

**POLICY & RESOURCES CABINET BOARD**

**22<sup>nd</sup> JANUARY 2009**

**DIRECTORATE OF FINANCE & CORPORATE SERVICES**

**REPORT OF THE HEAD OF ICT  
STEPHEN JOHN**

**INDEX OF REPORT ITEMS**

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<b>SECTION B – MATTERS FOR INFORMATION</b>		
<b>Report Item</b>	<b>Page Nos.</b>	<b>Wards Affected</b>
1. Response to WAO Report on ICT Management Arrangements Review	2-4	All

**PART 1**  
**SECTION B – MATTERS FOR INFORMATION**

**ITEM 1**

**Response to WAO Report on ICT Management Arrangements Review**

**1. Purpose of Report**

To acknowledge the recommendations in the WAO report and to provide an update on progress to date.

**2. WAO Report**

The WAO conducted a review of the Management Arrangements of ICT within Neath Port Talbot and produced a series of recommendations as to how the existing service should be reconfigured and restructured in order to more readily meet the aims and objectives of the Council.

The report centred on the current arrangements whereby ICT support and services are provided by three distinct ICT units, Corporate IT, Baglan IT and Environment IT.

The review recognised that this approach had delivered some benefits to the Council but its overall view was that this approach had led to duplication of effort and an above average spend on support costs.

The report highlights a number of areas of good practice and recognises that all of the Key Performance Indicators generated by the All Wales Benchmarking ICT Exercise placed the Council's ICT services at or above the Welsh average.

However, it also noted that the lack of a single cohesive ICT unit introduced areas where service delivery was less effective and the subsequent lack of standardisation led to diverse systems and hardware which in turn increased support costs. The review also indicated that the current arrangements were inadequate and unlikely to meet the demands placed upon it by the Council's future aspirations regarding the Transformation and Innovation Programme.

The report concluded with the recommendation that the Council establish a single strategically focussed ICT service, some suggestions as to how that service might look and a list of potential advantages and disadvantages of carrying out the exercise.

The final submission of the report was given due consideration and it was agreed that the core recommendation be accepted and that the Head of ICT be tasked with scoping the exercise and implementing the outcome.

### **3. Progress to Date**

The WAO report was published in March 2008 but the implementation of its recommendations was put on hold pending the appointment of a new Head of ICT. This situation has now been resolved and the exercise is currently underway.

Prior to the appointment taking place, a number of the points raised by the report were addressed in part. This included examining the differences in strategic direction, inconsistent procurement and the acquirement and installation of diverse ICT infrastructure. The three ICT units have worked closely together to try and eliminate differences in approach and to start sharing information and resources. The move to The Quays has also allowed for some areas of duplication to be reduced and the provision of a single contact number for ICT support has proved to be a success.

The progress to date has shown a willingness amongst staff to accept change and would appear to indicate that they understand the importance their role holds in making the restructure a success.

### **4. Next Steps**

Initial meetings have been held with all interested parties including representatives from the WAO, Corporate Directors, Heads of Service, Service Users and those managers currently tasked with delivering the Council's ICT services.

The views and concerns expressed during these meetings are currently being considered with a view to producing a business case and project plan outlining how the three ICT units will be combined into a single entity with clear objectives and targets.

Initial thoughts are based on producing a structure that will allow the exercise to be completed in time for the new financial year, will be capable of providing at least the same levels of service in the interim, will be fair and acceptable to staff and the Unions and will exploit economies of scale to realise savings during the first year.

However, it is recognised that whatever the outcome of the exercise, the service is likely to experience further change following its exposure to a Lean Systems Review, whenever that project is undertaken.

**List of Background Papers**

WAO Report – ICT Management Arrangements Review

Ref: 372A2008

**Wards Affected**

All

**Officer Contact**

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