

SUBJECT: Admission of an Additional Partner to the SRS

MEETING: Cabinet

DATE: 24th February 2016

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: None

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 The SRS ambition has always been to expand the provision of services to other Public Sector partners. Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council (BGCBC) has completed and agreed a business case through its own authorisation and committee processes, and is requesting to become a partner in the SRS. This is a milestone in the SRS journey, and one to celebrate the expansion of the collaborative service model.
- 1.2 This report seeks approval from SRS Partner Cabinets and the PCC to invite Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council to join the SRS.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That MCC agrees to BGCBC joining the SRS as a partner, realising benefits for both the SRS and MCC

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 The SRS Strategy (2016 - 2020) is focused on consolidating the demand of multiple partners and brokering the supply of single ICT solutions. The SRS strategy is scalable to support Welsh Government public sector objectives.

It operates with 5 strategic aims to:

- 1) Deliver effective ICT services from a single combined unit
- 2) Provide a solid foundation upon which partner organisations can operate in order to improve service delivery
- 3) Ensure the investment in ICT is focused on delivery of the corporate priorities of the partner organisations
- 4) Develop a capable, professional workforce that can meet the challenges within ICT over the coming years
- 5) Provide a collaborative platform for public sector organisations to share digital capacity and capability through shared platforms

3.2 BGCBC has a business need to develop and implement a sustainable service improvement model for its ICT provision that:

- Supports the Welsh Government's objectives for collaboration
- Addresses some of the financial issues that affect the Authority
- Responds to the Authority's growing delivery needs and previously identified issues, and
- Future proofs the service.

3.3 The SRS Public Board has received BGCBC's business case, and can now assure the existing partner organisations that accepting a new partner is in line with its strategic aims to grow the business. With the addition of new partners the SRS is able to further achieve economies of scale and realise savings through the equal share of strategic and service management costs.

3.4 The challenges experienced by BGCBC offer an opportunity to the SRS to showcase its ability, supported by its strategic vision, to realise its potential for public sector collaboration in line with WG aspirations.

3.5 The acceptance of this proposal will generate additional revenue of £163,665 into the SRS to invest in service improvement that will generate efficiency savings for the existing partners.

4. **REASONS:**

4.1 A review of BGCBC ICT services by Price Waterhouse Coopers in 2014 highlighted a number of issues with the existing ICT service provision at BGCBC with reference to its strategy, resilience and structure.

4.2 A business case has been created by BGCBC which has explored all potential collaboration options alongside finance, service benefits and risks to determine the preferred solution. The conclusion of the business case was that BGCBC should seek to join the SRS as a partner, providing a robust service solution at the same time as enabling existing SRS partners to benefit from the arrangement.

4.3 **What are the benefits for the SRS?**

4.3.1 The strategic review of the SRS last year included an assessment of the roles needed at a leadership level within the SRS to put in place a structure capable of continuing the successful growth of the SRS. The SRS Board has recognised the need for business skillsets that will enhance the existing Leadership Team capacity as the organisation develops. The additional financial investment arising from the introduction of a new partner will enable an effective business leadership structure to

be established which will provide a strong core to enable further business growth across Wales.

4.3.2 The current BGCBC ICT service aligns with the organisational structure being implemented in the SRS. The merger will allow all partners to benefit from an increased capacity and capability to provide knowledge, resilience and expertise. There are similarities in the systems, technologies and applications used in BGCBC with those of the SRS and this will assist with the effective knowledge transfer required with the merger.

4.4 **What will be the benefits be for MCC specifically?**

The SRS Public Board can assure all partner organisations, their Elected Members and their Officers that accepting BGCBC as a new partner will enable the SRS to establish a strong business foundation in order to progress with its strategic aims to further grow the enterprise. It will also enable the SRS to achieve economies of scale for the benefit of all partners. The specific advantages for MCC are that:

- i. MCC will benefit from collaboration with Greater Gwent authorities (and potentially across Wales) by integrating back office systems, bringing economies of scale and efficiency savings.
- ii. MCC will benefit from standard ICT platforms rather than servicing many different platforms, choosing the 'best of breed' and benefitting from efficiencies in system administration.
- iii. Collaboration and integration will bring better preparedness for any future amalgamation of local authorities as we will be working off single standard ICT platforms, where databases can be integrated where required.
- iv. The additional investment into the SRS will bolster service excellence within the SRS, assisting with the delivery of MCC's iCounty strategy and enabling efficiency savings to be realised through the equal share of strategic and service management costs

5. **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The SRS will monitor the impact on performance using its existing Performance Framework & KPIs. The SRS will also closely monitor staff/team capacity to ensure that there is no detrimental impact on existing service provision and this will be reported back monthly to the SRS Board through the newly established Performance Board.

The SRS will monitor registered risks on an ongoing basis. This enhanced performance management structure will benefit all partner organisations to ensure continued quality and effectiveness.

The internal audit arrangements, which are set out and agreed with the SRS Board will need to be reviewed to incorporate the changing size of the organisation. BGCBC will need to align their existing arrangements for ICT audit into this process

6. **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

- 6.1 There are no resource implications as a result of this report for MCC. The additional £163k income arising from accepting the new partner into the SRS will be invested in bolstering service delivery bringing opportunities for future efficiency savings within MCC.

6. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS:

The significant equality impacts identified in the assessment (Appendix 1) are summarised below for members' consideration:

Complete

The actual impacts from this report's recommendations will be reviewed every **xxx** years and criteria for monitoring and review will include:

Complete

- 7. CONSULTEES: SLT, SRS Operational Board, MCC Digital Board, SRS Leadership Team, BGCBC, TCBC, Gwent Police**

- 8. BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

- 9. AUTHOR: Sian Hayward**

- 10. CONTACT DETAILS:**

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