**REPORT TO
EXECUTIVE SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

19 OCTOBER 2010

**REPORT OF HEAD OF
ICT AND DESIGN &
PRINT**

DEVOLVED ICT EIT REVIEW – BASELINE UPDATE

SUMMARY

This report is an overview of the baseline work undertaken as the start of the review.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the report is noted.

BACKGROUND

1. This review concerns those elements of ICT support which currently sit outside of the Council's main ICT service i.e. Xentrall ICT Services. With agreement from both Councils, the scope of the review also includes Darlington Council. The areas of ICT covered are:

    *   ICT provision within CESC
    *   GIS ICT provision
    *   ICT provision within Darlington Children Services Department

2. Work has been undertaken with the services concerned to pull together baseline information for the existing service based provision.

GIS ICT

3. This forms a small element of the review. The potential for a Tees Valley GIS shared service is being considered as part of another review lead by D&NS. The remaining element which comes within the scope of this review is the ICT element of the GIS service provision. As part of this baselining process this ICT element has been assessed as insignificant both in terms of total FTE and budget. Consequently, the current GIS service will no longer be part of this review. However, should the shared service proposal being developed by D&NS gain momentum, then the underpinning ICT service provision will need to be reviewed once more with regard to efficiency and effectiveness.

SCHOOLS ICT OVERVIEW

4. There are similarities between the ICT support that both Stockton and Darlington provide to their respective schools. This covers both advisory functions and technical ICT support. The Stockton schools provision is described below.

5. Within CESC there are five teams supporting ICT systems and their development. These cover:

   - E-Learning Co-ordination & City Learning Centres (CLCs)
   - Children's Social Care
   - Adult's Social Care
   - Children & Young People
   - Schools Information & Communications Technology Unit (SICTU)

6. The E-Learning function (& CLCs) is focussed around helping schools exploit ICT in the curriculum environment. The next three teams are grouped under the umbrella of CESC ICT Development Services (CIDS) and their role is mainly focussed around supporting and exploiting the CESC specific ICT applications in use. SICTU represents the ICT technical support given to schools.

7. The E-Learning Co-ordination team (3 FTE) report to the Head of School Effectiveness and also have line management responsibility for the two City Learning Centres (9 FTE). The other four teams (35 FTE in total) report to the Head of Support Services within CESC. The cancellation of Contact Point nationally means that one the teams within CIDS is now under review.

8. At Darlington, a smaller support model exists. There are also no CLCs in Darlington. Approximately 12 FTE are in place at Darlington, plus the schools SIMS support service which is bought in from Durham CC.

9. The overall ICT provision in education and schools is driven by a number of factors. Some of the programmes are set nationally and the Council has little in the way of influence in their implementation. Elements of the support service are commissioned directly by schools though SLAs and these are self funding. Grants are often used to fund capital schemes and core ICT infrastructure across schools. The Council has a seat on the board of Northern Grid which is the main provider of networks and Internet provision within schools.

10. Current grant and spending reviews will no doubt re-shape the geography for ICT provision across schools. The Harnessing Technology Grant has already been cut significantly, BSF has been axed, as has BECTA and it is expected that the coming CSR will detail additional pressures which may affect CLC funding and other areas of service provision. Like the Council, schools themselves will also be looking to make efficiencies in their budgets and will likely turn to the ICT services they currently receive and expect some element of contribution to their budget pressures. So, although the current services appear well regarded by schools, the landscape is rapidly changing. This review will provide a fresh opportunity to re-shape the makeup and focus of the current services, while maintaining what is valued in the service.

STOCKTON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

11. SICTU (the technical element of school's ICT support) has a good relationship with schools and scores highly on customer satisfaction surveys. Service level agreements are in place with all customers. Not all Stockton schools take the whole service offering from SICTU as some secondary schools rely on their own in-school technician support. The service is also now provided to five secondary schools in Redcar & Cleveland and four primaries in Hartlepool. This is a further measure on how well regarded the service is.

12. The CIDS teams also undertake customer satisfaction surveys across CESC and they too are achieving good results.

13. Darlington customer satisfaction information is currently not available.

INITIAL OBSERVATIONS

14. Regardless of the EIT process, the services in both Councils are unlikely to continue in their current form as there are several financial and service pressures which will necessitate change.

15. With regards to Stockton, there are elements of the service which clearly overlap with aspects of Xentrall ICT services, both in terms of technical support and business development. There are also overlaps internally within these CESC based services themselves in terms of both systems support, schools ICT support and advisory functions (& CLCs). There may be opportunities to develop a more integrated service delivery model, yet at the same time release efficiency savings. Any such proposals would also need to consider synergies with the equivalent service provision within Darlington.

16. Through targeted external marketing, there is also the potential to grow the existing SICTU elements of the service, as this is already successfully provided to some schools outside of the Stockton Council area.

17. In the main, the ICT architecture which underpins the service in schools can be integrated with any emerging strategic ICT architecture proposals for both Councils. For example, networks between buildings and Internet connectivity. In certain areas there are already links and overlaps in existence. This larger estate gives any strategic procurement of equipment and services more buying power and therefore should realise efficiencies. The subsequent management of such services can also be streamlined.

NEXT STEPS

18. The next stage is to undertaken more detailed analysis on the baseline information and engage with the relevant teams involved to begin identifying and drafting future service delivery options, including partnering opportunities if appropriate. The process will be geared towards delivering a balanced approach to realising efficiencies and identifying opportunities for service improvements.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

19. There are no direct financial or legal implications arising from this report.

RISK ASSESSMENT

20. The proposal is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS

21. There are no community strategy implications arising from this report.

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Background Papers   None

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors**:**   Not Ward Specific