

Report of the Cabinet Member for Transformation & Performance

Cabinet – 16 February 2017

UNIFIED COMMUNICATIONS (TELEPHONY)

Purpose:	The purpose of this report is to recommend the way forward on unified communications including partnership working with ABMU.
Policy Framework:	Transformation & Performance
Consultation:	Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board (ABMU), Neath Port Talbot Council, Legal, Finance, Access to Services, No public consultation is required.
Recommendation(s):	It is recommended that the Council: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Collaborates with ABMU by joining their highly resilient telephony platform2) Transforms the way that staff work by reducing the number of desk phones and reducing telephony costs3) Introduce new technologies such as Skype for Business.
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1.0 Introduction

1.1 The existing telephone system is 'end of life' meaning that support is limited and it is no longer scaleable to meet the future needs of the council.

Collaboration plays a key role in the strategy and is seen as a strong way to reduce costs, improve business value and increase system resilience.

Transformation is at the forefront of the design of the new system. A mobile first approach has been agreed, in line with the Agile Work Programme, providing a major reduction in desk phones across four of the main council sites; Civic Centre, Guildhall, Heol Y Gors and Clydach.

The current Administration has already provided Capital investment of £500k for this new development and the work forms a key enabler of the Digital Strategy (Aspiring to a Digital Business 2020).

2.0 Unified Communications Proposal

2.1 The Current System

The Council's Corporate telephony is handled by a Mitel MX1 TSW (formerly known as PBX Ericsson MD110 also Astra MX1 TSW) system. First installed in the early 90's the system is subject to a maintenance contract for mechanical or component failure designed to restore operations within 24 hours (currently with The Weston Group, reporting 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday).

The system is interconnected via the network and distributed around the Council's principal buildings:

MAIN SITE: Civic Centre

REMOTE SITES: Guildhall
 Heol Y Gors
 Clydach

This system is now 'end of life' meaning that support is limited and is not able to expand to meet future needs of the organisation. However, an upgrade will only improve resilience and functionality. It would still operate on the same cabling system installed originally when the Civic Centre was built and added to in the intervening years. It will require, at the very least, upgrading with modern, fully digital components.

Although the Mitel switch has proved very resilient and long lived, it is approaching end of support in its current configuration (2015/6) and in its present form the telephony infrastructure does not allow multiple people conferencing, video conferencing, call recording, directory services, full automated call handling features and detailed reporting facilities. All of which are present in modern telephony systems. In addition, although the Council's buildings are connected via a data network, central call handling is only available between the 4 main sites mentioned above.

2.2 Future Technical Requirements

Summarised below are the known requirements necessary for the replacement product which have been collected in consultation with key telephony users across the Council and ICT:

- Resilient and Scalable by design (At least 10,000 users)
- SaaS or private cloud
- Able to integrate with ISDN and IP telephony
- Able to integrate with current Solidus system (in the contact centre)
- Support a variety of end points, including SIP based devices for Windows O/S soft clients, IP desk phones, mobile device soft phone clients (IOS/Android/Windows 10) and analogue devices.

- Support traditional analogue devices to enable provision for hard of hearing/deaf users
- SMS targeted at hard of hearing users
- All automated services must be at least bi-lingual (Welsh / English)
- Existing software and hardware investment to be taken into consideration
- Contacts Directory, using Active Directory as source
- Extensive and real-time reporting
- Supports multiple devices, such as, smartphones
- Integration with multiple back-end products
- Tariff-based call logging
- Soft telephony client
- Single number service with simultaneous ring

2.3 **A Partnership Approach**

In 2016 the project was discussed with Neath Port Talbot (NPT) who were looking at options to replace their existing Siemens telephony system when their current contract ends in 2017/18. An options appraisal was undertaken on the platforms available to both Councils, including partnership options with both Bridgend and ABMU.

As both Bridgend and ABMU use the Cisco platform a workshop was undertaken with Cisco, ABMU, CCoS and NPT. One of the key benefits of moving onto the Cisco solution would be that most of the Western Bay partners would be working on the same platform, allowing for a seamless telephony experience i.e. Being able to log-in to the phone system from any office with the solution hosted within the Western Bay region.

Three possible options were explained at the workshop by Cisco:

1. **Single cluster with ABMU and/or NPT** – this solution would be sharing a single instance of the Cisco platform and all authorities consuming and maintaining collaboratively.
2. **Standalone** – this solution would mean each organisation procuring the system (via public tender), with responsibility for internally enhancing skills, installing, configuring, maintaining and consuming the system as a single entity i.e. No collaboration with other authorities.
3. **Federated inter-cluster** – This solution would involve all organisations hosting and maintaining their own instance of the system but linking them together to form a 'trust'. This solution would share most of the same collaborative advantages of the single cluster option; However, each organisation would need to maintain and upgrade their respective solutions.

Each option was analysed and assessed at length and the pros and cons of each option were collated for review.

2.4 Recommendation and Key Benefits

Sei Mani, an independent third party, was employed by NPT to review the three options and give an independent view. After review, the single cluster option between CCoS, NPT and ABMU was recommended. At this time, NPT have not confirmed their involvement in the single cluster solution but this does not change the direction of CCoS.

After consideration of Sei Mani's report and long consultation with NPT and ABMU, it is therefore recommended that the single cluster option is the best option for CCoS. The benefits being:

- **An enabler for the CCoS Agile programme roll out** – it will decrease the amount of ICT staff required for 'office moves' as most changes will be possible remotely. This will increase ICT capacity and improve the speed of changes for ICT users across the Council
- **Blue light resilience by joining ABMU's platform** – ABMU have a very resilient system as telephony is a critical service for them. CCoS could not replicate this level of resilience without significant investment
- **Western Bay users are already on the Cisco Platform**
- **Greater integration between social services and health and an enabler for the new Social services and Well-being Act (Wales)** – Members of staff across ABMU and LAs within Western Bay would be fully integrated with the technology, increasing efficiencies and communication
- **Fast installation times for the new system** – only local components (telephones, switches, cabling, networking) need to be installed and configured. The backend system is already up and running
- **Low maintenance and upgrade costs** – ABMU will lead on the maintenance and upgrading of the central system. Most of the components would be automatically upgraded or fixed alongside this. The only areas of maintenance and upgrading would be components locally to CCoS
- **Low support costs** – ABMU will support the main infrastructure of the solution, CCoS will only be responsible for the local components.
- **Market leading technology** – the Cisco platform is the top rated telephony platform, available today, as rated by Gartner.
- **Vanguard to the introduction of the Wales Community Care Information System (WCCIS)** - Enabling WCCIS users to use the telephone system without having to access outside lines, i.e. dialling extension numbers only
- **Enabling greater team integration** – Between not only social services and health teams, but also technical teams
- **Collaborative working environment, collaborative support model.**

2.5 Approach to Implementation

The project design has been informed by the Council's transformation programme, especially priorities such as agile and mobile working. In order to achieve this transformation, most users who do not engage with the public as part of a Contact Centre environment will be given a corporate mobile phone for use instead of a desk phone. The Council will only provide desk phones to the people that need them, for example:

- Contact Centre
- Critical services
- Staff in areas of low mobile connectivity.

The Agile project is moving into its next phase of roll-out with piloting the 'model office'. All Agile users will be provided with an 'Agile bundle', consisting of a laptop/tablet, corporate mobile phone (if required) and a USB/Bluetooth headset.

All ICT users across the Council will receive Skype for Business (SfB) as a means of communicating: internally; to other Skype for Business using organisations; via instant messaging; via voice calling between SfB users; and via conference calling. Skype for Business will not allow external telephony services.

A profiling exercise has been undertaken and it has been estimated that that there will be a reduction in the current desk phone estate from over 4,000 to around 900. Staff have been profiled into three categories: Agile; Flexible; and Static and must justify the requirement for a desk phone on the new platform. Staff profiled as Agile and Flexible will make greater use of mobile technologies such as Skype for Business, mobile phones and personal headsets, as mentioned above.

A phased approach will be taken for implementation, to reduce risk and confirm the stability of the system and network before moving to the next phase.

Each of the four sites will be implemented separately over a three-month period. Disruption to staff and Members will be kept to a minimum where possible.

Training materials for the new Cisco phones and SFB will be placed on Staffnet and users' desks. There will also be departmental "champions" available who will have been trained prior to site implementation to assist where necessary.

2.6 Risks and Mitigations

Risks and issues have been identified and managed as part of the project. The key (high) risks and mitigating actions are as follows:

Key Risk	Mitigating Action
1. A risk that network throughput may reach / exceed capacity	Network analysis has been undertaken and QoS (Quality of Service) will be enabled on the Network. A third party is implementing this as part of the project implementation plan.
2. A risk that mobile phone costs increase in the future as current costs have been forecasted based on the Vodafone contract in place	Unified Communications project design to be taken into consideration when reviewing the mobile phone tender responses
3. A risk that SFB is not rolled out quick enough across the estate then this delays the project	Office 365 licences have been procured (agreed by CMT in December 2016, after successful completion of the pilot) with SFB aiming to be rolled out within January 2017
4. A risk that mobile phone coverage could be subject to channel capacity degradation if there are more users	This will be monitored as part of roll out and ongoing business as usual. If mobile connectivity affects council services an alternative solution will be sourced, such as, providing Cisco phones. The corporate buildings estate is likely to change in the coming years given the changes being discussed as part of transformation.
5. ABMU may change policy around charging	ABMU have stated that they will only charge for the elements of the initial installation that they undertake. Legal will encompass this into the contract with ABMU.
6. Business continuity risks – if ABMU put the Council at a lower priority in a recovery situation?	As the Council would be part of the same cluster as ABMU, it should be fixed to the same timescales

2.7 Key Implementation Milestones

The diagram below identifies the key projects milestones. The project is scheduled to be completed by June 2017.

Timeline																				
Task	Nov-15	Dec-15	Jan-16	Feb-16	Mar-16	Apr-16	May-16	Jun-16	Jul-16	Aug-16	Sep-16	Oct-16	Nov-16	Dec-16	Jan-17	Feb-17	Mar-17	Apr-17	May-17	Jun-17
Project Initiation	█																			
Architectual Investigation	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█												
Design Solution									█	█	█	█	█	█	█					
CISCO POC																				
Pilot Testing																				
Procurement																				
Project Board Review																				
Support Training																				
Champion Training																				
Kit Installation & Configuration																				
Project Board Review																				
Implementation																				
Phase 1 implementation																				
Phase 2 implemmentation																				
Phase 3 implementation																				
Phase 4 implementation																				
Project Completion																				

3.0 Equality and Engagement Implications

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) screening is complete and full EIA report has been confirmed as not required as there is no impact on the general public. The changes are all internal to staff and Members and involves infrastructure and hardware changes only.

4.0 Financial Implications

The current Administration has provided a capital budget of 500k for this project. Current financial analysis shows expenditure of £480k with a 20k contingency for use during implementation.

Ongoing revenue implications are minimal. ABMU will not be charging CCoS for any services or hosting, this is all being agreed as part of the collaboration approach. Any equipment replacement will form part of the Council's general repairs and renewals cycle for ICT equipment.

5.0 Legal Implications

The collaboration with ABMU will need to be governed by a detailed collaboration agreement setting out the roles and responsibilities of the parties and the respective obligations and liabilities so that the Council's interests are protected.

This agreement will be drafted by the Head of Legal Services and will require agreement and signature by ABMU.

All equipment/hardware necessary to deliver the project will need to be procured in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

Background Papers: None

Appendices: None