3 Background

The previous 12 month period has presented unprecedented ICT challenges to the Service as it addresses the consequences of the collapse of the national FiReControl Project, ICT hardware failures and the demands of relocating services to the newly refurbished Headquarters/Shrewsbury Fire Station building.

In addressing these and associated demands, some predictable and others not so, the Service with the support of the Fire Authority has been able to:

- a) Enter into a shared services agreement with Shropshire Council to secure access to the Public Services Network enhancing wide-area network connectivity between all Service sites and Shropshire Council. This project is largely complete with full completion scheduled for late November. The network will (upon completion) act as the primary mobilising bearer to all fire stations, offering resilience and speed of connectivity and in addition improve connectivity speeds across the Service.

- b) Procure a cost-effective resilient local area network solution hosted at the new Headquarters with fallback and replication taking place at Telford Central Fire Station. This project has enabled the Service to upgrade to current standards its data hardware servers and rationalise ICT assets. The project will be completed in October.
- c) Transference of communication and data services from the old Headquarters building to the new Headquarters building. This has been a technically complicated project and is largely complete albeit it has not been without its difficulties. The Service has encountered a number of email problems, all of which should be resolved in the near future.
- d) Migration, implementation and go-live of the new command and control system. This has represented one of the most technically challenging projects any service can undertake, and one that has been successfully completed without a standalone project team that most other services would have employed. The primary challenge has been to maintain business continuity during the migration from the old to the new Control Room; this was achieved with no loss of service to the community. The new system is now functional with fallback arrangements in place at Telford Central Fire Station and ultimate fallback to Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service.

4 Financial Comment

Funding for the above projects has been met from within Service budgets previously approved by Members. Officers have prepared a submission for grant funding from Central Government to offsite the costs incurred in securing essential fire control services in the absence of the regional fire control centre.

5 Legal Comment

There are no legal issues arising from the update set out in this report.

6 Equality Impact Assessment

Officers have considered the Service's Brigade Order on Equality Impact Assessments (Personnel 5 Part 2) and have determined that there are no discriminatory practices or differential impacts upon specific groups arising from this report. An Initial Equality Impact Assessment has not, therefore, been completed.

7 Appendix

There are no appendices associated with this report.

8 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.