

Report to Executive



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PORTFOLIO	Customer Access and Community Engagement
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Government Connect

PURPOSE

- To seek approval to commit to the Government Connect programme.

RECOMMENDATION

- Members are recommended to:
 - commit the Council to the Government Connect Programme (Government Connect);
 - recommend to Council an additional item of Capital expenditure in the 2008/09 Programme of £41,950 partly funded from use of Local Housing Allowance (LHA) Grant (£20,000) and reallocation of part of PC Replacement Funding Programme (£9000)
 - note that a revenue growth item to cover extra costs of £2500 per annum from 2009-10 onwards will need to be considered as part of the overall budget process.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- In order to ensure information transfer between the DWP and the Council (particularly Benefits) can still be carried out after March 31st 2009. Unfortunately as the DWP have made it clear that they will not communicate in any other way, there is no other real choice than to go down the Government Connect route. Until the announcement in July, the Council did not know that the DWP would effectively mandate that Councils have to use Government Connect. Before this there was not a strong business case to go with Government Connect and the Council was not going to commit to the Programme.

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

- What is Government Connect?** (Government Connect)

Government Connect is a secure connection between local authorities and Central

Government. It provides;

- secure e-mail
- secure browser access to applications
- authentication (of citizens): this would enable people to use a single secure log-on to access Local and Central Government services

It is planned to also provide;

- secure file transfer and data exchange
- secure employee authentication.

5. Central Government already has a secure network. Government Connect gives the Council access to that network. So Government Connect itself is really just a connection – like an Internet connection, but to a private network – and a box that allows traffic from our network to go out over that connection.
6. Central Government provide and pay for the use of the service at their end. They also pay for the connection to us until 2011, after this time they have indicated that they may ask for a contribution, but have not as yet expanded on this.
7. **Why do we need it**

On 7 July 2008, the DWP (Department for Work and Pensions) wrote to all councils stating that 'restricted data' from the DWP would only be available through Government Connect. Some of this information (eg on Income Support, Pension Credits etc) is essential to the working of the Council's benefits service. Benefits receive bulk updates on a daily basis regarding claimants. If these are not available, benefits performance will be seriously detrimentally affected. Error in the system would increase because the benefit service would not receive information directly from the JobCentre Plus and Pension Service about changes in circumstances likely to result in both under and overpayments for claimants. This, in practice, means that Government Connect is mandatory. After 31 March 2009, DWP restricted data will only be accessible via Government Connect.

8. **Work involved**

The thing that makes Government Connect difficult is the Code of Connection (CoCo). This is a set of policies and procedures that we must adhere to before you can be granted access to the Government's secure network. This is a time-consuming and expensive process. As well as the additional costs itemised in the Financial implications section, it will require a concerted effort from IS staff in order to meet all the criteria in the CoCo by the 30th of March 2009.

The change that will have the greatest impact on staff and Members is the new approach required for remote working. To satisfy the Code of Connection:

1. all remote users must use Council supplied equipment, not their own:
2. all remote users must use two-factor authentication. This involves having some kind of gadget that generates a unique ID each time you log on.

Getting two factor authentication working properly is likely to take some time. Other big time-consumers will include the re-configuration of our Novell e-mail server, the installation and configuration of a new Government Connect firewall, and implementing vulnerability scanning software.

9. It is possible to apply for an exemption which can be anything up to 6 months. However the amount of work required to achieve this makes it an unviable option.

10. **Implications on other projects**

This has implications on the progress of other planned projects, the main being the move from Novell to Microsoft. It is estimated that without additional resource the move to Microsoft will be delayed by around 5 months. There is the possibility of bringing in extra consultancy to help with the Microsoft Project however overall this is not seen as a cost effective option as:

- it will require our staff time anyway to be involved in the complex system that we currently have
- it will have a detrimental affect on our staff gaining hands on experience of the transfer to Microsoft which is crucial for robust future support.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND BUDGET PROVISION

11. The estimated costs to implement Government Connect are as follows:

Item		Cost £
1.	New key-code lock device for server room – one that we can change the code on.	500
2.	Server for Nessus vulnerability scanning software.	1,000
3.	Government Connect SX firewall.	2,850
4.	Consultancy for implementation of new firewall and related configuration changes:4 days.	2,800
5.	Devices and software for two-factor authentication for all remote users.	2,000
6.	Consultancy for implementation of new secure remote access: 2 days.	1,400
7.	Laptops for any staff currently using their own hardware to connect remotely. Some members who currently use their own equipment will have to use Council laptops @ £500 per user. Some staff can share pooled laptops. – another 10 devices @ £500.	10,000
8.	Router for Government Connect SX.	500
9.	Consultancy for implementation of router: 2 days.	1,400
10.	Full CHECK accredited penetration test.	5,000
11.	Consultancy for re-configuration of mail server: 3 days.	3,000
12.	Consultancy for re-configuration of e-directory: 3 days.	3,000
13.	Consultancy for Microsoft configuration	5,000
14.	SSL VPN License (for 3 years)	2,500
15.	Storage increase for log files	1,000
Estimated Total:		41,950

With the exception of the SSL VPN licence none of these costs are recurring, although a

'health check' is expected every year. This will need to be undertaken by an external specialist and it is estimated that this would cost about £2,500 per annum.

Item 7 can be part funded by reallocating existing agreed capital programme monies already allocated to PC/laptop replacement. This may however have a detrimental effect on the productivity of staff who were scheduled a replacement, as the PCs are already over 5 years old, however it is hoped this can be mitigated by transfer of PC users who will be issued with laptops and who have more recently purchased PC's. This will allow £9,000 to be reallocated to help fund item 7 above. In addition further funding of £20,000 has been identified from the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) Grant which was awarded to the Council as a result of taking on the LHA.

This results in the following

Estimated Capital Expenditure Total		£41,950
Less		
Local Housing Allowance (LHA) Grant	£20,000	
Reallocation of PC Replacement Funding	<u>£9,000</u>	
		£29,000
Net additional Capital Resources required		£12,950

In addition, there is a revenue growth item to cover extra costs of £2500 per annum from 2009-10 onwards and this will need to be considered as part of the overall budget process.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

12. It will impact on the Information Security Policy, IS Strategy, and Home working policy

DETAILS OF CONSULTATION

13. None

BACKGROUND PAPERS

14. Government Connect source information held in Information Services

FURTHER INFORMATION

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ALSO: