

TO: Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority

FROM: Head of ICT – John Fagg

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## ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE OPERATION OF THE ICT SHARED SERVICE AGREEMENT

### 1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Fire Authority of the outcome of the annual review of the operation of the ICT Shared Service Agreement (Schedule 4) for the period 1 April 2019 to 31 December 2020, undertaken by the Head of ICT for Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service and the ICT Shared Service Delivery Manager.

### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Authority is asked to:
- consider the outcomes of the annual review of the operation of the ICT Shared Service Agreement,
  - note the progress in achieving 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 for a further five year period.
- 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 2019 to 31 December 2020.
- 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 2019 to 31 December 2020

- 6.1 Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic during a large portion of this reporting period, the ICT Shared Service function has continued to achieve its original aims, delivering identifiable improvements to the day to day ICT service provision and development of the technology environment for CFRS.
- 6.2 As for everyone, this has been a challenging year for the ICT Shared Service. However it quickly enabled remote working for large numbers of staff and adapted to new ways of working throughout lockdown, maintaining good levels of service and continuing to deliver key ICT projects.
- 6.3 Previous ICT investments and technical designs successfully met the increase in demand for remote working. The resilience and flexibility of the ICT infrastructure coupled with the agility and dedication of the ICT Shared Service staff enabled both organisations to maintain operations in difficult circumstances.
- 6.4 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 placed upon it 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 **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.
- 7.3 Due to extensive work being undertaken within the ICT Shared Service, the annual customer survey was not issued until December 2020. As a result, it has not been possible to analyse the results for inclusion in this report. However during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Service has been proactive in seeking views and opinions from staff on what the Service has done well during the pandemic, what we could have done better and what we should continue to do moving forward. Understandably, ICT services and provision were a fundamental part of the feedback received, which was in the most part very positive. Where improvement opportunities were identified by staff, these were actioned as quickly as possible.
- 7.4 A new service management tool (HALO), including Service Desk, has recently been implemented. The new Service Desk includes online portals that will make it

easier for customers to report faults and request services from the ICT Shared Service.

- 7.5 The new system will introduce automated workflows that will improve the operation across all teams of the ICT Shared Service aiding its customer focus.
- 7.6 The Impact of COVID-19 - despite the lockdown and restrictions on working arrangements enforced by the pandemic, the ICT Shared Service has provided a stable and reliable ICT infrastructure throughout. Performance against incident management has dropped slightly but this is largely due to increased fix times for some faults due to the large number of staff remote working in both organisations.
- 7.7 To assist staff when initially required to work from home, ICT staff provided advice and guidance with personal ICT equipment and also conducted some home visits to deliver equipment where necessary; this was well received by staff.
- 7.8 The ICT Shared Service continued to progress and deliver internal projects and support organisation driven projects with minimum impact. The main challenges were with supply chains, as technology products were in high demand across the country. Some suppliers also restricted activities during the initial lockdown period, which had an impact on the Wi-Fi refresh project.
- 7.9 During this reporting period, the ICT Shared Service has renewed the Wide Area Network (WAN) infrastructure, providing a modern, expandable and resilient infrastructure that will meet the demands of the Service over the coming years. Resilience and bandwidth has improved while also reducing costs by moving away from the Cambridgeshire Public Services Network (CPSN) partnership. The move of staff to Microsoft 365 has continued throughout lockdown, enabling access to Microsoft Teams and other collaboration and productivity tools, whilst maximising our investment in Microsoft licencing. Surveys of all CFRS premises were conducted as part of the Wi-Fi replacement project and the replacement equipment has now been procured. During the first quarter of 2021 this equipment will be configured and installed.
- 7.10 To improve remote working facilities, laptops have been procured, built and distributed to all support staff, operational staff of Station Commander level and above and operational staff in support roles. Additionally, video conferencing facilities have been provided at all wholetime and day-crewed stations to assist with attendance at virtual training and team meetings.
- 7.11 ICT staff have been heavily involved in the new mobilising system procurement, including the setup of the new secondary control at Dogsthorpe and the remote Factory Acceptance Testing (FAT) of the system; a first for both the ICT team and the supplier.

## 10. The Effectiveness of Budgetary and Financial Management Arrangements

10.1. 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;

- FTE staff costs including individual consumption by each respective fire service 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.

10.2 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 staff including agency staff. Bedfordshire Fire Service costs are shown here as a comparison. The costs for CFRS remain very similar to last year. BFRS incurred additional costs due to contractor support for their projects.

April 2018 to March 2019	BFRS	CFRS	Total
Total costs ICT Shared Service Team	£503,888	<b>£504,026</b>	£1,007,914
April 2019 to March 2020	BFRS	CFRS	Total
Total costs ICT Shared Service Team	£541,956	<b>£505,430</b>	£1,047,386

## 11. Time split between Services

11.1 The consumption of staff resources by each service 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 staff available show that a lean environment exists. The shared service arrangement effectively provides a method of financial risk mitigation in that, where a service 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.

11.2 The original expectation was that the resource demands on the ICT Shared Service from each service 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 service as well as the larger user base in CFRS.

- 11.3 To date this expectation has not proved accurate. During the initial years BFRS consumed more resources than CFRS. In recent years, more joint activity has been undertaken with the current split of activities approximately 50:50.

## 12. Use of Agency Staff

- 12.1 In order to ensure continued delivery of service and adequate support to projects, existing staff resources have been augmented at times with agency staff with specialist skills or to cover vacancies. The reliance on contractors to fill vacancies has been removed during this reporting period, as all permanent vacancies are currently filled.

## 13. Capital Investment

- 13.1 Both partners in the ICT Shared Service have capital replacement programmes which are aligned particularly in respect to infrastructure renewals and contracts.
- 13.2 An asset inventory is maintained by the ICT Shared Service with a contracts database being maintained by each organisation. Opportunities for joint procurement continue to deliver benefits, including price advantages through economies of scale. 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.

## 14. The Effectiveness of Systems, Processes and Procedures

- 14.1 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.
- 14.2 Audits of the ICT functions are conducted by the Information Governance Manager in CFRS and also by third parties as part of the ISO27001 accreditation.
- 14.3 The Skype for Business solution implemented two years ago proved invaluable in further supporting the new ways of working during the pandemic. As a Service, we were well prepared for large scale remote access, with sufficient licenses to meet the demand.

## 15. Project Delivery

- 15.1 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.

- 15.2 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.
- 15.3 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 Services have large ICT related projects underway.
- 15.4 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.
- 15.5 Work is currently underway to improve resource management and better inform the Programme Board on current and future resource capacity to aid resource planning.

## 16. Development in Legislation and Policy Guidance

- 16.1 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.

## 17. Planning for the Development of the Shared Service

- 17.1 **Establishment** – a new structure for the ICT Shared Service was implemented on 1 August 2018. Transition into the new structure was implemented throughout the remainder of 2018, with the new structure being fully implemented on 1 January 2019.
- 17.2 The establishment of the ICT Shared Service has remained stable since the restructure with very little change in personnel.
- 17.3 The ICT apprentice has been successful in securing a full time position within the Network Team. The apprenticeship scheme has added value to the ICT Shared Service and it is something that we will be looking to continue when the current situation eases and face to face working is possible again.
- 17.4 **Transport** - three cars are provided by CFRS and two by BFRS. We locate three at Cambourne and one at each Headquarters. The number of vehicles is proving adequate at present to travel around the sites as necessary to address incidents and attend meetings.
- 17.5 **Terms and Conditions** - the variances in terms and conditions between the two organisations continue to cause frustration amongst staff and complicate the

role of managers. The Services were unable to reach an agreement on the harmonisation of terms and conditions during the restructure and this continues to be a problem. We are closely monitoring the situation.

- 17.6 **Resilience** – the ICT Team continues to provide 24x7x365 cover for mission and business critical systems. Additionally the ICT Service Desk operates from 0800-2100 hours Monday to Thursday to enable On-Call staff and those on shift patterns to access ICT assistance in a timely manner.
- 17.7 **Changing Technology** – progress has been made throughout the year migrating services onto Microsoft 365 in the cloud environment. This work will continue and the migration to cloud services will continue in the coming year. This move will provide enhanced tools to assist with collaboration and productivity. Additionally, the ICT Shared Service is looking to replace the Local Area Network infrastructure during the next financial year and are also looking at options for replacing the PSTN telephone solution from BT that will go out of support in 2025.
- 17.9 **Governance** - the ICT Shared Service is governed through the ICT Shared Service Governance Board. The Board meets on a monthly basis to monitor progress. Both partners have established organisationally focussed ICT strategies which are underpinned by an ICT Shared Service Technical Response Plan.
- 17.10 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.
- 17.11 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.

## 18. Conclusion

- 18.1 The review of the operation of the ICT Shared Service has demonstrated that progress has been made in developing services and improving technology provision despite the current challenging environment.
- 18.2 A number of significant projects have been delivered during this reporting period, as well as responding rapidly to the requirement for new ways of working. The ICT Shared Service Team were presented with an Excellence Award this year as a result of the exceptional service that they provided to staff during the current pandemic.
- 18.3 The ICT Shared Service continues to provide a value for money solution in supporting technology provision for both CFRS and BFRS.



Source Document	Location	Contact Officer
ICT Shared Service Governance Board Schedule 4 Agreement	Hinchingbrooke Cottage Brampton Road Huntingdon	John Fagg Head of ICT <a href="mailto:john.fagg@cambsfire.gov.uk">john.fagg@cambsfire.gov.uk</a>

## 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.