

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting16th December 2010

1. Title of Item/Report

EIT Review of Devolved ICT

2. Record of the Decision

Members considered an Efficiency, Improvement and Transformation Task and Finish Review. The review had concentrated on the Schools Information and Communications Technology Unit (SICTU) and members were provided with an overview of that service. It was noted that SICTU provided technical support to primary and secondary schools, which had bought into the service.

Members noted the current situation with regard to schools funding.

The review concluded that SICTU was clearly a Council in-house technical ICT function which sits outside the main ICT service. It's functions were a sub-set of those provided by Xentrall ICT Services i.e. application and technical support. Xentrall and SICTU already had a working relationship through the provision of some Council ICT services to schools e.g. Agresso. The separation of the two services and differences in technologies could cause problems in the implementation of those services.

The funding pressures facing the service, both in terms of school's Service Level Agreement and the ICT architecture, which underpinned all school's services, meant that the current model for provision was destined to change. Incorporating SICTU within Xentrall ICT would increase the capacity to manage change of ICT provision within schools and provide a platform, which could more readily cope with an expansion or contraction of the service. A review of architecture provision would also give rise to opportunities from an increase in overall scale, as had seen to be the case with the Stockton and Darlington partnership.

A transfer of SICTU into Xentrall ICT Services would seem a sensible direction of travel. The outline proposal therefore was to integrate SICTU as it currently existed into Xentrall ICT Services. However, due to the current funding uncertainties, it was felt that the best time to consider integration was during 2011/12. The process could then be undertaken in

light of a clear funding arrangement for both SICTU and the underlying school's ICT architecture. To inform this process, consultation would start with School Heads to gain clarity over current and future ICT service & infrastructure funding and to seek views on the way forward.

As SICTU was self funding through SLA arrangements, there was no anticipated savings resulting from this particular EIT review at this time. Any pressure from schools to reduce SLA costs or significant efficiency savings gained at the centre would result in either reduced income from schools or lower operating costs. Based upon the current working arrangements with schools it was unlikely that significant savings could be made through a reduction in cost base. However, as had already been shown, there were opportunities to proactively market the service wider outside of Stockton and it would be appropriate for the Xentrall brand to be used for this purpose. Any increase in income or reduction in cost would ultimately contribute to the Authority's medium term financial plan.

A potential integration with Xentrall also gave an opportunity to consider an integrated architecture for ICT provision to both Council and schools. As well as efficiencies of scale, an integrated architecture could provide increased resilience and also assist in the provision of services to schools. An integration of the two services would also allow a review of architecture to be considered in time for the renewal of the NGfL contract later in 2011/12.

Xentrall ICT Services had also been the subject of an EIT review and were planning to implement a new service structure in April 2011. Subject to consultation, the proposal at this stage would be to initially transfer the SICTU structure into Xentrall ICT unchanged during 2011/12. The service could then be monitored and an informed view developed on how to best integrate aspects of the service more fully.

RESOLVED that:-

1. the findings of the review are noted.
2. the Head of Support Services (CESC) consult with School Heads regarding the findings of the EIT review and the proposal to transfer the SICTU function into Xentrall Shared Services.

3. Reasons for the Decision

To be able to maintain suitable levels of ICT service provision to schools in light of budget pressures both to the Council and schools.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected
None
5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest
None
6. Details of any Dispensations
Not applicable
7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed
Midnight on Friday 24 December 2010

Proper Officer
20 December 2010