

**Manchester City Council
Report for Information**

Report to: Audit Committee – 5 October 2017

Subject: ICT Out of Hours Provision

Report of: Bob Brown, Chief Information Officer
Sarah Fannon, Interim Head of Service Operations, ICT

Summary

Following the internal audit on ICT incident management conducted in 2016 and the subsequent report, it was recommended that ICT review and formalise the departments out of hours staffing arrangements. The review covered working provisions in terms of cover, expectations, terms and conditions and any additional payments.

Recommendations

Committee members are requested to consider the contents of the report and confirm assurance is provided by the proposed approach.

Wards Affected: All

Contact Officers:

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

None

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Out of hours cover in ICT is currently provided on a voluntary goodwill basis with no consistent arrangements or consistent remuneration across teams within the department.
- 1.2 The 2016 internal audit report identified the lack of a formalised arrangement; historically there have been no issues providing adequate support and over the last 12 months ICT have delivered a reliable, robust and stable out of hour's provision. However ICT acknowledges that this informality presents a risk outside of core hours in terms of ensuring the provision and availability of critical services, such as telephony, MiCare, SAP, Genifax, Academy, One System, PARIS and responding to a major incident.
- 1.3 The service disruption caused by a major incident could negatively impact the Council's ability to provide services to residents, staff and customers, as well as resulting in significant financial and reputational damage.
- 1.4 The approach to mitigate this risk will be to formalise out of hours cover by adding the obligatory requirement to the contract of all permanent and fixed term ICT staff, approximately 166, and standardising remuneration for out of hours provision. It is worth noting that staff will only receive additional payments if called upon to provide out of hours support.
- 1.5 This process is complicated by the fact ICT must adhere to the European Union Working Time Directive. However work is underway, and will be completed as soon as is practicably possible

2. Progress to date

- 2.1 As a result of Head of Service leaving the organisation, there have been number of personnel changes in ICT since the issuing of the internal audit report. Ownership of this action is now confirmed within the team and progress is being made.
- 2.2 Meetings have taken place between the Interim Head of Service Operations and Directorate HR Business Partner to pursue the contractual change required and to discuss options available and an approach. Trade Union advice, guidance and consultation will also be sought.
- 2.3 It is expected that there will be a staff consultation period of between 2 weeks to 3 months depending outcome of the initial consultation meetings.
- 2.4 ICT have looked at out of hours provision in other local authorities both in Greater Manchester and across the UK. Findings are that most local authorities at best, are also operating a similar model to Manchester City Council in terms of the out of hours provision being purely on a volunteer basis with no standardisation in payments. Furthermore, some LA's have no out of hours provision at all.

- 2.6 A number of private sector organisations arrangements have also been considered to ensure parity with industry best practices. All those consulted had formal out of hours support included within all employee contracts and a standardised remuneration package.
- 2.7 Considerable work has already been undertaken to implement a service catalogue which identifies the critical systems and the underpinning support requirements including operational working hours. This greatly assists in modelling the correct service provision for out of hours support. Contact has also already been made with key stakeholders across the directorates to ensure that any formalised out of hours provision is fit for purpose.

3. Management of Risk

- 3.1 The Council's continued investment in infrastructure, underpinned by the ICT capital investment strategy, has and will continue to deliver an increasingly robust, stable and fit for purpose platform. This has resulted in a reduction in the number of major incidents particularly those occurring out of hours, which has reduced the reliance on the staff who provide the current out of hours service on a voluntary basis. With further capital investment in the Council's IT infrastructure and the delivery of 'Our ICT Strategy' it is expected that this downward trend in the number of major incidents will continue.

4. Delivery Steps

- 4.1 Continued engagement with the Business (Heads of Service/Key Stakeholders and Strategic Business Partners) and the consideration of their requirements in order to ensure the fit for purposeness of the approach.
- 4.2 Continued engagement with HR and initial conversations to take place with Trade Union representatives in order agree a standardised compensation model and to ensure adherence to the correct procedures, policies and standards.
- 4.3 Communication with all ICT employees followed by a consultation period.
- 4.4 Once agreed and amendments made to employee contracts, the new formalised out of hours support arrangements will be communicated to the business.
- 4.5 In parallel activities such as data centre and disaster recovery will continue to ensure there is a robust, resilient and stable IT infrastructure.

4. Timeline and Plan (To be overseen by ICT Board)

- 4.1 Proposed High Level Plan

Activity	Timescale
Confirmation of business's requirements	Oct '17 - Nov '17

Design and provision of service model	Dec '17 - Jan 1'18
HR and Trade Union activities	Feb '18 - Mar '18
Employee Consultation	Mar '18 - May '18
Contract amendment issued	May '18 - Jun '18
Employee sign off	Jun '18 - Jul '18

5. Conclusion and recommendations

- 5.1 Whilst ICT accept there is risk due to the informal and disparate nature of out of hours service support, steps are being taken to appropriately address this and IT infrastructure improvements continue to lessen possible impact.