

To: Policy and Resources Committee

From: Head of ICT and Occupational Health Unit (OHU) – John Fagg

Presenting officer(s): Head of ICT and OHU – John Fagg
Telephone: 01480 444580
Email: john.fagg@cambsfire.gov.uk

Date: 31 October 2023

Annual Review of the operation of the ICT Shared Service Agreement

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Policy and Resources Committee of the outcome of the annual review of the operation of the ICT Shared Service Agreement (Schedule 4), for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023, undertaken by the Head of ICT for Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service and the ICT Shared Service Delivery Manager.

2. Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- consider the outcomes of the annual review of the operation of the ICT Shared Service Agreement,
- note the continued achievement of the aims of improved resilience, flexibility, cover, quality and customer focus.

3. Risk Assessment

3.1 **Economic** – although taking advantage of more efficient ICT systems and solutions involves an upfront financial outlay, once in place, their proactive and robust management can be linked to many economic benefits. The existence of the ICT Shared Service Agreement is a mechanism through which such benefits can be realised.

3.2 **Technological** – new systems and solutions lead to improved services for all stakeholders whilst bringing new challenges and a requirement for a myriad of skill sets to meet them. The ICT Shared Service recognises the need to remain focussed yet flexible and regularly review its structure to meet these challenges.

3.3 **Legislative** – the Service recognises the need to retain and embed existing quality standards, using them to drive business change. The Authority must remain legally compliant and make the necessary provisions to meet changes such as the General Data Protection Regulations.

4. Background of the ICT Shared Service

- 4.1 On 22 October 2013 Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority authorised an ICT Shared Service Agreement with Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority for a term of five years. This agreement, made on 31 October 2013, included establishing an ICT Shared Service Governance Board to provide oversight and management control of the services delivered to both Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS) and Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS). This agreement has since been extended.
- 4.2 The ICT Shared Service Governance Board meets on a quarterly basis to consider and oversee the quality and delivery of services, consider prioritisation and new work streams. The Board consists of the Deputy Chief Executive (CFRS), Assistant Chief Officer (BFRS) and Head of ICT from both services as well as the ICT Shared Service Delivery Manager.

5. ICT Shared Service Agreement and Review

- 5.1 The ICT Shared Service Agreement sets out the scope of the service and includes amongst others the arrangements for accommodation, an asset register, costs and liabilities, insurance, staffing, finance and intellectual property.
- 5.2 The Agreement requires the establishment of an ICT Shared Service Governance Board and Schedule 4 of the Agreement sets out the functions and powers of the Board. A copy of Schedule 4 to the Agreement is shown at Appendix 1.
- 5.3 Schedule 4 also requires that an annual review of the operation of the Agreement is carried out. The review is passed to the ICT Shared Service Governance Board and subsequently reported to the structures in each Authority accordingly.
- 5.4 This report puts forward the summary of the review for the period covering 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.
- 5.5 The review covers the following areas as set down in Schedule 4 of the Agreement:
 - the quality of the shared service,
 - the effectiveness of budgetary and financial management arrangements,
 - the effectiveness of systems, processes and procedures,
 - development in legislation and policy guidance,
 - planning for the development of the shared services.

6. Executive Summary of the Review of Operations 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023

- 6.1 Significant technology changes have taken place throughout this reporting period. This has ensured that technology provision continues to meet the needs of the Service and that we are well placed to adopt new technologies as required.

6.2 An independent review of the ICT Shared Service has shown that it continues to deliver value for money and that the current operating model is fit for purpose to deliver future technology across both fire and rescue services.

6.3 The demand on the resources of the ICT Shared Service continues to be a challenge. It is essential that all new projects are properly considered and individually resourced to ensure demands on the ICT Shared Service are manageable.

7. The Quality of the ICT Shared Service

7.1 The quality of the ICT Shared Service is reviewed throughout the year through the ICT Shared Service Governance Board, including the extent to which the aims and outcomes of it have been met and its effectiveness. The quantitative aspects of the ICT service are a measure of its adherence to Service Level Agreements (SLA's) and Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) as well as customer surveys and monitoring of project delivery.

7.2 In this reporting period, a review of the ICT Shared Service was carried out by an independent consultant to determine whether it was delivering value for money and if the current operating model is fit for the future of technology across both organisations. The review concluded positively that the ICT Shared Service did provide value for money and that the operating model was fit for purpose. Several areas were identified where further improvements could be made and these will be explored during the next reporting period.

7.3 **Customer Focus** – one of the key aims has always been to embed customer focus within the ICT Shared Service as this aspect encompasses not only day to day service delivery but also the engagement with customers for both organisations.

7.4 The Service Desk software in use automatically canvasses users for their level of satisfaction with how their incident was handled and any additional comments they may have every time an incident is closed. The results of the analysis are detailed below; BFRS results are included for comparison purposes.

Service	Satisfaction Score %
Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service	97
Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service	99

7.5 The ICT Shared Service has continued to progress and deliver internal projects and support organisation driven projects during this reporting period.

7.6 The following provides a high-level overview of key works undertaken over the reporting year in CFRS, significant work has also been undertaken for BFRS;

- retirement of virtual desktop environment to ensure all staff have the same end-user experience,
- move to cloud-based telephony in preparation for the retirement of the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN),
- installation of 999 Over SIP in preparation for the retirement of the PSTN,
- started the replacement of all Local Area Network equipment,
- implementation of advanced anti-virus software,
- undertaken annual penetration testing and any required remediation,
- tested disaster recovery processes with fail over to BFRS,
- replaced unsupported operating systems,
- conducted an assessment into cloud computing options,
- negotiated a renewal of the public address system contract making substantial savings,
- significant support to the ICCS and Mobilising and DCS projects for Combined Fire Control,
- support to the St Johns project - configuration and build including audio visual solution, endpoints, networking infrastructure, printers and peripherals,
- moved On-Call crew into Cambourne,
- decommissioned Papworth and old Huntingdon sites,
- recruitment of an apprentice into team (via BFRS),
- endpoint upgrades,
- new image for all endpoints and laptops,
- asset management system tablet upgrades,
- new Mobile Data Terminal builds.

8. The Effectiveness of Budgetary and Financial Management Arrangements

8.1 The review included the effectiveness of arrangements to ensure appropriate monitoring of budgets and financial management of the ICT Shared Service. Financial arrangements cover costs associated with:

- staff costs including individual consumption by each respective organisation and joint consumption,
- use of temporary agency staff,
- joint procurement opportunities aimed at reducing costs,
- monitoring, at six monthly periods, the apportionment of staff costs.

8.2 Costs are subject to each organisations own approval process including ICT Shared Service joint projects and temporary agency staff. A framework for accounting for time and costs is in place and end of year procedures for cross charging are undertaken and reviewed by the ICT Shared Service Board. The table below shows the total costs for ICT Shared Service; BFRS costs are shown here as a comparison.

April 2021 to March 2022	BFRS	CFRS	Total
Total costs of ICT Shared Service staff	£503,670	£494,863	£998,533
April 2022 to March 2023	BFRS	CFRS	Total
Total costs of ICT Shared Service staff	£512,275	£499,537	£1,011,812

9. Time split between Services

- 9.1 The consumption of staff resources by each organisation has a direct impact on annual costs and as such are scrutinised as part of the annual review. The demands placed onto ICT compared to capacity show that a lean environment exists. The shared service arrangement effectively provides a method of financial risk mitigation in that, where an organisation consumes less resource it does not pay for it, as a lean environment exists in which demand outstrips supply there is no risk of over-supply of ICT resources.
- 9.2 The original expectation was that the resource demands on the ICT Shared Service from each organisation would be split roughly 65:35 between CFRS and BFRS, with CFRS taking the larger amount. This was based on the number of sites in each organisation as well as the larger user base in CFRS.
- 9.3 To date this expectation has not proved accurate. BFRS continue to consume more resources than CFRS although the gap is closing year on year as more joint activities are being undertaken resulting in a greater proportion of shared costs.

Time split of ICT Shared Service activities between CFRS and BFRS (%)										
Year	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23
BFRS	37	36	38	42	33	27	29	30	24	21
CFRS	45	44	36	30	29	26	24	27	18	19
Shared	18	20	26	28	38	47	46	43	58	60

10. Capital Investment

- 10.1 Both partners in the ICT Shared Service have capital replacement programmes which are aligned particularly in respect to infrastructure renewals and contracts.
- 10.2 Opportunities for joint procurement continue to deliver benefits, including price advantages through economies of scale. It should be noted that there has been a large increase in the cost of technology products, including software, due to high rates of inflation. Procurement is undertaken by CFRS and BFRS procurement teams through their respective controls and systems. Agreements are in place

through these teams for one Service to lead and contract on behalf of the other where this is appropriate and beneficial. ICT procurement is an area for improvement identified during the recent independent review. The current concerns are that CFRS undertakes more procurement activities on behalf of the Shared Service than Bedfordshire, and that a fairer way of sharing this work is required.

11. The Effectiveness of Systems, Processes and Procedures

- 11.1 Systems, processes and procedures, including KPI's are in place and the ICT Shared Service adopt best practice by aligning to the ITIL (Information Technology Infrastructure Library) framework. KPI's are monitored by ICT Shared Service Management and reported through the ICT Shared Service Governance Board.
- 11.2 Audits of the ICT functions are conducted by the Information Governance Manager in CFRS and by third parties as part of the ISO27001 accreditation.

12. Project Delivery

- 12.1 The ICT Programme Board continues to manage the project work being undertaken by the ICT Shared Service. The Board comprises the Heads of IT for each organisation, ICT Shared Service Delivery Manager, ICT Shared Service Project Manager, ICT Shared Service Infrastructure Manager and the ICT Shared Service Support Manager.
- 12.2 The role of the Board is to review the progress of projects underway and to agree the scope and schedule of new projects. The Board reports to the ICT Shared Service Governance Board for agreement and decisions on priority and resourcing.
- 12.3 The ICT Shared Service continues to be under pressure due to the amount of work that is currently in progress requiring ICT resources. As well as the continued essential upgrades of both Services ICT infrastructures both organisations have large ICT related projects underway.
- 12.4 There is not enough capacity in the ICT Shared Service establishment to proactively maintain the ICT infrastructure and deliver multiple large projects in both organisations. To enable IT projects to be successfully delivered it is essential that additional resources are made available and such costs are included within the initiation process of new projects. This is managed by the ICT Shared Service Programme Board that has been established to monitor project demands and escalate issues to the Governance Board. Digital capacity is seen as a priority within the Integrated Risk Management Plan Action Plan this year (encompassing all areas of digital support which includes the ICT Shared Service).

13. Development in Legislation and Policy Guidance

13.1 The Heads of ICT work with the ICT Shared Service Manager to identify and address developments in legislation and align policy to guidance. No new legislation has been introduced this year that impacts on ICT service delivery.

14. Planning for the Development of the Shared Service

- 14.1 **Establishment** – the establishment of the ICT Shared Service has remained stable over the majority of the past 12 months with very little change in personnel. The new ICT Shared Service Delivery Manager has made many improvements to service provision in a short period of time. He has though secured a more senior role in another fire and rescue service and will be moving on imminently.
- 14.2 **Transport** - a car and a van are provided by CFRS and two cars by BFRS. The fleet requirements are currently being reviewed across CFRS to ensure value for money is being achieved.
- 14.3 **Terms and Conditions** - the variances in terms and conditions between the two organisations have not had a major impact on staff but have complicated the roles of managers. A pragmatic approach is taken wherever possible to harmonise requirements as much as possible, although no formal agreement has been reached between the organisations to rectify this problem. This was highlighted within the recent independent review.
- 14.4 **Resilience** – the ICT Team continues to provide 24x7x365 cover for mission and business critical systems. Additionally, the ICT Service Desk operates from 0800 to 2100 hours Monday to Thursday to enable On-Call staff and those on shift patterns to access ICT assistance in a timely manner.
- 14.5 **Changing Technology** – with the upcoming retirement of the PSTN, much work has been undertaken to replace legacy telephony solutions with a cloud-based telephony solution. This has also included preparation for the replacement of 999 lines into Combined Fire Control. The replacement solution for emergency lines is now ready once the new mobilisation system goes live. A major project is underway to replace Local Area Network components across the estate. This will ensure that we continue to provide a resilient and reliable network required for by areas of the Service.
- 14.6 **Governance** - the ICT Shared Service is governed through the ICT Shared Service Governance Board. The Board meets on a quarterly basis to monitor progress. Both partners have established organisationally focussed ICT strategies which are underpinned by an ICT Shared Service Technical Response Plan.
- 14.7 A key challenge for the Governance Board is to manage the expectations of each organisation. Demands on resources are sometimes individual to a

services business priorities and risk appetite. Therefore, the Board looks to align business priorities, remove conflicts and align work streams and funding availability to maximise the benefits of a shared service.

- 14.8 The KPI reports showing performance against the ICT Shared Service Catalogues are published monthly. The reports detail performance for each organisation on a monthly and rolling six monthly basis. These reports are scrutinised at the Governance Board meetings and progress is monitored.

15. Conclusions

- 15.1 The review of the operation of the ICT Shared Service has demonstrated that progress has continued to be made in developing services and improving technology provision despite the current challenging financial environment.
- 15.2 Several significant projects have been delivered during this reporting period.
- 15.3 The ICT Shared Service continues to provide a value for money solution in supporting technology provision for both CFRS and BFRS.

Source Document

ICT Shared Service Governance Board Schedule 4 Agreement

Location

Fire Service HQ

Hinchingbrooke Cottage

Huntingdon

Contact Officer

John Fagg

Head of ICT and OHU

john.fagg@cambsfire.gov.uk

Schedule 4

1. ICT Shared Service Governance Board

1.1 Establishment

The Parties shall establish an ICT Shared Service Governance Board with the functions and powers set out in this Schedule. The Board will not be responsible for the day-to-day operation of the shared services, which will remain the responsibility of the ICT Service Delivery Manager.

1.2 Role

The Role of the ICT Shared Service Governance Board shall be to;

1.2.1 ensure that the ICT Shared Service is effective, efficient and resilient,

1.2.2 agree the Budget for the following financial year in accordance with the budget setting process of each party,

1.2.3 identify opportunities for innovation and improvement to the approach taken to delivering the ICT Shared Service in a way that is effective, efficient and provides value for money, whilst maintaining resilience and reviewing reports from the ICT Service Delivery Manager on how this may be achieved,

1.2.4 seek further financial benefits which do not compromise the effectiveness and resilience of the ICT Shared Service,

1.2.5 to ensure that an annual review of the operation of the Agreement is carried out, using information provided by both parties to assess the delivery of the shared services and the provision of those services within budget.

The Board shall consider and make recommendations, as appropriate, on the following matters;

i. the quality of the shared services, including the extent to which the aims and outcomes of the Agreement have been met and the effectiveness of the shared services,

ii. the effectiveness of budgetary and financial management arrangements,

iii. the effectiveness of systems, processes and procedures,

- iv. any developments in relevant legislation and policy guidance that may impact on the shared services,
- v. forward planning for the development of the shared services.

1.3 Responsibilities

In performing its role the ICT Shared Service Governance Board shall;

1.3.1 consider further opportunities for partnership working and synergies where this represents opportunities and benefits,

1.3.2 determine and ensure the sharing of the financial benefits relating to the ICT Shared Services on a fair basis between the parties that minimises unnecessary costs,

1.3.3 review requests for change in relation to the Agreement,

1.3.4 receive and consider disputes where escalated to the ICT Shared Service Governance Board.

1.4 Membership

The ICT Shared Service Governance Board shall be comprised of the following representatives;

1.4.1 Principal Officer responsible for ICT from Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service,

1.4.2 Principal Officer responsible for ICT from Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service,

1.4.3 Head of ICT from Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service,

1.4.4 Head of ICT from Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service,

1.4.5 ICT Shared Service Manager,

1.4.6 Other members who are co-opted as required and agreed by the parties,

1.4.7 Substitutions may be made as necessary.

1.5 Chairmanship

The ICT Shared Service Governance Board shall be chaired by the Principal Officers of both parties, with the Chairmanship being rotated alternately on a meeting-by-meeting basis.

1.6 Frequency of Meetings

The ICT Shared Service Governance Board shall meet at least four times in each financial year. Additional meetings may be organised as necessary with the agreement of both parties.

1.7 Quorum

The ICT Shared Service Governance Board shall be quorate for decisions where the Principal Officers of each party, or their agreed substitutes, are present.

1.8 Decision making

The parties shall ensure that their representatives at the meetings of the ICT Shared Service Governance Board have the necessary delegated authority for decision making. Decisions shall be reached on a unanimous basis and the only voting representatives shall be the Principal Officers of each party.

1.9 Support

The ICT Shared Service Governance Board shall be serviced by the party hosting the meeting.