

Committee(s): Digital Services Committee Police Authority Board	Dated: 17/01/2024 07/02/2024
Subject: Future Network Strategy	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	9, 10
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	Y
If so, how much?	£8.3m
What is the source of Funding?	Capital Bid 2024/25
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	Y (part approved £4.3m)
Report of: Caroline Al-Beyerty, Chamberlain	For Decision
Report author: Tara Crombie, Chamberlain's	

Summary

The City of London Corporation has a requirement to update its existing network capability and to provide a common approach to networking across the City Corporation, City of London Police and Institutional Departments. The current network solution was implemented in 2017 and is complex and inefficient, relying on several vendors and technologies. Network coverage is unreliable in some areas, which presents a suboptimal user experience, and maintenance and support is costly.

The Future Network Strategy proposes a move to a Secure Access Service Edge (SASE) solution, which will provide an efficient and simplified network that will enable the organisation to adapt to modern technologies. The approach will reduce complexity and ongoing costs and provide a more secure and reliable experience for users.

Recommendation

- Members are asked to approve the Future Network Strategy for a SASE solution, which will enable Commercial engagement with a supplier to help implement the solution.

Main Report

Background

1. The current City of London Corporation and City of London Police network was implemented in 2017 based on a traditional Local Area Network (LAN) and Wide Area Network (WAN) approach using Multiprotocol Labelling Switch (MPLS)

technology. Whilst this technology is still fully supported, the Network Hardware is approaching end of life and the requirements of the organisation have evolved to a point where there is no longer a cohesive approach across the organisation. The current network approach has limited flexibility and is dependent on multiple external suppliers, which has led to even more complexity and a disjointed and inefficient service.

2. The current infrastructure of copper or fibre cabling is old and has limitations in supporting the current workforce and ways of working.

Current Position

3. The Digital, Information and Technology Service (DITS) have submitted a Capital Bid for 2024/25 for £8.3m, which will fund the replacement of the existing LAN and WAN across the City of London Corporation and City of London Police. The relevant Gateway Papers will be submitted to Digital Services Committee, Police Authority Board and Court of Common Council for the release of this funding in 2024/25.
4. The contract for City of London Corporation's current Network Support Provider, ROC Technologies, is due to expire in January 2025, with no further options to extend. DITS will be going to market for a new agreement with a Network Support Provider in early 2024/25 to implement and support a new Network approach for the City of London Corporation and City of London Police. This will include existing buildings and new buildings within the Future Police Estates Programme (FPEP).
5. To inform the procurement of the new Network Support Provider, FPEP, in consultation with DITS, are proposing a Future Network Strategy which is intended to outline the new approach to the connectivity requirements of existing and new buildings across the City of London Corporation, City of London Police and potentially Institutional Departments in the future.

Options

6. The Programme Team, in conjunction with Commercial Services undertook a soft market testing exercise in September 2023. The exercise included 19 suppliers to gain insight into the current market and direction of the industry and asked them to provide recommendations on the approach. Most suppliers recommended a move to a SASE solution, and the strategy has been adapted in line with this recommendation.

Proposals

7. The Future Network Strategy proposes to adopt the following key design principles:
 - The use of standardised technology to enable a modern and holistic approach to networking and security.
 - Combined network and security in a cloud-based architecture, simplifying the network and reducing complexity and operational costs.
 - Fast and secure access for remote and on-premise users.

- Ability to respond to an organisation's growth and the evolving nature of work by being adaptable and scalable.
 - Support any user, from anywhere, using any device, via any connection, to any application.
8. Secure Access Service Edge (SASE) is the proposed technological approach for the Future Network Strategy, combining network and security services into a unified cloud-based architecture. This is intended to reduce complexity and operational costs, as well as being highly scalable and adaptable. SASE adopts a zero-trust security model which verifies the identity and security posture of every user and device, providing a granular, context-based access control. Further detail is provided in Appendix 2, the Future Network Strategy.

Key Data

9. The existing City of London Corporation and City of London Police Networks cover 237 separate sites including:
- 120 COL locations;
 - 17 COLP locations;
 - 100 Secure City CCTV sites.
10. The costs for the current Network over a 5-year period are approximately £11.5m, which includes LAN and WAN infrastructure, hardware, and support.
11. The existing network is supported by 14 vendors, encompassing infrastructure, hardware, and support.
12. 19 vendors were engaged in the Soft Market Testing Exercise.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications – Stable, Secure and Supported Network Connectivity is essential for the future operations of the City of London Corporation and City of London Police.

Financial implications – A Capital Bid of £8.3m was submitted through the priorities board "New bids" Process in 2024/25 to fund the implementation of the Future Network Strategy. As part of this process £4.25m was approved and will be included in the Capital Programme for 24/25. The balance of c£4m will require further approval. At present it should be noted there are no plans for new Capital bids in 25/26 so there may be a need for re-prioritisation or re-allocation of funds within the Capital programme.

Resource implications – The implementation of the Future Network Strategy will be delivered by the Future Network Programme Team, which will consist of permanent staff and additional resource funded by the Programme budget.

Legal implications – The Future Network Strategy will require the procurement of a new Network Support Provider, which will be supported by Commercial Services and Comptroller and City Solicitor's.

Risk implications – The Future Network Strategy will be managed as part of a wider Programme of work, with all risks and issues managed accordingly.

Equalities implications – None.

Climate implications – The Future Network Strategy seeks to reduce the use of Network hardware across the City of London Estate, reducing demands for energy consumption and cooling needs.

Security implications – The Future Network Strategy recognises the complex requirements across the City of London Corporation and City of London Police with regards to Network security and resilience.

Conclusion

The City of London Corporation and City of London Police networks were implemented in 2017 and the network approach now needs to modernise and simplify to meet the evolving needs of COL and COLP. Following engagement with the market the recommendation is to implement a SASE based solution to provide a more efficient and cost-effective network offering, as outlined in Appendix 1, the Future Network Strategy

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – CoL/ Colp Future IT Network Strategy

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