MEETING REPORT

Meeting: Policy & Resources Committee, 8th January 2024

Agenda item: PR23/048

Report subject: Town Hall & Watermark network system proposal

Report author: K Elliott-Turner, Town Clerk

Urgent network improvements/replacements

Background

A previous staff colleague had skills which enabled him to look after our networking requirements across our two sites (Town Hall and Watermark). Prior to his leaving, attempts were made to source a company to provide network support for the council.

Of those approached to provide a quote for network support, two quoted, and only one of those visited site to fully understand the network and our requirements. They discovered that whilst the previous Clerk was able to keep the systems going through modifications and adaptations, thus making significant cost savings to the council over past years, many individual components either now don't work, or are at the edge of their capability and lifespan. These discovered significant issues now require urgent resolution.

Issues with our WiFi supply at the Watermark are becoming more frequent, not only causing disruption to the Watermark staff operations (managers/supervisors, card machines), but now also to the top floor business units - lease of their rooms includes WiFi provision.

It is therefore vital for our business continuity, that the full network system is overhauled.

Financial requirements

Recommended quote provided by Flotek Group is as follows:

"To confirm our conversation, further to our discovery meeting please find our report below:

The Problem:

We identified the following key areas need resolving:
- The Networking infrastructure on site was looked after by a member of staff who has left the organisation.
- The hardware is of an age in which it requires changing, and is starting to fail.
- There are WiFi Signal issues in the buildings.
- The Guest WiFi service you currently have is not compliant.
- You have frequent internet issues in areas of the organisation which heavily rely on internet connectivity.

How We Solve It:

We will address this by,
- Providing a Support Package for the Network and hardware for the organisation.

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- Provide new Hardware which is utilising the latest technology.
- Install new WiFi 6 Access Points, which will improve signal quality and speed.
- Provide a compliant Guest WiFi Platform.
- Provide a new, dedicated 1Gbps leased line internet connection into the organisation, which will be split between the Council, Office Area and Guest WiFi.

The Proposed Monthly Costs are for the support of the Network and WiFi setup only - there is no support cover within this proposal for items relating to Google G Suite, Telephone System, Advertising Screens or Computer Systems. This support proposal also does not include any support for the Cinema System or its environment, equipment or broadband."

Flotek group

Upfront Costs:

We've listed all the components you need, however some might be in a bundle format.

QTY	Product & Description	Price	Subtotal
1	Draytek Router With Rackmount Kit	£261.00	£261.00
10	WiFi 6 Access Points	£190.00	£1,900.00
8	24 Port PoE Managed Switches	£625.00	£5,000.00
10	Cable Runs Including Materials	£140.00	£1,400.00
8	10GBe SFP Cables	£22.00	£176.00
7	Installation Professional Services	£600.00	£4,200.00
1	Training & Project Management Professional Services	£0.00	£0.00

One Off Total   **£12,937.00**

TaaS - Hardware as a Service

Prefer to pay everything monthly?

Save the cash for your core business and wave goodbye to **One-time costs,** just simply choose a term:

Term	Monthly Payment
36 Months	£ 449.17

Please note all prices exclude VAT

Notes:

Installation would be a mixture of on site and remote works.

Our aim would be to configure the hardware as much as possible remotely before site attendance.

A full installation and implementation plan would be discussed and advised before works commence.

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This particular company, Flotek Group, regularly works with Microshade VSM – provider of our IT systems support (Citrix), and indeed is recommended by them.

Risk, Resource & Policy Implications

<u>Risk Implications</u>
- By not carrying out this required work, there is significant risk to Ivybridge Town Council's business continuity
- The Watermark – risk to business floor occupancy levels should network systems not function correctly or reliably (as provided for in business unit leases with ITC), loss of sales in café and cinema when networking issues prevent card transactions
- Town Council operations in general – staff unable to use IT and network systems to carry out council's day to day functions and services

<u>Policy Implications</u>
- Financial Regulations state that for proposed expenditure between £3,000 and £25,000 three quotations should be sought – as outlined above, and due to complex nature of our network system and set up, and urgent need for properly functioning systems, members are asked to consider the one recommended quote for this overhaul work
- Financial Regulations state that proposed expenditure above £5,000 should be recommended by committee for council's approval

<u>Resource Implications</u>
Total upfront costs £12,937 plus vat - full proposal detail attached. There is an option to pay monthly over a 36 month period, however there is interest attached and this would incur an additional £3,233.12 on the upfront costs. As we have sufficient funds to meet the upfront costs, the preferred option is to pay outright. Funds available from Watermark EMR, Precept Support Grant budget.

PROPOSAL: To recommend to Council that the quote from Flotek of £12,937 plus vat for networking systems overhaul in The Watermark and Town Hall, is accepted, with work to be carried out at the earliest opportunity