

For Publication

**Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority
Corporate Services Policy and Challenge Group
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REPORT AUTHOR(S): HEAD OF ICT

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF THE INFORMATION, COMMUNICATIONS & TECHNOLOGY SHARED SERVICE

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Background Papers: None

PURPOSE

To provide an update for the Corporate Services Policy and Challenge Group in relation to the reorganisation of the ICT Shared Service Function.

RECOMMENDATION

That members of Corporate Services Policy & Challenge Group receive the report and note its contents

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In February 2018 Fire & Rescue Authority Members agreed the 2018/19 Revenue Budget. This included provision of growth related to the proposed restructure of ICT Shared Services function. This paper sets out the current position and progress in relation to the proposed restructure.

2. Background

Reason for Proposed Restructure

- 2.1 On 22 October 2013 Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority authorised the completion of an ICT Shared Service (ICT SS) Agreement for a term of five years. Schedule 4 of the ICT Shared Service agreement requires that an annual review of the operation of the ICT SS is carried out. The review is passed to the ICT SS Governance Board and subsequently reported to each Fire and Rescue Authority accordingly.
- 2.2 The previous two annual reviews have highlighted that the ICT SS faces increasing challenges to meet the current and future demands of both Services. Additionally, a series of informal workshops were held with ICT SS staff in August 2017 to elicit views on identifying and understanding issues and how service could be improved.

A summary of the issues identified included:

- A large demand for new business systems and applications;
- The increasing cyber security threat landscape and associated requirement to improve/maintain system security;
- The increasing maintenance of enlarged IT environment;
- Lack of resilience in the Communications support function;
- The requirement for maintenance/refresh of infrastructure;
- The changing technology environment (introduction of VDI and Unified Communications) provided an opportunity
- The location of staff hinders knowledge sharing and effective work allocation
- The recruitment and retention of staff;
- A lack of database support within BFRS.

2.3 The recommendations from the annual reviews and comments from the workshops were taken into account during the compilation of a Business Case (BC) that proposed a restructure, with the BC presented to both Services in Oct 2017 and agreement given to proceed. Since then, work has been underway to put together and obtain agreement for the detailed proposal from both Services, obtain the necessary budget approvals, produce revised job descriptions, complete job evaluations and to compile a Consultation document.

3. Proposed Structure

3.1 The proposed structure is made up of 19 posts. A diagram detailing the structure is shown in Figure 2. The changes are intended to re-align resources:-

3.2 The Support team will move from a model of dedicated service desk operators to one where all members of the support team will participate in service desk support duties. This provides more flexibility in resource allocation and provides further opportunities for wider skills to be gained, whereas previously dedicated service desk operators duties were more limited, this change allows a wider remit to all support activity either based at Cambourne or any of the sites, with wider experience it allows better opportunities for career progression either through the senior roles within the team or moving to other roles within the department.

The Support team will be reduced by one FTE to allow a move of the post to the Server team. This is possible through the VDI environment, which will be supported by the Server team as all desktop images are contained in the server environment and maintained centrally, whereas previously there was a heavy reliance on supporting each desktop which contained specific number of generic builds.

3.3 The Network team will be reorganised by merging the existing Communications team into it. The remit and the scope of the team will remain the same, but by merging and relocating staff, resilience will be increased. The implementation of Unified Communications will have a positive resource impact through the bringing of technologies into the data network and rationalisation of the systems into one platform, allowing one of the existing posts from the merged team to be moved into the Server team. The opportunities for career progression will remain, with an enlarged and merged team it will be possible to employ posts that are more junior should vacancies arise as the resilience will be higher than before.

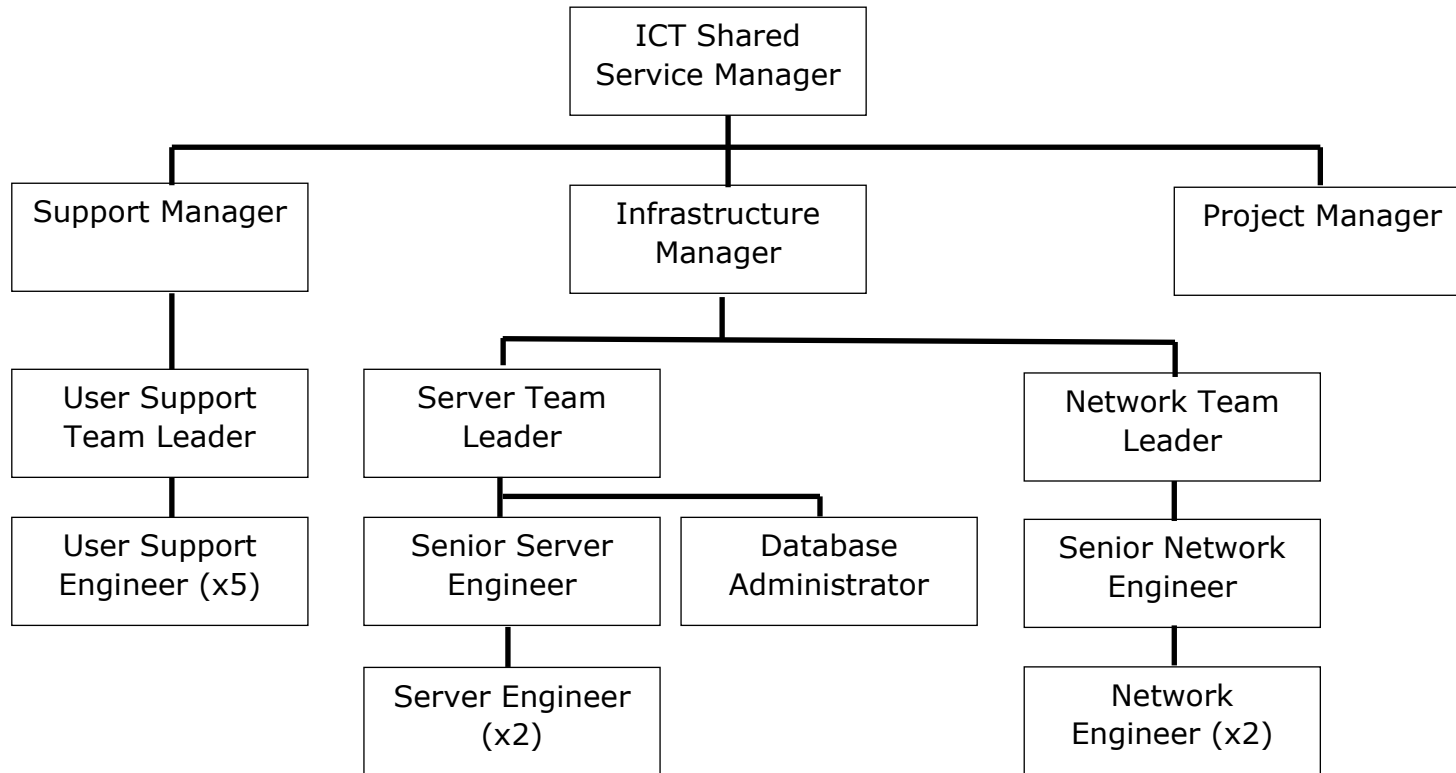
3.4 The Server Team will be increased by 3 FTEs and a structure introduced to improve management and provide opportunities for career development. It has been particularly difficult to recruit to this team and retain staff. The creation of two new Server Engineer posts will enable employment of less experienced engineers and provide career opportunities. This should help with

addressing the lack of resources in the team, to support and maintain systems and resource projects, as well as improving staff retention.

The additional post proposed will be a Database Administrator which currently sits outside the ICT SS and is a CFRS post. Both Services have a number of databases deployed, however only CFRS have a dedicated Database Administrator (DBA). Within each Service a number of applications and reporting management information is derived from the (Microsoft SQL) database linked to each application. These databases are not static and need to be regularly maintained through a process known as database tuning. A lack of regular administration on databases leads to reductions in responsiveness of applications and a waste of ICT resources. It is proposed to include the DBA position within the ICT Shared Service to ensure databases are kept maintained in both Services. Moving the post into the Shared Service allows BFRS to have a capability that on its own that would be expensive either through internal dedicated post or through the use of suppliers to maintain the databases. A single DBA resource providing dedicated support for the databases for both Services would provide benefit allowing for a more joined up approach to problem resolution that can be flexibly used as needed and frees resource from the Support team through having more reliable databases.

- 3.5 Through moving 2 existing resources within ICT SS (1 from the Communications team and one from the Support team), the Server team is enlarged without incurring additional expenditure. This methodology allows, should it be economically advantageous to use Cloud services in the future. It has to be borne in mind that any potential use of Cloud services still requires Server engineers or Software Applications staff to configure and use services.
- 3.6 The proposed model will still require for larger projects, additional resources on a contract basis to be brought in to augment existing ICT staff when required. This method has the advantage of shifting costs to the project so that the true cost of the project can be seen.

3.7 Figure 1 Proposed ICT Shared Service Structure



4. Progress of Proposed Restructure and Timescales

4.1 Formal Staff consultation and implementation of the proposals are presented here;

Formal Staff Consultation 16 April – 18 May 2018

The consultation period commenced on 16 April and ended on 18 May 2018.

There is no minimum statutory consultation period required under the relevant employment legislation, but to provide an opportunity for full and meaningful consultation to take place both Services undertook a 33 day consultation period. A meeting was held with all staff to launch the start of the proposed restructure.

Each staff member was given the Proposal document as well as a presentation given by Heads of IT from both Services, to explain the rationale and timescales, providing an opportunity for questions and answers. In addition Trade Union representatives were sent copies of the documents beforehand from both Services. Feedback received from the Trade Union resulted in extending the closing date by one week for the vacant post of ICT Shared Service Support Manager allowing staff the opportunity to apply for the post, this extension was highlighted to staff at the meeting.

During the Consultation Period individual consultation meetings were held with each member of staff and opportunity extended for further meetings where needed. These meetings had minutes taken and copies sent to each staff member to sign and agree.

4.2 Consideration of Feedback from Staff - 22 May 2018

The ICT SS Governance Board sat to consider all the feedback from the consultation period and agree whether or not to make any changes to the proposals set out under the proposals based on the feedback received. As a result of this, some changes (as outlined below) were agreed to be made to the proposal.

The ICT SS Governance Board agreed to progress with the restructure based on the original timescales, with a go-live date of the new service on 1 August 2018.

Themes of Feedback Received During Consultation Period

During the formal 1:1 meetings held, as part of the consultation process, a number of themes emerged and the responses from the ICT SS Governance Board are summarised below.

Co-location

The co-location of staff to Cambourne is a fundamental part of the proposal this remains to be the position for the restructure.

Allocation of work between new teams

The ICT SS Governance Board acknowledged the feedback and need to ensure knowledge transfer between team members will need to take place to allow reallocation of work between Teams. The reallocation of work continues to be the preferred option.

On-call Support Provision

An alternative solution to on-call provision was proposed during the consultation period, The ICT SS Governance Board supported the alternative model proposed. This approach will be reviewed by the ICT SS Delivery Manager after 6 months and fed back to the Board.

Transition of Skills/Knowledge

The ICT SS Governance Board recognised that a period of training and knowledge sharing will be required over the first few months to ensure smooth transition to the new model. Priority for knowledge sharing will be on the areas requiring 24/7 support. The ICT SS Governance Board agreed to extend the contracts for the existing support engineer and server engineer for a limited period to aid the knowledge transfer.

Team Leader Roles – Management Responsibility

The ICT SS Governance Board did not agree to make any changes to the proposed management responsibilities of these roles and existing staff should only consider applying for these roles if they are prepared to take on staff management responsibilities.

Use of Pool Cars

The use of pool vehicles for ICT SS travel continues to be the preferred option. Where dedicated ICT SS pool vehicles are not available, the short term use of pool vehicles from other areas of the service should be considered (where applicable).

Errors/changes to Job Descriptions

A few minor errors have been identified with the reporting responsibilities within the Job Descriptions of the Server Team Leader and ICT SS Delivery Manager roles. These will be amended. Additionally, a number of changes to the JD for the Project Manager will be made.

4.3 Feedback from the Consultation Period - Week commencing 28 May 2018

Feedback from the consultation period has been provided to affected employees and Trade Union representatives.

4.4 Selection processes 11 June 2018 – 31 July 2018

Selection processes will commence.

Where relevant the following will also occur:

- Job offers, job descriptions and new contracts will be issued. Where necessary any new or revised terms and conditions of employment will be outlined.
- External adverts will be placed.
- Redeployment will be considered for the duration of the notice period.
- Each employing organisation retains the right to refuse or consider a request for voluntary redundancy

4.5 Selection Processes

As part of the proposal the methodology to be used to move staff into the new structure has been aligned to both Fire Services with HR team members working through the various considerations. These processes were described fully in the Consultation documents and explained to staff at each of the one to one meetings.

There are four ways in which an employee may secure a role in the proposed new shared services structure:

- (i) Slotting in where the new post is considered to be the same as an existing post
- (ii) Offer of slotting in where the post may be considered suitable alternative employment
- (iii) Ring-fenced selection process
- (iv) External advertising and recruitment for any posts remaining after above processes applied

4.6 Go Live of the New Structure - 1 August 2018

Proposed “go-live” date for the new ICT Shared Service team.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Taking in to account the current resource levels it is not possible to adequately maintain systems or meet project resource requirements with the existing configuration of the ICT Shared Service. Through undertaking a restructure more efficient use of resources can be obtained and with minimal growth a better service can be provided to both Fire Service’s.

The proposed restructure is progressing in a planned and coordinated manner as shown within this document.