

FINANCE AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

PILOT OF TELEPHONE SYSTEM USING VOICE OVER IP

15TH APRIL 2003

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

ABSTRACT

This report advises the committee of a pilot Voice over IP telephone system at the IT Department and the ICT section of Education at Montrose Road, Forfar.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the committee agree to allocate £23,000 from existing uncommitted balances in the IT Repairs and Renewal Fund to enable an initial pilot of Voice over IP technology.

2. BACKGROUND

At present the voice and data communications networks are completely separate systems. However since the successful implementation of AngusNet the data networks at the majority of Council sites are now capable of carrying internal voice telephone calls over the existing Council infrastructure. This is due mainly to the increase in network bandwidth and quality of service now available.

In the medium to long term, it is anticipated that deploying a Voice over IP (VoIP) telephone systems across Council sites could make savings over the running costs of the existing voice network, as well as offering significant operational benefits which potentially include :-

- Free calls between sites.
- Free transfer of calls between sites - eliminating the need for callers to the council being advised to redial another number.
- A common voicemail package (delivered to handset or to email account).
- Simplification of telephone numbering at sites where tie lines are not cost effective.
- Retention of direct dial numbering ranges and extending these facilities to smaller offices as they are connected.
- Providing virtual contact centres for customer resource management CRM e.g. Accessline & access office staff could provide the same functionality.
- Ability to forward calls to different location e.g. home number, mobile handset or other extn as required.

3. PROPOSAL

There is currently a requirement to purchase a new PABX telephone system at the ICT Centre. It is therefore proposed to pilot a Voice over IP telephone system instead at similar cost and to also include the Department of Information Technology in this pilot.

The effectiveness of this pilot will be measured after installation to ascertain the savings and benefits that can be made should this technology be adopted across the Council.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The estimated cost to complete the pilot project is £23,000 which can be contained within the uncommitted balances within the IT Renewals and Repair fund.

5. HUMAN RIGHTS

There are no human rights implications arising from this report.

6. CONSULTATION

The Chief Executive and the Directors of Finance and Law & Administration have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

A Greenhill
Director of Information Technology

NOTE: No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above Report.