



**POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE –
3RD JUNE 2014**

SUBJECT: REPLACEMENT OF MICROSOFT XP AND OFFICE 2003

**REPORT BY: ACTING DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES AND SECTION 151
OFFICER**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Members of the IT Department's plans to deal with the issues of Microsoft withdrawing support for its XP operating system and Office 2003 products.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 Microsoft Windows XP and Office 2003 became unsupported with effect from 9th April 2014 with no further security patches to be issued by Microsoft as standard after this date. This poses a potential risk as security flaws present within these computer software packages could be exploited by malicious / unscrupulous external or internal parties.
- 2.2 To mitigate this risk, the Authority has secured an extended support arrangement from Microsoft that will provide cover until 8th April 2015. This was achieved by utilising an arrangement brokered by Central Government through its Crown Commercial Services (CCS) division. This arrangement is available to all public sector organisations that have a Microsoft Premier Support Agreement (PSA) in place.
- 2.3 The Authority entered into a PSA in sufficient time to access the extended support arrangement in accordance with Financial Regulations and Standing Orders requirements at a cost of £12.5k. CCS has stated that no further costs will be imposed during the period of the agreement.
- 2.4 The Authority must eradicate these unsupported software versions from its estate prior to the expiry of the extended support arrangement. This report explains the strategy to be employed that will both achieve this requirement and update and improve the desktop computing services provided to the Council's ICT users.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The ICT strategy to provide reliable, secure services to the Authority and the PC replacement strategy which underpins the update of corporate desktop computer devices, their Microsoft operating systems and Microsoft Office versions.

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 Microsoft Windows XP, a key piece of software used by a quarter of the world's PCs, became unsupported with effect from 9th April 2014 with no further security patches to be issued by Microsoft as standard after this date. This poses a potential risk as security flaws could be exploited by malicious / unscrupulous external or internal parties.

- 4.2 Microsoft offers an extended support arrangement where important security patches will be provided to counter new threats discovered. Due to the extent of the issues associated with this matter facing the whole of the public sector, Central Government has become involved via its Crown Commercial Services (CCS) division to arrange the provision of extended support for the products for an additional 12 months for qualifying public sector organisations.
- 4.3 For an organisation to qualify it must have a Microsoft Premier Support Agreement (PSA) in place. The Authority entered into a PSA in sufficient time to access the extended support arrangement at a cost of £12.5k.
- 4.4 This extended support arrangement is provided free of charge with schools also covered under this agreement. Arrangements are being put in place to provide advice and guidance to schools to facilitate the eradication of this problem from their sites during the life of this agreement.
- 4.5 Elimination of the unsupported software from the Authority's PCs is to be achieved as part of the IT Department's plans to update the way in which desktop computer services are provided. The intention is to move away from the current means of deploying systems to a technology called Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI). This relies upon a powerful centralised server infrastructure to be based in the Tredomen Data Centre. Such an infrastructure means that the devices placed on users' desks can be of a lesser specification and be configured and managed in a consistent manner from a central point. The deployment of this new technology has been trialled with over 120 users thus far. This trial has resulted in positive feedback in relation to performance and a reduced number of support calls that require attendance at site.
- 4.6 The opportunity to review CCBC's Microsoft licence holding overall has been taken to coincide with the VDI deployment. This process is required as the products in use currently are relatively aged in the main and an inconsistency of the versions in use across the Authority has developed. This process is expected to be concluded by the end of June 2014 and will identify the most economically advantageous licensing model to be adopted to meet CCBC's needs for the future. The resultant agreement will allow the standardisation of the product versions in use and facilitate future upgrades. Cost calculations included later in the report have been based upon our existing licensing arrangements.
- 4.9 The IT Department aims to complete the transition to update to the VDI technology and eradicate the Microsoft software versions in question before the end of the 2014 calendar year to allow a three month contingency period before the extended support arrangement comes to an end. Although many of the systems in use in CCBC have been prepared for deployment via VDI, in order to achieve this target, work to prepare the remainder will have to be prioritised during the May to September 2014 period to facilitate the roll-out of the new technology.
- 4.10 Many technical support, environmental and service provision benefits will be derived from the deployment of this new technology. Such benefits will include access to an updated single version of the Microsoft Office suite of programmes reducing compatibility issues, improved machine start up times, reduced hardware maintenance demands, greater business continuity options and lower power consumption.
- 4.11 The initial deployment plan is to prioritise the larger sites so that the maximum benefit can be derived from the shortest installation time.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no equalities implications relating to the content of this report.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Authority entered into a Microsoft PSA to access an extended support arrangement at a cost of £12.5k. CCS has stated that no further costs should be incurred in relation to the extended support arrangement during the period of the agreement.
- 6.2 Over recent years, the Authority has prudently set aside funds taken from directorate budgets to finance the renewal of its desktop computer estate at the appropriate intervals. Effective management of the PC estate has meant that the Authority has been able to maximise its return on investment by extending its scheduled replacement timetable and wait until the VDI technologies have matured into the viable option currently available. It has been confirmed that the sum held in the PC Replacement Fund as at 31st March 2014 is sufficient to finance this estimated expenditure.
- 6.3 The intention is to undertake this implementation in three phases and the estimated costs for the whole project are outlined below.

Description	Timescale	Cost
Microsoft Premier Support Agreement	In place	£12,500
CCS Extended Support Arrangement	In place	£0
Phase 1 – Elimination of Unsupported Software Versions (through update to VDI and installation of updated Microsoft Office product set). <i>Must be completed before end of extended support period.</i>	Target completion 31/12/14 3 months contingency	£1,022,000
Phase 2 - Conversion of Existing Windows 7 PCs to VDI	3 months immediately following completion of Phase 1	£244,000
Phase 3 – Replacement of remaining PCs with IGEL VDI devices	Target completion 31/03/16	£357,000
TOTAL		£1,635,500

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 As the migration progresses there will be a shift of support from the legacy desk based support to the new central server environment. As such there will be a requirement to move support staff within the IT Department to accommodate the new support requirements.

8. CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 All comments received are contained within the report.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 That the report is noted for information.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 The report contains information for consideration by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 This report is for information only.

Author: - Paul Lewis, Development Manager

Consultees: - Cllr Barbara Jones, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
- Nicole Scammell, Acting Director of Corporate Services and Section 151 Officer
- Gwyn Williams, Acting IT Operations Manager
- Huw Jones, IT Business Manager
- Joanne Jones, Corporate Information Governance Manager and Acting Senior Information Risk Owner
- Jonathan James, Senior Server Development & Support Officer

Background Papers:

Report to CMT on 2nd April 2014 - *Replacement for XP and Microsoft Office*