



**Joint Committee of  
the London Boroughs of Brent,  
Lewisham and Southwark**  
4 July 2018

**Report from the Head of Digital  
Services**

**Report to the Joint ICT Committee on 4 July 2018**

<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b>	Non-Key
<b>Open or Part/Fully Exempt:</b> <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
<b>No. of Appendices:</b>	1 (Performance Pack)
<b>Background Papers:</b>	None
<b>Contact Officer(s):</b> <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Prod Sarigianis Head of Digital Services Tel: 020 8937 6080 <a href="mailto:prod.sarigianis@brent.gov.uk">prod.sarigianis@brent.gov.uk</a>

**1.0 Purpose of the Report**

1.1 This report provides an update on the 3-council ICT Shared Service.

**2.0 Recommendation(s)**

2.1 The ICT Shared Service Joint Committee is asked to:

- a) Note the actions being taken in Section 3 – Detail.
- b) Note the contents of the Performance Pack as outlined in Section 3 – Detail (Performance) and Appendix 1.

**3.0 Detail**

**Summary**

3.1 Over the last period since the last meeting of the Committee the service experienced significant disruption due to a number of factors:

- We had to undertake a security review of the network to ensure the IT infrastructure continues to be secure and compliant with all required standards. This resulted in a number of essential changes that caused a level of disruption to services.

- We undertook a project to replace all telephony services for Brent and Lewisham. The project had to be delivered under extremely short timescales, as we needed to complete implementation before existing contracts came to an end.
  - We completed the restructure of the department, which was necessary to ensure we were in position to recruit to all positions, as we were previously operating with 41 vacancies.
  - We experienced a series of outages caused by problems with the Virgin Media Business (VMB) link connecting our two datacentres.
- 3.2 The volume of open calls and call resolution performance suffered significantly over this period as a result.
- 3.3 Recent major incidents affecting Brent and Lewisham raised serious concerns about the service. As a result we are taking a series of measures to stabilise and improve the service going forward, outlined later in this report.
- 3.5 The first phase of the restructure has been completed, with all internal interviews having taken place in May and the new structure implemented on the 4th of June. We have now started work on the next phase of external recruitment for the remaining vacancies.

## **Performance**

- 3.6 There has been a clear increase in call volumes for Brent and Lewisham during the telephony rollout, something that was expected. However as mentioned earlier the combination of security review, rollout, restructure and major incidents has left us with a high number of open calls at the end, which we are working to clear back to previous levels.
- 3.7 In the process of clearing a backlog of calls we will always have a side effect of reduced call resolution statistics, as they show higher numbers of aged calls being resolved within the reporting period.
- 3.8 Attached to this report is a summary of the key performance indicators for the three councils. This report had to be completed prior to the end of the month, but we should note that at the time of writing all indicators for June show significant improvement over the previous months.

## **Service Issues**

- 3.9 Following a period of major incidents in January we had started a review of our processes, with an initial focus on change management, risk assessment, major incident reviews and communications.
- 3.10 We had a period of stability with no change-related major incidents, however this was followed with a significant number of issues emerging from the telephony rollout at Brent and Lewisham, as well as more recently significant major incidents.

3.11 All these issues resulted in a very poor perception of the IT service in Brent and Lewisham by staff, and loss of confidence by management. We are taking a number of actions to address this urgently:

- We have reviewed all recent major incidents and have devised a series of immediate remediation activities to mitigate against reoccurrence.
- We are compiling lessons learned from the telephony rollout which we will be reviewing with staff outside IT, as well as full remediation plan for all outstanding issues prior to starting the Southwark implementation.
- We are appointing to a number of interim positions to address identified weaknesses in our current establishment and reinforce areas where we need additional capacity to stabilise the service, including providing additional management capacity.
- We are also retaining interim staff whose contract was ending at the end of the telephony project and the end of the restructure for an additional 2 months, and reviewing the situation at that point.
- We are putting in place a strict regime for approving new projects until we have stabilised the environment, and putting on hold existing projects where possible, particularly where these pose any risk of disruption.
- We are exploring options for procuring 24x7 support for the core network to provide more comprehensive/robust cover – this has been an area where recruitment has historically been challenging, and that has made 24x7 cover more challenging to cover.
- We are bringing in a storage expert from our network vendor (Dell) to assist with optimising the system, setting up proactive alerts, knowledge transfer to existing staff, and general support while we are increasing the resilience of our data centres.
- We are exploring the procurement of external support (Microsoft) to accelerate our email migration to the cloud (Office 365).
- The issues with the Virgin interconnect between the data centres that has caused 3 major incidents in the recent months has been escalated to CEO level with both LGfL and Virgin; the LGfL CEO and Virgin senior management have attended the Shared Service Management Board in June to explain how they will address this.
- We have escalated with BT the installation of a second interconnect between the data centres.
- While we are addressing the link issues, and until we have both operational, we are running all live services from the Brent data centre to avoid further reoccurrence of the incidents.
- We have been working on a number of improvements on the resilience of our data centres and a plan for an overall disaster recovery test of our data centres, as well as plans for regular testing.

- We are exploring options for implementing additional proactive monitoring for all services, including looking at tools that simulate user interaction with systems and measure responsiveness. This report had to be completed prior to the end of the month, but we should note that at the time of writing all indicators for June show significant improvement over the previous months.

## **Southwark Transition – Phase 2**

- 3.12 Work is progressing with Phase 2 (data centre migration)
- 3.13 Issues with upgrades of the links to the existing data centres (Capita, links provided by LGfL/Virgin) have resulted in a delay to the project. At the moment this is estimated to come to 3 weeks, moving us to a late September end-date.
- 3.14 The controls we have put in place for Brent and Lewisham projects do not affect this project, as Southwark have funded additional ring-fenced resources to ensure delivery is not affected by BAU activities.

## **Shared Service Restructure**

- 3.15 We have completed all internal recruitment and appointed to 29 positions.
- 3.16 We have 22 vacancies for which we are starting external recruitment.

## **Update on Other Projects**

- 3.17 We will be starting on the Brent project for rolling out laptops this month; the project will be feeding into similar projects for Southwark and Lewisham.
- 3.18 We have begun the planning phase of the telephony rollout for Southwark, although as mentioned we will not be moving into implementation until all lessons learned have been reviewed and all remediation actions have been completed.
- 3.19 Following the successful implementation of Wi-Fi at Tooley Street we are continuing with the rollout to the remaining Southwark sites.

## **Procurement Update**

- 3.20 The tender for Regulatory Services Software was concluded. The three councils were unable to agree on the selection of the preferred bidder, and therefore we will need to pursue separate processes for procurement.
- 3.21 We have completed the reverse auction for end user devices (desktops and laptops) for all 3 councils in May and have awarded a contract for a range of Lenovo devices through XMA.
- 3.22 Work is progressing in preparing for the 3-council tender for office & bulk printing; we have released the tender under a Crown Commercial Service framework, with expected contract award by November.

- 3.23 We are in the process of procuring a single contract for the supply of Children's & Educational Services software for Brent and Lewisham, and expect to complete by the end of July 2018.

#### **4.0 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 The budget for the shared service for 2018/19 is currently under review to ensure that all issues highlighted in section 3 can be addressed.

#### **5.0 Legal Implications**

- 5.1 This report is for noting. Therefore no specific legal implications arising from the report at this stage.
- 5.2 Brent Council hosts the shared ICT service, pursuant to the Local Government Act 1972, the Local Government Act 2000, the Localism Act 2011 and the Local Authorities (Arrangements for the Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2012. These provisions allow one council to delegate one of its functions to another council as well as allowing two or more councils to discharge their functions jointly with the option of establishing a joint committee. Joint committees can in turn delegate functions to one or more officers of the councils concerned. Decisions of joint committees are binding on the participating councils. However, subject to the terms of the arrangement, the council retains the ability to discharge that function itself.

#### **6.0 Equality Implications**

- 6.1 No equality implications arising from this report.

#### **7.0 Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders**

- 7.1 There are none.

#### **8.0 Human Resources/Property Implications**

- 8.1 The restructure of the service was completed in June and as mentioned in section 3 we are working on recruitment for a number of residual vacancies.

**Report sign off:**

***Althea Loderick***  
Strategic Director of Resources