

Report from: Simon Oliver Director: Digital Transformation and Councillor Clive Stevens

Agile Working ICT Project

The background...

1) In March 2018 a Social Care proposal was approved by Cabinet to invest in tablets for the Children's and Adult Care Services to enable agile/mobile working and bring in efficiencies and meet some Ofsted recommendations amongst other things. The project was commenced to deliver service improvements quickly (to ASC within 1 year and to Children's Services by 2020). It was run as a separate project due to expected delays in the FSA Programme (Future State Assessment, approved by Cabinet in July 2018) which could also deliver the technology.

2) The project experienced a series of delays, both technical and operational. A small number of pilot devices were deployed with the mobile application (a cut-down version of the case management system which holds just the records needed and synchronises changes with the main system), and this has generated some valuable feedback. One of the key findings is that the Council has been unable to obtain supplier assertions that the mobile software meets the security standards expected by Information Assurance officers. In addition, it has been identified that a variety of different devices is required to meet the different workstyles across the services (one type does not fit all).

3) The technical aspects for the Agile Working pilot were essentially a short-term tactical solution which was developed prior to the FSA Programme being established with its long-term solution not ready to deploy. However, now that the IT Transformation Programme (the successor to the FSA Programme) is developing its roll-out schedule, it would seem sensible for the Care Services to now get the properly developed long-term solution (which is fully supported and robust) when the timelines for deployment of either solution appear to be almost identical (end 2020)

4) In Nov 2019 all the money attributed for the laptops/tablets, and small amount of equipment used for trials, has been transferred back to the IT department. This money will be utilised to procure the equipment which will be delivered as part of the IT Transformation Programme, and the equipment is being used elsewhere for other trials.

5) It seems that the business case in March 2018 didn't quantify the benefits nor how they would be achieved or monitored and as the project delivery has not been met, the anticipated service improvements haven't been realised thus not reducing cost pressures on ASC.

ICT's offer...

6) The new IT approach is to supply PC's, laptops etc with Windows10 (W10) and to configure them for Cloud Computing so that the applications run on the Cloud and not on the PC. This also means that all hardware will be required to have more robust security protocols (and 4G). Non W10 hardware like iPads/Android will have their Council software operate in a contained part of the software. This "contained area" will be invisible to the user but provide protection if there are other non-Council apps running.

7) Therefore all Council applications (nearly 800 of them) need to be able to run on W10; some of our existing apps can do this, some need upgrades and some legacy software needs replacement software as it cannot be upgraded.

8) In addition to considering whether software is compatible with W10, Information Assurance Officers are establishing whether our software meets current security standards and is compatible with GDPR legislation. The mobile application to be used by Social Care needs to meet these standards, and at present, we do not have confirmation whether it can. It is thought any development or assurance work to achieve/assure these standards, could take 6 months or more.

9) When the new devices and the new mobile application are released, it will enable social workers to update information wherever they are sited without returning to the office. Referrals will be able to be made quicker and bring more confidence to users of the care services. In addition, they will be able to meet the ofsted requirements about children's photo albums (life histories). These benefits directly brought about by the scope of the Agile Working Project will be augmented by the wider collaboration and productivity improvements which will be made available through the IT Transformation Programme.

The wider costs to BCC...

10) It seems there still isn't a clearly defined and available benefits document for the Agile Working Project. But, since improved efficiency of operation is expected and hasn't occurred, it could be costly. We are entering a phase of carer shortages (especially for homecare) then every 5% improvement in efficiency will make a huge saving on costs to the service, £millions or more.

11) The delivery of the Agile Working benefits are now part of the IT Transformation Programme and requires better coordination with Children's and Adult Care Services.