

SCRUTINY COMMISSION 31st January 2023

Report Title	Scrutiny Review into ICT Value for Money
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List of Appendices

Appendix A – Scrutiny Review – ICT Value for Money Draft Scoping Document

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To provide the Scrutiny Commission with an initial scoping document to help set out the terms of reference for a scrutiny review into ICT Value for Money.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report introduces the draft scoping document that sets the terms of reference for a scrutiny review of the value for money of the Council's Information, communications and technology (ICT) services.
- 2.2 Just under half of the Council's £7.696 million annual budget for ICT services is spent on services provided to it by West Northamptonshire Council.
- 2.3 The Council's ICT services are at a critical juncture. The Council is rapidly approaching a point where it will be considering the future options for the service, including its disaggregation from West Northamptonshire Council. An understanding of the value for money of the arrangements in place would be of significant benefit for the Council.
- 2.4 The request for the scrutiny review and the draft scoping document have been endorsed by the Chair of the Finance and Resources Scrutiny Committee and has been shared with members of that committee for feedback.
- 2.5 The Scrutiny Commission is being asked to consider and agree the scope for the review, along with its membership and timescale and then add the review to the Scrutiny Workplan to be conducted by the Finance and Resources Scrutiny Committee to carry out the review within the parameters agreed.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Scrutiny Commission:
- (a) Consider the draft ICT Value for Money scoping document as a basis for the scrutiny review and agree that it be added to the Scrutiny Workplan
 - (b) Propose a non-executive elected member to act as the political lead for this scrutiny review.
 - (c) Agree that the Assistant Chief Executive is appointed as the officer lead for this scrutiny review.
 - (d) Consider the high-level timeline it intends to take for completion of this review, noting the constraints set out within the draft scoping document.
 - (e) Identify any desired outcomes it would intend to deliver as part of this review.
 - (f) Identify any groups or individuals that it would want to be engaged or co-opted on to the review.
- 3.2 The reasons for the recommendations are summarised as follows:
- (a) To instigate a scrutiny review as requested by the Chair of Finance and Resources Scrutiny Committee.
 - (b) To inform and develop the scope of the scrutiny review, ensuring clear outcomes are achievable.

4. Report Background

Context

- 4.1 As with most other medium to large organisations, the effectiveness of ICT services are fundamental to the success of the Council, both now and in the future. Pretty much all services are reliant on ICT systems. The Council's ability to respond to the challenges ahead are inextricably linked to how effectively it can utilise ICT solutions.
- 4.2 Just under half of the Council's £7.696 million annual budget for ICT services is spent on services provided to it by West Northamptonshire Council.
- 4.3 The decisions that relate to how the ICT were set up were made before the existence of both North and West Northamptonshire councils. The Council is keen to be able to make conscious decisions for itself, informed by contemporary and impartial information, and in line with its Corporate Plan.
- 4.4 The financial pressures facing the Council are significant. Making sure the Council's ICT arrangements are affordable, effective and provide value for money in the future is vitally important.

Scoping Document

- 4.5 This report introduces the draft scoping document that sets the terms of reference for the scrutiny review. This is set out as Appendix 1. The request for the scrutiny review and the draft scoping document have been endorsed by the Chair of the Finance and Resources Scrutiny Committee and has been shared with members of that committee for feedback.

- 4.6 The Scrutiny Commission is being asked to consider and agree the scope for the review, along with its membership and timescale and then assign the task to the Finance and Resources Scrutiny Committee to carry out the review within the parameters agreed.

5. Issues and Choices

- 5.1 The Council's ICT services are at a critical juncture. The Council is rapidly approaching a point where it will be considering the future options for the service, including its disaggregation from West Northamptonshire Council. An understanding of the value for money of the arrangements in place would be of significant benefit for the Council and help inform its future choices.
- 5.2 In order to request the Finance and Resources Scrutiny Committee to carry out the scrutiny review, the Scrutiny Commission will need to:
- (a) Agree that the review is added to the Scrutiny Workplan
 - (b) Consider the draft ICT Value for Money scoping document as a basis for the scrutiny review
 - (c) Agree the name of the Task and Finish Group
 - (d) Agree the Task and Finish Group's membership
 - (e) Propose a non-executive elected member to act as the political lead for the scrutiny review (who will also chair the group meetings)
 - (f) Agree that a Vice Chair will be appointed by the Task and Finish Group at its first meeting
 - (g) Approve a senior officer to be appointed as the officer lead for this scrutiny review. The report recommends that this is the Assistant Chief Executive who is responsible for ICT services at the Council.
 - (h) Consider the high-level timeline set out for completion of this review. It will be important to note the constraints set out within the draft scoping document.
 - (i) Identify any desired outcomes it would intend to deliver as part of this review.
 - (j) Identify any groups or individuals that it would want to be engaged or co-opted on to the review.
- 5.3 The Scrutiny Commission may identify further factors to be included within the Scrutiny Review.

6 Implications (including financial implications)

6.1 Resources and Financial

- 6.1.1 The budgetary values associated with the ICT services provided to North Northamptonshire Council, in particular those that it does not directly control that are provided by West Northamptonshire Council, are significant and fundamental to this report and its recommendations.

6.2 Legal and Governance

- 6.2.1 The Scrutiny Procedure Rules state that the Scrutiny Commission owns the Scrutiny Workplan. A Task and Finish Group may only be appointed by the Commission if the review is added to the Workplan.
- 6.2.2 The Chair of the Finance and Resources Scrutiny Committee may request that a matter is included on the Scrutiny Commission Workplan.

6.3 Risk

- 6.3.1 There are no significant risks associated with the recommendations of this report.

6.4 Consultation

- 6.4.1 Any consultation, if required, could be considered as part of the scrutiny review.

6.5 Climate Impact

- 6.5.1 Any climate impact could be considered as part of the scrutiny review.

6.6 Community Impact

- 6.6.1 Any community impact could be considered as part of the scrutiny review.

7 Background Papers

- 7.1 None