



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	To seek Committee approval to use the NIRAN Public sector framework agreement for the renewal of the Council's Internet Service Provision.
Date:	20 November 2009
Reporting Officer:	Rose Crozier, Head of ISB, ext 4200
Contact Officer:	Paul Gribben, IS Portfolio Manager, ext 4237

Background

The current contract for internet service provision is due to be renewed.

This service provides access to:

1. The internet from all PCs on the council's network,
2. External Email services,
3. Council hosted websites to public users of the internet e.g. www.belfastcity.gov.uk
4. Remote IT services e.g. access to council's network for home working.

The current cost of internet service provision is £20,000 per year and is paid out of revenue.

A new public sector framework agreement has been established by Queens University for the provision of internet services in the region. The Northern Ireland Regional Area Network (NIRAN) was developed as a broadband computer network for the tertiary education and public sector in Northern Ireland.

The NIRAN network delivers high-speed internet access to some thirty education and public sector institutions across the region. Whilst its core membership lies in higher and further education, NIRAN can also provide internet connectivity to a broader range of customer including libraries, local authorities, and lifelong learning organisations.

NIRAN provides cost effective high speed internet access which compares favourably to larger internet service providers.

Key Issues

The bandwidth of the current internet service provider (ISP) is 10Mbits. This is a single circuit coming in to ISB at the Gloucester Street premises.

The service from NIRAN provides a 100Mbits service offering 10 times the capacity of the current service.

As report to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 23rd May 2008 set out the benefits of having a 2nd connection to the internet (called a point of presence or POP) based at the 2nd server site at the Duncrue complex. The main reason for having a 2nd internet connection at Duncrue is to have a contingency for external access to the internet (and thus backup web page and email services) in the instance of the Gloucester St site being lost for any reason.

The low cost of the NIRAN offering will allow ISB to implement the 2nd point of presence, improving resilience and increasing capacity and performance for the same annual cost as the current arrangement which only provides for a single circuit.

There will be a requirement to implement additional security equipment in the form of a firewall to secure the 2nd POP at Duncrue. A firewall is a part of a computer system or network that is designed to block unauthorised access while permitting authorised communications. The cost of implementing a second firewall will have an initial cost of £20,000 with an annual support cost of £2,000.

Given that a public sector framework is already in place the Council will not have to go to public tender. This has been verified by the Council's Procurement Manager.

Resource Implications

Financial Issues

2 x internet circuits (Contracted for 3years)

Installation Costs: **£10,000**

Annual Rental: **£19,000**

Firewall to secure 2nd POP: **£20,000**

Annual support and maintenance: **£2,000**

Total initial cost to be funded from revenue **£30,000**

Total Annual cost to be funded from revenue **£21,000**

Human Resources

None

Asset and Other Implications

None

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Council procures 2 circuits for internet service provision off the NIRAN framework to enable a second POP to be implemented at Duncrue and to increase internet bandwidth from 10Mbits to 100Mbits.

It is also recommended that a firewall is procured to provide security at the second site.

Decision Tracking

Officer responsible: Rose Crozier, Head of ISB

Action to be completed by: February 2010

Documents Attached

Key to Abbreviations

ISB Information Services Belfast
NIRAN Northern Ireland Regional Area Network
ISP Internet Service Provider
POP Point of Presence

Documents Attached

None

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