

The Highland Council	Agenda Item	22
Resources Committee – 27th May 2015	Report No	RES/49/15

Pathfinder North – Transition to Scottish Wide Area Network

Report by Depute Chief Executive / Director of Corporate Development

Summary

This report updates Members on the current status of Pathfinder North (PFN) which is the five local authorities shared services partnership comprising of Argyle & Bute Council, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Highland Council, Moray Council and Orkney Islands Council, and its membership within the new Scottish Wide Area Network Partnership (SWAN).

A report to Highland Council on March 13th 2014 recommended that Highland Council acting as the Lead Authority within the Pathfinder North Partnership to enter into a contract for the provision of broadband services as part of the (SWAN) initiative. The recommendations in the report were approved and Member approval was also given at this time for the Detailed Business Case and associated savings. The contract was signed in October 2014 and the purpose of this report is to update members on the progress to transition services onto SWAN and the associated savings position.

1. Background

- 1.1 The aim of the SWAN initiative is to procure and implement a single telecommunications and network service available for use by any and potentially all, public service organisations within Scotland. SWAN will enable infrastructure and service sharing which will over time replace the existing traditional model where individual public sector bodies are required to procure, implement and maintain network infrastructure specific to their own organisation.
- 1.2 One of the key benefits of the contract is pricing for public sector broadband and shared services that reduces progressively as more customers take the available services. This fits well with the Scottish Governments drive to use more shared services and should ensure that PfN Partners benefit from increasingly competitive pricing throughout the term of the contract. The Highland Council is at the forefront of this approach having been a founding Partner of the national procurement on behalf of the Pathfinder North Partners and a Vanguard SWAN Member.

2 Transition Progress

- 2.1 The Pathfinder North Partnership is scheduled to begin its transition onto

SWAN in November 2015. The Transition for all of the other Vanguard Members is well underway but progress has been significantly slower than anticipated for a variety of reasons. This has included network stability issues and delays to the delivery of the core infrastructure that underpins the network.

- 2.2 As a result of the issues experienced to date an independent audit has been commissioned by National Services Scotland (NSS) who is the contracting Authority on behalf of all other SWAN Members, and Capita, the SWAN Supplier. This is to evaluate the processes and resource underpinning the transition onto SWAN and the ongoing support arrangements.
- 2.3 It would be unreasonable to expect a programme of this size and complexity to be without its challenges. It is anticipated that all major issues will have been resolved in advance of the PfN Transition to SWAN and as such Highland Council's Transition is expected to complete by September 2016 as planned.

3 PfN Transition Planning

- 3.1 The PfN Transition is a complex and challenging project with some 750 sites to be migrated onto SWAN across a diverse estate and large geographical area. Detailed planning is in progress and will take place over the next few months in conjunction with the supplier, the PfN Management Team and the Partner Teams. Lessons learned from transitions currently in progress are being incorporated into the planning process.
- 3.2 In order that sufficient time has been allocated to deal with any issues and to build maximum flexibility into the planning the time slot for the Transition will run from November 2015 – September 2016. To ensure the work is properly managed and supported Highland Council has appointed a dedicated SWAN Team within ICT Services for the duration of the Transition.
- 3.3 Key dates for Transition activity are as detailed below and Members will be updated in future progress reports;

Activity :	Date :
Confirmation of order requirements by site	19.06.15
Detailed scheduling of transition by site	24.07.15
Project documentation sign off	03.08.15
Completion of Technical Design	09.09.15
Transition starts for early adopter sites	02.11.15
Main transition starts	05.01.16
Transition completes	20.09.16

4. Budget

- 4.1 The report to Council on March 13th 2014 and the associated Detailed Business case also set out the financial position of the proposed SWAN Contract and the expected savings, and to date this position has not changed.
- 4.2 The Detailed Business Case also noted that each Council within PfN should

individually carry out an assessment of potential costs associated with the Transition including costs for Construction Design and Management (CDM), resources and minor construction works. Highland Council has now completed that exercise and assesses these additional costs as approximately £1.4m. Highland Council is meeting its costs through existing capital provision and accrued savings from the current Pathfinder contract (£800k capital and £600k revenue) and as such these costs do not present a budget pressure. Costs are approximated as they will be fully determined as result of site surveys which will be completed in phases throughout the transition.

5 Developing The Partnership

5.1 The focus for the PfN Management Team at this time is setting the foundations for a successful Transition to SWAN for the current Pathfinder North Partners. However, the nature of the SWAN contract means that new services will be added over the coming months and as more members join, across Scotland, the costs reduce. Work is already underway to identify opportunities to develop the Partnership and as the Transition progresses work in this area will increase and is likely to include;

- Identifying opportunities to increase partner numbers with public sector organisations with a fit to PfN and the potential creation of a Scotland North SWAN Hub
- Working with existing Partners to identify further opportunities to maximise the benefit of the SWAN contract including further sharing of services
- Working with other SWAN Members to identify opportunities to share services and influence the further development of SWAN itself.

6. Implications

6.1 Resource

The recruitment of a Project Team to manage the Highland Councils transition on SWAN has recently been completed.

The PfN Team will continue to work with Capita and all Partners to manage costs and ensure spend is kept to a minimum.

6.2 Legal

Membership of SWAN represents a different contractual relationship between the supplier and the PfN Partners to the current arrangements. The PfN Management Team is working with the Highland Council Legal Team to ensure all parties interests and obligations are managed appropriately prior to an order for services being placed.

6.3 Equalities

There are no equalities implications at this time

6.4 Climate Change/ Carbon Clever

The provision of a new wide area network is to support the continued development and delivery of digital services. The potential benefits of this can include a contribution to the Councils Carbon Clever initiative but these are captured elsewhere and there are no specific implications to be noted in this report.

6.5 Risk

SWAN Programme Risks

SWAN Programme risks are captured and managed by National Services Scotland (NSS) as the Contracting Authority with reporting coming through the SWAN Management Board (SMB). PfN is represented at the SMB by the PfN Partnerships Manager and risks are tracked accordingly.

Risk management is also undertaken by the PfN Partnership Management Team as per Prince 2 Project Management discipline. Governance is provided by the PfN Management Board with any Highland Council specific risks managed as per Highland Council policy and recorded on Highland Councils Corporate Risks Register if required.

6.5.1 Costs

The nature of the Project means that there remain a number of unknowns with regard to costs specifically associated with (CDM) and any minor enabling works. These will be understood as surveys are completed through the transition; the PfN Team will continue to work with Capita and all Partners to manage the risk.

6.5 Gaelic & Rural Implications

There are no implications at this time.

7. Recommendation

Members are asked to;

- i) Note progress with regard to the transition planning
- ii) Note the budget position.

Designation: Michelle Morris, Depute Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Development

Date: 11.5.2015

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Background Papers: