



Report To:	Cabinet
Date:	24 th July 2024
Subject:	To allocate funding to relocate Boston Borough Council's ICT server room to South Holland District Council
Purpose:	To consider allocating funding to allow the relocation of Boston Borough Council's ICT server room to South Holland District Council
Key Decision:	No
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Sandeep Ghosh, Portfolio Holder for Finance
Report Of:	James Gilbert, Assistant Director – Corporate
Report Author:	Jackie Wright, Chief Delivery Officer, PSPS
Ward(s) Affected:	None
Exempt Report:	No

Summary

This paper is to seek approval for funding to relocate Boston Borough Council's ICT server room to South Holland District Council.

This proposal has been formed in response to the requirement to replace aging network infrastructure and mitigate against risk to the Council.

Recommendations

To invest in aging ICT infrastructure and to allow the relocation of the ICT server room to South Holland District Council, Cabinet approves the addition of £120,000 to the Capital Programme and, if required, £20,000 to the revenue budget, to be financed from the Capital Reserve, and to note the implications for future year's budgets.

Reasons for Recommendations

The report outlines several risks to the Borough Council regarding its existing ICT server room. The recommendation supports the most cost-effective solution to removing those risks.

Other Options Considered

Several options were considered and are outlined in the body of the report.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 In recent years Boston Borough Council has invested heavily in its ICT provision to improve the quality of services to the community.
- 1.2 Whilst significant improvements have been made there remain several risks the Council and its partners at Public Sector Partnership Services are working to address.
- 1.3 To address the risks outlined in section 2, this report proposes relocating the Council's ICT server room to that of South Holland District Council, which is a more modern, fit for purpose, environment.
- 1.4 This solution is only possible because of the collaborative working between the Councils resulting from the formation of the South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership.

2.0 Report

- 2.1 An ICT server room is a location that hosts the Council's main ICT infrastructure and data centre. Without the ICT server room, the Council's ICT infrastructure wouldn't function.
- 2.2 The existing server room has reached the end of its functional life for this purpose, presenting several risks to the Council that must be addressed. Those risks, which are identified on the ICT risk register, include:
 - It is not large enough for the infrastructure.
 - It is incapable of housing a fire suppression unit. *This poses a risk of complete loss of equipment and data should a fire break out.*
 - It only has an Uninterruptible Power Supply (a battery backup) capable of powering the core environment for around 40 mins. *This is insufficient to allow a controlled response to a power outage - an uncontrolled shut down could result in infrastructure failure and data loss.*
 - Network cables for almost every computer port in the building route to the server room. *This makes cable management and labelling almost impossible.*
 - The current server room, whilst has never flooded, is below the flood line.
- 2.3 In addition to these risks, the networking infrastructure at Boston Borough Council is now beyond its useful life and is prone to outage.

2.4 Before proposing to relocate the server room to South Holland District Council, a range of options were explored, as set out in the table below:

Option	Estimated Cost	Decision / Reasoning
Do Nothing	£0	Rejected <i>Doing nothing is not an option. The aging unsupported network infrastructure the Council has is prone to outage and requires security improvements. Doing nothing would also result in the server room environmental risks highlighted in section 2.2 remaining. For these reasons one of the below options has to be selected.</i>
Replace network infrastructure only	£74,000	Rejected <i>Server room environmental risks would remain</i>
Replace network infrastructure and add fire suppression to cabinets	£99,000	Rejected <i>Some server room environmental risks would remain</i>
Replace network infrastructure and relocate server room to a new dedicated room within Municipal Buildings	£215,000	Rejected <i>Significant cost and would not make use of Partnership advantages, such as resilient Internet links and generator that other sites would offer</i>
Replace network infrastructure and relocate server room to cloud	£74,000 capital £243,000 per annum	Rejected <i>Significant revenue cost</i>
Replace network infrastructure and relocate server room to South Holland District Council.	£140,000	Recommended way forward <i>To relocate Boston Borough Council server room to SHDC. Doing so will remove the aging network infrastructure, remove the risk of unpatchable software, remove the server room environmental risks detailed in section 2.2 and also provide additional benefits of a resilient internet link and building generator)</i>

2.5 Whilst there is the option to co-locate in East Lindsey District Council's server room in Horncastle, Boston is geographically closest to Spalding and on the same external Internet link infrastructure, therefore South Holland makes the most logical sense for cohabitation and has been the focus of the options appraisals. Should South Holland District Council make changes to its offices, or bring in additional tenants, it would be expected that the server room would remain in its present location.

2.6 A third party would be engaged to relocate the ICT equipment to ensure it is fully insured during the relocation.

- 2.7 Whilst this report proposes the relocation of the server room to South Holland District Council, Boston Borough Council would retain network communication equipment, such as firewalls and switches at its Boston premises to provide secure internet access. There is a communication room already utilised within the Boston premises that would accommodate this small footprint.
- 2.8 Relocation of the server room to South Holland District Council addresses the identified risks and is considerably more cost effective to the Council than seeking to create a fit for purpose server room within Municipal Buildings.
- 2.9 Relocation to South Holland District Council, would provide a small amount of income for South Holland, circa £15,000 per annum, as contribution to power, UPS, cooling etc. Some of this would be offset by a reduction in running costs for Boston Borough Council.
- 2.10 The cost to relocate the server room to South Holland District Council is £120k capital with a revenue implication of £20k per annum. The in-year revenue costs, should it not be possible to contain them within existing budget provision, will be funded from the Capital Reserve, with the 25/26 costs included as part of the budget setting process.
- 2.11 This costs are broken down as follows:

Capital Costs	
Hardware Migration (required for insured consultant to relocate environment)	£10,000
Patching, Power, Cabling (required to increase capacity at SHDC to accommodate)	£3,000
Server room power (required to increase capacity at SHDC to accommodate)	£2,500
Cabinet connectivity and re-cable (required to ensure sufficient space available and to accommodate complex configuration)	£5,000
Networking Hub and Spoke – Switches (required as current as EOL)	£85,000
Investment into SHDC UPS (required to increase capacity at SHDC to accommodate)	£4,000
Contingency	£10,000
TOTAL	£119,500

Annual Revenue Costs	
Switch Support (required to maintain support/compliance)	£4,200
Power contribution (required to provide contribution to SHDC costs)	£9,942
UPS contribution (required to provide contribution to SHDC costs)	£1,000
Aircon contribution (required to provide contribution to SHDC costs)	£1,200
Generator contribution (required to provide contribution to SHDC costs)	£1,200
Internet link contribution (required to provide contribution to SHDC costs)	£2,000
TOTAL	£19,542

3.0 Conclusion

- 3.1 The most cost-effective option that replaces the aging network infrastructure in addition to mitigating against environmental risks is to relocate the ICT server room to South Holland District Council.
- 3.2 Relocation will increase the resiliency of the ICT environment for Boston Borough Council, allowing it to benefit from the additional enhancements that South Holland District Council have already invested in.
- 3.3 The new network infrastructure to be purchased will support the longer-term aspiration of a combined ICT environment and/or a Partnership-wide move to cloud hosting, as it will be of a nature and configuration that allows a future cloud migration.

Expected Benefits to the Partnership

As a member of the Partnership, this will provide Boston Borough Council with greater ICT resiliency.

Implications

South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership

This proposal aligns to the aspirations of the Councils to maximise the opportunities presented by the formation of the Partnership. It reduces replacement cost to Boston Borough Council and provides income to South Holland District Council.

Corporate Priorities

The Partnership has a priority to be 'Efficient and Effective'. The recommended solution in this report maximises the opportunity presented by the Partnership.

Staffing

None

Workforce Capacity Implications

None

Constitutional and Legal Implications

None

Data Protection

Data and applications will remain separated from South Holland District Council and remain under the sovereign identity of Boston Borough Council.

Financial

The financial implications are outlined at 2.10 and 2.11 in the report.

Risk Management

The relocation of the ICT environment, does come with inherent risks:

- The physical relocation of the environment, carries a risk of physical damage and/or data destruction. This will be mitigated by using a 3rd party that specialises in this sort of works and is known to PSPS.
- The relocation of the environment will need to be performed out of core business hours to not impact the normal operation of the Council.
- The relocation will increase the network “traffic” inbound to South Holland District Council, whilst several ‘sizing exercises’ have been completed at various times of accommodation capacity (i.e, upon peak occupation, “normal” occupation and minimal occupation) to ensure the Internet link is sufficient, the actual requirement will not be known until the point of relocation and testing. The current internet links are however adequately sized with additional spare capacity.

Stakeholder / Consultation / Timescales

Consultation has been undertaken with the Finance Portfolio Holder and Leadership Team. This consultation has resulted in the alternative options being explored and discounted.

Reputation

None

Contracts

None

Crime and Disorder

None

Equality and Diversity / Human Rights / Safeguarding

None

Health and Wellbeing

None

Climate Change and Environmental Implications

None

Links to 12 Missions in the levelling Up White Paper

Missions	
This paper contributes to the following Missions outlined in the Government's Levelling Up White paper.	
Living Standards	By 2030, pay, employment and productivity will have risen in every area of the UK, with each containing a globally competitive city, with the gap between the top performing and other areas closing.
Research and Development	By 2030, domestic public investment in Research & Development outside the Greater South East will increase by at least 40% and at least one third over the Spending Review period, with that additional government funding seeking to leverage at least twice as much private sector investment over the long term to stimulate innovation and productivity growth.
Transport Infrastructure	By 2030, local public transport connectivity across the country will be significantly closer to the standards of London, with improved services, simpler fares and integrated ticketing.
Digital Connectivity	By 2030, the UK will have nationwide gigabit-capable broadband and 4G coverage, with 5G coverage for the majority of the population.
Education	By 2030, the number of primary school children achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and maths will have significantly increased. In England, this will mean 90% of children will achieve the expected standard, and the percentage of children meeting the expected standard in the worst performing areas will have increased by over a third.
Skills	By 2030, the number of people successfully completing high-quality skills training will have significantly increased in every area of the UK. In England, this will lead to 200,000 more people successfully completing high-quality skills training annually, driven by 80,000 more people completing courses in the lowest skilled areas.
Health	By 2030, the gap in Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE) between local areas where it is highest and lowest will have narrowed, and by 2035 HLE will rise by 5 years.
Wellbeing	By 2030, well-being will have improved in every area of the UK, with the gap between top performing and other areas closing.
Pride in Place	By 2030, pride in place, such as people's satisfaction with their town centre and engagement in local culture and community, will have risen in every area of the UK, with the gap between the top performing and other areas closing.
Housing	By 2030, renters will have a secure path to ownership with the number of first-time buyers increasing in all areas; and the government's ambition is for the number of non-decent rented homes to have fallen by 50%, with the biggest improvements in the lowest performing areas.
Crime	By 2030, homicide, serious violence, and neighbourhood crime will have fallen, focused on the worst-affected areas.
Local Leadership	By 2030, every part of England that wants one will have a devolution deal with powers at or approaching the highest level of devolution and a simplified, long-term funding settlement.

Acronyms

None

Appendices

None

Background Papers

No background papers as defined in Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the production of this report

Chronological History of this Report

No

Report Approval

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