

REPORT

SUBJECT:	SRS TACTICAL PLAN AND FUTURE DATA HOSTING ARRANGEMENTS
MEETING:	Cabinet
DATE:	4th March 2020
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	All

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To outline the SRS Tactical Plan and its strategic intent for the SRS to de-commission the data hall in Blaenavon, replacing it initially with a move to a commercial scale purpose built data hall followed by cloud based solutions as appropriate.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Cabinet endorses the SRS Tactical Plan which supports delivery of the long-term strategic goals of the SRS and its partners and as outlined in the SRS strategy 2016-20.
- 2.2 That Cabinet acknowledges the strategic intent of the SRS Strategic Board to de-commission the existing data halls in the SRS, moving the provision to a commercial data hall, with a future migration to Microsoft Azure cloud or other SAAS cloud solutions.
- 2.3 As necessary for Cabinet or Council to receive future business cases and where investment requirements are unable to be absorbed by the SRS without recourse to increased partner contributions or one-off investment from partners.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 As a result of two development sessions with the SRS Strategic Board in July 2019 a Tactical Plan was developed for the SRS and that serves as an annual guide to implement tactical SRS initiatives that incrementally achieve the Strategic Board's five-year

partnership strategy as agreed in January 2016. This strategy reflects a revitalised strategy for collaboration between SRS partner organisations.

3.2 The strategic aims for the SRS, and as agreed by the SRS Strategic Board, are to:

- a) Deliver effective ICT services from a single combined unit and operate as one SRS.
- b) Improve services to provide a solid foundation upon which partner organisations can operate.
- c) Ensure the investment in technology is focused on delivery of the corporate priorities of the partner organisations.
- d) Develop a capable, professional workforce that can meet the challenges within technology over the coming years.
- e) Provide a collaborative platform for public sector organisations to share common ground.

3.3 The SRS Tactical Plan documents the SRS collaborative initiatives that the SRS plans to execute and includes the budgeted initiative costs and milestones for delivery. The individual organisation projects are not typically included in the plan and are overseen and delivered separately.

3.4 The SRS Tactical Plan, the latest iteration of which is shown in appendix 3, outlines existing programmes of work. The gateway process adopted by the SRS Strategic Board allows it to consider, in conjunction with its Business & Collaboration and Finance & Governance Boards, collaborative programmes of work that partners wish to pursue. Three of these have already received strategic intent from the SRS Strategic Board to implement being:

- a) The continued rollout of Office 365 services;
- b) The continued implementation of PSBA GovRoam across all partners; and
- c) The continuation of the implementation of GovWifi across all partners and the subsequent removal of SRS Public due to the lower level of security.

- 3.5 A platform approach has been agreed by the Strategic Board called OneWales. The platform offers collaborative opportunities that have not been available to our partner organisations in the past. The platform as a project and standard set of services, is owned by the SRS. Each partner's process of migrating into the platform is an individual organisation project tailored to the needs of each partner.
- 3.6 There are a further 9 programmes of work where partners to the SRS have signalled intent to work together. These programmes of work highlight where the opportunities are for partners to collaborate and for the SRS to facilitate this on their behalf. This will in turn benefit not only the SRS but the partners themselves. These programmes of work exemplify the opportunities to have shared network platforms (for Sharepoint Online, core network and telephony), licencing arrangements (for SQL, Oracle and Microsoft Enterprise agreements) and device management (for mobile devices and telephone calling). Each of these programmes of work will be developed and business cases presented to the SRS Strategic Board for further consideration.
- 3.7 The gateway process has also resulted in the SRS Strategic Board confirming four programmes of work that will not be pursued further at this stage or at least through the Board. There may be future opportunities to pursue these programmes of work separately and each would be assessed on its merits and on the basis that there was both an intent and an appropriate case for collaborate. These programmes consisted of proposals for:
- A shared Revenues and Benefits licence model;
 - A shared Financial system implementation;
 - A shared Information @ Work implementation for documentation management
 - A shared HR/Payroll implementation – the Authority has drawn up its own specification and is procuring a new HR/Payroll system
- 3.8 The one remaining significant programme of work to be advanced comprises a review of the “on premise” data centre infrastructure in Blaenavon. Appendix 4 contains the future recommendations presented to the SRS Strategic Board in October 2019 and where it agreed to the development of a business case that looked to:
- a) Support a move to an alternate data centre facility for all services to avoid increasing capital costs in Blaenavon; and
 - b) A move to a revenue based, cloud services model for each partner.
- 3.9 The physical data centre in Blaenavon has been a fantastic asset to the SRS for ten years. The original purpose and thinking behind it still stands to this day as something that was the right thing to do at a point in time. All partners have enjoyed accredited, cost effective and secure services from this facility. The world, more importantly technology, has moved on at pace in those ten

years and we find ourselves in a position where others can provide these services over public infrastructure using hyper scale implementations, more securely at lesser cost and with an improved carbon footprint.

- 3.10 The SRS report identified that the data hall in Blaenavon is unsustainable and has a limited lifespan (maximum of 2 years) with the existing equipment and infrastructure. There is an estimated cost of £1.2 million to upgrade the existing equipment based on a report from their current contractor. This together with estimated running costs for the data halls of circa £800k per annum a year which are also unsustainable based on the other options available in the marketplace today.
- 3.11 The SRS Strategic Board on the 21st January 2020 agreed that the COO (Chief Operating Officer) progress a tender for the alternate data hall facilities, which would be returned to the Board for a decision. The COO advised that a detailed assessment would be required to formulate a financial assessment for the project and resourcing to pull together an outline business case for change. The assessment would be conducted by Red Cortex, a technical specialist that has been brought on board to advise the SRS. Partners would be required to prioritise the project to ensure that the change could take place within the timescales indicated.
- 3.12 The essential requirements for an alternative data hall provision are:
- The flexibility to increase or decrease our storage needs as required;
 - The use of 100% renewable energy which aligns with our Climate Emergency plan and will reduce energy costs; and
 - The mandatory requirement to operate a PSBA connection which is an essential requirement of a local authority provider.
- 3.13 In order to transfer to an alternate data hall provider the SRS will need to recreate the core infrastructure including network, firewalls and data storage. The storage racks in the alternate data hall will replace the racks in SRS.
- 3.14 The SRS and Monmouthshire adopted a cloud first strategy several years ago. The SRS has procured space within Azure, the Microsoft cloud. Cloud services such as Azure are more secure than many smaller data centres simply because they operate at such scale in large data centres around the world. This move would require a transition of systems as and when they are upgraded to be able to operate within a cloud environment whether this is within the Azure cloud or other SAAS cloud solutions as identified.
- 3.15 The SRS Strategic Board's preferred direction of travel is a hybrid model which comprises a complete move to an alternative data hall provider followed by a phased migration to the Azure cloud or other SAAS solutions as appropriate. This enables us to take immediate advantage of the decreased costs of energy usage with an alternative commercial scale data hall provider. Whilst at the same time allowing us to migrate systems into Azure cloud or other SAAS cloud solutions, either whilst systems are at end of life or having a fundamental upgrade.

- 3.16 The indicative timeline of proposals, subject to the approval of business cases by the SRS Strategic Board, and as necessary the relevant partners, are:
- a) In the first instance for the SRS to procure an alternate data hall solution and recreate the existing data hall so that all SRS partner's storage can be relocated from Blaenavon. It is anticipated that Monmouthshire and Torfaen will move their systems/data first and within the next 6-9 months.
 - b) In parallel for MCC to work with the SRS to assess which of our systems and processes can move from physical storage to Azure Cloud storage or other SAAS cloud solution. This will enable Monmouthshire to meet their strategic aim of moving all of our systems to Cloud.
- 3.17 It is worth clarifying that schools will not feature in this initial move and as a result of the significant Welsh Government EdTech funding that is being programmed into schools this year and that will divert available SRS resources. This delay presents an opportunity in that it will allow a full review and options appraisal to be undertaken of school data being moved from the data halls in Blaenavon and into the Cloud on the Welsh Government supported Hwb teaching and learning platform. Again a business case will be developed and presented back to the SRS Strategic Board for consideration and Monmouthshire schools will be engaged and involved throughout.

4. OPTIONS APPRAISAL:

- 4.1 The options appraisal, at a strategic outline level, is contained within appendix 4 and 5 and is as described above. In summary however the SRS have investigated potential solutions that included:
- a) Move the data hall to a more sustainable and economic data hall facility
 - b) Move all of our systems into the Azure cloud or other SAAS solution.
 - c) A hybrid model of the above two options, with a complete move to an alternative data hall prior followed by a phased migration to the Azure cloud or other SAAS solution.
- 4.2 As stated above the recommendation made was to pursue a hybrid option and which affords greatest flexibility and affordability considerations.

5. EVALUATION CRITERIA:

- 5.1 An evaluation assessment has been included at Appendix 1 for future evaluation of whether the decision has been successfully implemented. The decision will be reviewed after 12 months and on an ongoing basis.

6. REASONS:

- 6.1 The SRS data centre in Blaenavon is unsustainable and the SRS Strategic Board have indicated the strategic direction that the data hall should be decommissioned and replaced with alternative more economically viable solutions.
- 6.2 Adopting this approach will meet Monmouthshire's and the SRS cloud first strategy.
- 6.3 Moving to cloud services such as Azure will provide additional resilience, security, scalability and capacity management.

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 7.1 These arrangements will be formalized within a suitably costed Business Cases for:
- a) The move of core server infrastructure to a commercial data hall provider
 - b) The move of the education data halls to an alternative data hall provider then to HWB
 - c) The move to Azure cloud
- 7.2 Appendix 4 and 5 to this report an estimated cost of £1.2 million to upgrade the existing equipment based on a report from their current contractor. This together with estimated running costs for the data halls of circa £800k per annum a year which are also unsustainable based on the other options available in the marketplace today.
- 7.3 The business cases when developed will include any contingent liabilities in addition to detailed cost analyses. Upon consideration and approval of the business cases by the SRS Strategic Board and if there are investment requirements that are unable to be absorbed by the SRS then Cabinet or Council as appropriate would need to consider the business case and any approval increased partner contributions or one-off investment from partners required.

8. WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS IMPLICATIONS (INCORPORATING EQUALITIES, SUSTAINABILITY, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):

- 8.1 The significant equality impacts identified in the assessment are summarised below for members' consideration:

- a) Cloud services will enable communities to engage and transact with the council more easily, economically and with a lesser impact on the environment;
- b) The safe sharing of digital data with police and health colleagues will enable a more joined-up approach to care of vulnerable people in our communities

8.2 The actual impacts from this report's recommendations will be updated with subsequent reports containing full business cases and then reviewed every year for monitoring.

9. CONSULTEES:

SRS Strategic Board
SRS Senior Leadership Team
MCC Senior Leadership Team
Cabinet

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Appendix 1 – Evaluation Criteria
Appendix 2 – Wellbeing of Future Generations Assessment
Appendix 3 – SRS Tactical Plan
Appendix 4 – SRS Future Data Hosting Recommendations
Appendix 5 – SRS Business Case for Cloud Computing presentation

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Appendix 1

Evaluation Criteria

Title of Report:	SRS TACTICAL PLAN AND FUTURE DATA HOSTING ARRANGEMENTS
Date decision was made:	4th March 2020
Report Author:	Sian Hayward

What will happen as a result of this decision being approved by Cabinet?

The decision will endorse the SRS Tactical Plan and endorse the decision of the SRS Strategic Board to instigate a complete move of the data hall provision at Blaenavon to an alternative data hall prior; followed by a phased migration to the Azure cloud or other SAAS solution.

In the first instance business cases will be brought forward to the SRS Strategic Board for approval and consideration. Subsequent to this it is proposed that there is a 12 month appraisal and evaluation to ensure the desired outcomes have been achieved and that benefits and any savings have been realised?

What benchmarks and/or criteria will you use to determine whether the decision has been successfully implemented?

A 12 month appraisal and evaluation will be undertaken and that will also look to identify further and future opportunities to optimize data storage needs and to source the most appropriate and cost effective data storage solutions. The outcomes, benefits and savings to be realised will be closely monitored and through ongoing budget and performance monitoring arrangements.

What is the estimate cost of implementing this decision or, if the decision is designed to save money, what is the proposed saving that the decision will achieve?

Give an overview of the planned costs associated with the project, which should already be included in the report, so that once the evaluation is completed there is a quick overview of whether it was delivered on budget or if the desired level of savings was achieved.

The full cost implications, in terms of cost avoidance and cost savings are yet to be finalized. Where costs cannot be absorbed within existing SRS resources a business case will need to be considered by Cabinet or Council as necessary to consider any resulting increase in the annual SRS core contribution or any associated one-off costs. Throughout and subsequent to implementation this will be monitored closely through existing budget monitoring arrangements.

Appendix 2



monmouthshire
sir fynwy

Future Generations Evaluation (Includes Equalities and Sustainability Impact Assessments)




Name of the Officer completing the evaluation Sian Hayward Phone no: 07971893998 E-mail: sianhayward@monmouthshire.gov.uk	Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal To agree the proposal to move the SRS data hall from Blaenavon into Microsoft Azure cloud storage or to a more sustainable and economic storage.
Name of Service Digital & Agile	Date Future Generations Evaluation form completed 18/2/2020



1. **Does your proposal deliver any of the well-being goals below?** Please explain the impact (positive and negative) you expect, together with suggestions of how to mitigate negative impacts or better contribute to the goal.

Well Being Goal	How does the proposal contribute to this goal? (positive and negative)	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
A prosperous Wales Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs	The move to a cloud based provision has significant benefits to our workforce and the wider community. These solutions mean that access to information and services can be available when the public need to use them, as well as improving the digital teaching and learning facilities in schools.	
A resilient Wales Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g. climate change)	We would expect an alternative data hall would operate through 100% renewable technology, with infrastructure that uses half as much energy as the provision at the SRS. Cloud based services can significantly improve efficiency with self-service and a reduction in the need to travel.	Where any negative impacts are identified the team will seek to address them by taking an inclusive approach.
A healthier Wales People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized and health impacts are understood		Where any negative impacts are identified the team will seek to address them by taking an inclusive approach.

Well Being Goal	How does the proposal contribute to this goal? (positive and negative)	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
A Wales of cohesive communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected	Cloud based technology enables greater connectivity within our communities, as well as protecting peoples data and therefore the safeguarding of vulnerable people.	Where any negative impacts are identified the team will seek to address them by taking an inclusive approach.
A globally responsible Wales Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing	Cloud infrastructure enables an efficient, economic service which reduces the negative impact on our environment of travel.	Where any negative impacts are identified the team will seek to address them by taking an inclusive approach
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language Culture, heritage and Welsh language are promoted and protected. People are encouraged to do sport, art and recreation	Digital information and services are being improved across our cultural and leisure services, enabling electronic transactions through cloud based systems	Where any negative impacts are identified the team will seek to address them by taking an inclusive approach.
A more equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances	Cloud will assist people with protected characteristics to access information and services in our rural community. They will also provide better employment opportunities for people working in digital industries.	Where any negative impacts are identified the team will seek to address them by taking an inclusive approach.

2. How has your proposal embedded and prioritised the sustainable governance principles in its development?

Sustainable Development Principle	How does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle?	What has been done to better to meet this principle?
 <p>Long-term</p> <p>Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future</p>	The digital world is moving at pace and is the future of everything we do. This proposal will ensure we reap the benefits of digitisation to capture short term economic and efficiency benefits as well as support investments in emerging and innovative technologies to reap the long term benefits globally, for our local communities and the Council.	
 <p>Collaboration</p> <p>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p>	MCC will work in collaboration with its partners in the SRS to deliver this proposal. Our partners also include Welsh Government and existing technology suppliers.	
 <p>Involvement</p> <p>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p>	Our main stakeholders are the other partners in the SRS and our internal service departments who will need to be aware of this decision when managing their current systems and the eventual move to cloud. We also have wider stakeholders in supporting central government policy decisions for the move to cloud based services. All stakeholders will have active involvement.	

Sustainable Development Principle	How does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle?	What has been done to better to meet this principle?
 <p>Prevention</p> <p>Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p>	<p>This move will absolutely prevent problems getting worse as it's the most sustainable, future ready solution for supporting ICT infrastructure.</p>	
 <p>Integration</p> <p>Positively impacting on people, economy and environment and trying to benefit all three</p>	<p>Cloud based services enable economies to be made, reduces the environmental impacts of travel, increases communications and access to information, and eases engagement with our communities.</p>	

3. Are your proposals going to affect any people or groups of people with protected characteristics? Please explain the impact, the evidence you have used and any action you are taking below.

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Age	Cloud services will assist the elderly to access information and services in more sustainable way without having to leave the house. Younger people will be expecting all services to be digital by design and move to cloud will be their norm. Government services can share health, housing and care information for the elderly, enhancing the quality of care.	No impact	Where any negative impacts are identified the team will seek to address them by taking an inclusive approach.
Disability	Cloud technology will assist people with mobility problems to access information and services.	No impact	Where any negative impacts are identified the team will seek to address them by taking an inclusive approach.
Gender reassignment	No impact	No impact	Where any negative impacts are identified the team will seek to address them by taking an inclusive approach.
Marriage or civil partnership	No impact	No impact	Where any negative impacts are identified the team will seek to address them by taking an inclusive approach.
Race	No impact	No impact	Where any negative impacts are identified the team will seek to address them by taking an inclusive approach.

<i>Protected Characteristics</i>	<i>Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic</i>	<i>Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic</i>	<i>What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?</i>
Religion or Belief	No impact	No impact	Where any negative impacts are identified the team will seek to address them by taking an inclusive approach.
Sex	No impact	No impact	Where any negative impacts are identified the team will seek to address them by taking an inclusive approach.
Sexual Orientation	No impact	No impact	Where any negative impacts are identified the team will seek to address them by taking an inclusive approach.
Welsh Language	No impact	No impact	The Welsh language will continue to be promoted by the Digital Service through all digitally published material.

4. Council has agreed the need to consider the impact its decisions has on important responsibilities of Corporate Parenting and safeguarding. Are your proposals going to affect either of these responsibilities?

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on safeguarding and corporate parenting	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on safeguarding and corporate parenting	What will you do/ have you done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Safeguarding	The provision of cloud based apps will enable our social care services to have real time, structured data and information to protect our vulnerable adults and children.	The purpose of this arrangement is to be inclusive to all therefore no negative impacts are anticipated in relation to this particular group.	We will continue to develop cloud services in order to provide accurate information to carers and families, even in people's homes, to assist with speedier service provision and assessment of needs. Security of data will be enabled by simple electronic security on mobile devices and apps.
Corporate Parenting			

5. What evidence and data has informed the development of your proposal?

There is industry wide evidence that cloud services improve security of data, access to information and enable better data analysis and management.

6. SUMMARY: As a result of completing this form, what are the main positive and negative impacts of your proposal, how have they informed/changed the development of the proposal so far and what will you be doing in future?

- i. Cloud services will enable communities to engage and transact with the council more easily, economically and with a lesser impact on the environment
- ii. The safe sharing of digital data with police and health colleagues will enable a more joined-up approach to care of vulnerable people in our communities

7. Actions. As a result of completing this form are there any further actions you will be undertaking? Please detail them below, if applicable.

What are you going to do	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible	Progress

8. Monitoring: The impacts of this proposal will need to be monitored and reviewed. Please specify the date at which you will evaluate the impact, and where you will report the results of the review.

The impacts of this proposal will be evaluated on:	18/02/21
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