

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE – 6 MARCH 2012

Title:

REPLACEMENT TELEPHONE SYSTEM

[Portfolio Holder: Cllr Stephen O’Grady]

[Wards Affected: All]

Annexes to this report refer to exempt information by virtue of which the public may be excluded during the item to which the report relates, as specified in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, names:-

Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

Summary and purpose:

This report seeks approval to the replacement of the Council’s main telephone system.

How this report relates to the Council’s Corporate Priorities:

This report relates to the Council’s priorities of value for money and customer focused services by providing a cost effective option of delivering an agile telephony solution that will provide a flexible and modern voice communication system to enhance customer service delivery.

Equality and Diversity Implications:

The provision of a modern telecommunication system will have beneficial implications for staff in terms providing facilities for home working and enhanced facilities and options for customers contacting the Council.

Climate Change Implications:

There are no climate change implications.

Resource/Value for Money implications:

An options appraisal for a replacement telephony system has been undertaken and indicative costs obtained for alternative solutions, the Microsoft Lync system proposed provides by a significant margin the greatest value for money option as set out in (Exempt) Annexe 1. The proposed solution would also provide on-going revenue budget savings from 2013/14 of approximately £10,000 per annum.

Legal Implications:

There are no specific legal implications.

Background

1. The Council's current telephone system is a Siemens Realtis PBX which was installed eleven years ago with most phone handsets using traditional analogue technology which required separate telephone cabling. Analogue phones do not provide the flexibility offered in more modern systems which are based on digital/IP technology. The Realtis system as a product is at end of life and is no longer being developed as a telephony solution by Siemens.
2. There are increasing demands from frontline services within the authority for improved telephone facilities to assist customer service development, in particular to support the customer contact teams providing telephone based services in the key areas of Environmental Services, Housing and Benefits and Council Tax. These teams which deal with high volumes of their business on the telephone require more sophisticated telephone call monitoring and call management features which are not available on the existing telephone system. Other necessary facilities that a modern telephony solution would provide would include presence (a notification of if you are logged in, busy, in a meeting), hot desk telephony and home and remote working functionality.

Options considered for the telephone system replacement

3. Officers commissioned Spink Telecom an independent telephone consultancy to undertake an options appraisal for replacement telephone systems and a range of options and costs were obtained as set out in the table attached at (Exempt) Annexe 1. The options ranged from upgrading to Siemens new telephony solution, two options for alternative suppliers of telephone systems and options for the provision of a hosted solution.
4. A further option emerged following the Microsoft Exchange implementation in October 2011, when as part of this implementation, Microsoft's Lync Instant Messaging system was installed. On further investigation of this product, it emerged that Microsoft Lync would be a viable alternative for voice services and the costs are included in the table at (Exempt) Annexe 1.

Microsoft Lync option

5. The capital and on-going revenue costs for the replacement telephony system are significant, however the Microsoft Lync option in terms of cost appeared to provide a value for money option. Officers therefore have examined this option in greater detail.
6. Microsoft Lync 2010 was released to the market by Microsoft in November 2010. Lync Server 2010 delivers unified communications with the complete telephony capabilities of an IP PBX (telephone system), integrated with rich presence, instant messaging (IM), ad hoc collaboration and online meetings including Video Conferencing. Voicemail functionality is included as standard together with options to direct to voicemail when in a meeting or status is busy. Unified Communications brings together voice, email, calendar and instant message into one environment so that you can see at a glance if someone is in a meeting or busy or on the phone.

7. Waverley has a Microsoft Enterprise Agreement for licensing the Office Suite and Exchange/Outlook. This Enterprise Agreement also enables us to use Lync 2010 software at no additional software cost which makes this solution particularly attractive as an addition to our Microsoft Environment. The cost involved with implementing a Lync 2010 solution for voice will be implementation consultancy, a gateway to our existing Siemens PBX and IP Handsets.
8. The new phone solution using Lync could be introduced without changing telephone numbers and in a phased way to operate alongside our existing Siemens PBX.
9. Lync is used successfully in a number of authorities including Salford City Council, South Ayrshire Council and Scottish Borders Council. An email from Scottish Borders Council regarding their implementation of Lync for 4,000 staff over 150 locations is attached at (Exempt) Annexe 2.

Conclusion

10. It is proposed that approval be given to the implementation of the Microsoft Lync telephony solution. It provides the best value for money solution and in terms of implementation, can be introduced and tested on a phased basis operating alongside our existing Siemens Realitis system thus reducing the risk of service loss.
11. The Lync solution provides all the functionality and features required by services and benefits from close integration with our Microsoft Exchange environment. There is capital programme provision in the current financial year (2011/12) of £25,000 for telephony/network and the intention is to use this to fund the first phase of the project. Provision of £250,000 has been included in the 2012/13 capital programme, however if the Lync solution is implemented the costs would be significantly below this sum.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Microsoft Lync telephony solution be implemented at the capital cost set out in (Exempt) Annexe 1, to be met from the capital programme provision of £25,000 in 2011/12 and from within the provision of £250,000 included in the 2012/13 capital programme.

Background Papers

There are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to this report.

CONTACT OFFICER:

Name: Roger Standing **Telephone:** 01483 523221
E-mail: roger.standing@waverley.gov.uk