

**Extract from the draft minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 10
October 2012**

Agenda item 10 – Report of the Scrutiny task group – ICT review

In the absence of the chair of the working group, the Democratic Services Manager gave a brief introduction to the work of the scrutiny task group. She emphasised that throughout the course of the review, the task group had worked very closely with officers from ICT and those involved in the commissioning review and the Cabinet Member had also had the opportunity to comment. As a result, officers were fully supportive of the recommendations.

Councillor Walklett, as the Cabinet Member responsible for ICT, was invited to give his view. He commended the work of the task group who in a very short space of time had studied a considerable amount of paperwork and got to grips with a lot of detailed information. He concurred with their views and acknowledged their recommendations. He referred to section 9.2 of the report which referred to a Cabinet Member Working group to support the ICT commissioning review. He had invited nominations by the group leaders and directly with members but sadly as only two members had come forward he had decided that it would not be effective to run a working group with such a small number. He suggested that during the course of the review, some members of the working group had been particularly interested in members ICT and he would be happy to look for opportunities for Councillors Wheeler and Chard to continue to input to this issue, working with Democratic Services and ICT. It had been agreed that the business case for the ICT review would go to the budget scrutiny working group and a meeting was being arranged in November for this purpose before the report went to Cabinet. The working group had also raised the issue of Cheltenham Festivals and the viability of continued support from the council's ICT services. He was pleased to report that he had already taken action on this and an amicable agreement had been reached whereby the festivals would set up their own ICT services separate from the council.

The chair invited members to consider the next steps.

Councillor Smith declared an interest at this point as he worked for a company which was setting up an external ICT service for a local authority. He suggested that the council should be looking to buy in ICT services rather than ongoing significant capital expenditure in ICT infrastructure. He cautioned the Cabinet in taking advice from officers who were currently involved in providing ICT services as it may be difficult for them to give an unbiased view. He urged the Cabinet Member to challenge any assumptions very carefully.

The Cabinet Member said that four options were being considered including outsourcing and sharing with another provider. He believed that capital investment was necessary to ensure sustainability of ICT and there was evidence to support that ICT services could be provided more cheaply by sharing the service with another partner. On that basis, a shared service was his current preference. He also added that he was satisfied that the new people were being brought into ICT who could offer a fresh viewpoint. The report on

the business options and the corresponding business cases would be presented to Cabinet on 13 December 2012.

Councillor Colin Hay, who had arrived late at the meeting at 6.50 pm, was invited by the chair to add any comments as chair of the working group. Councillor Hay highlighted the issues raised in the report regarding the lack of investment in the infrastructure and the importance of role of the Senior Leadership Team where it was acknowledged that there had been a gap for a period of time.

Members commented that it was a very good report. Although they might welcome comments from Council, they agreed given the urgency that they should endorse the recommendations for forwarding to Cabinet on 16 October 2012.

Resolved that

- 1. the recommendations of the scrutiny task group ICT review be endorsed and forwarded to the next meeting of Cabinet**
- 2. Councillor Hay has further discussions with the working group and the Cabinet Member to consider whether there was an ongoing role for the task group in carrying out further scrutiny of key stages in the ICT commissioning review and/or driving the delivery of members ICT.**