

Report to	<b>Governance Committee</b>
Date	<b>23 September 2015</b>
By	<b>IT Strategy Manager</b>
Title of Report	<b>IT Progress Update</b>
Purpose of Report	<b>To advise the Committee on the status of IT</b>

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**Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to note:**

- 1) There is considerable work to be carried out to move IT from its current audit assessment category of Limited Assurance**
  - 2) That suitable controls will be in place to mitigate all high priority IT risks by 29 January 2016**
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**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This report has been produced in response to the Committee's request for an IT Update at their last meeting in July 2015.
- 1.2 An IT audit carried out at the end of April 2015 assessed IT as having an overall category of assurance rating of 'Limited'. This paper describes the activity within the IT function since the audit and further improvements that will be made throughout this financial year.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 Historically, the focus of IT has been to support business as usual activity with little attention being given to housekeeping (governance) and the future needs of the organisation.
- 2.2 The majority of IT services were delivered through an outsourced model supplied by Advanced 365. This contract had been left to run itself with the exception of monthly service meetings which focussed on the front line service desk function.
- 2.3 The contracting of an IT professional in October 2013 enabled the commercial value of the outsourced contract to be assessed and monies have been clawed back for services that were not delivered. Notwithstanding this, the performance of several contracted background functions were not referenced in the Monthly Service Reports.
- 2.4 A significant single contributory factor to the Limited Assurance classification was as a consequence of SDNPA not having visibility of a number these background services. Examples included daily backups, the implementation of operating system and firewall security patches, the recording of failed login attempts and general network monitoring. Without such visibility SDNPA was not in a position to be able to evidence the quantitative or qualitative services and therefore could only assume such services were being carried out behind the scenes.
- 2.5 In summary the audit made 14 recommendations for improvement; 6 are listed as high priority, 7 are medium priority and 1 is low priority.
- 2.6 Since the audit, SDNPA has ceased contracting with Advanced 365 and has replaced the delivery of the supplied services through contracts with 3 new providers to cover desk side support, enterprise infrastructure hosting and support and printing.
- 2.7 The new contracts came into effect on 29 June 2015.

- 2.8 As part of the arrangements contained within the new contracts, the outsourced services were extended to cover a number of functions previously performed in-house by the ICT Lead with the aim of creating additional time for the permanent IT officer to focus on service delivery improvements.
- 2.9 The permanent ICT Lead left the organisation at the end of June 2014 and for the past year the role has been filled by interim staff who primarily continued to focus on supporting the day to day operations of the organisation. Most recently the role was upgraded and a permanent IT Strategy Manager joined the organisation on 1 July 2015.
- 2.10 The switch to new service providers offered an excellent opportunity to review the current underlying infrastructure and assess its suitability for the size of organisation and the type of business conducted.
- 2.11 The outcomes from the review included the removal of Citrix (to reduce operating costs and simplify logging on from remote locations), a refresh of the thin client terminals in the offices (to support the simplified logging in process), a refresh of the office printers (to improve performance and reliability whilst reducing operating costs) and replacement of the type of data connectivity between the offices and the data centre (to align it to our business needs and reduce operating costs).

### **3. Since 1 July 2015**

- 3.1 Since being in post the IT Strategy Manager has focussed his time on 3 specific areas. In no particular order they are:
- Working closely with the 3 new service providers to keep disruption to the business down to a minimum during the transition and whilst the new technologies and ways of working bed down
  - Meeting with directors and heads of teams on a one to one basis to learn more about what they and their teams do and to assess how well the existing IT systems support the operational and management demands of the organisation
  - Reviewing the output from the IT audit carried out earlier in the year with a view to mitigating the identified risks
- 3.2 With specific reference to the audit report, work has already started on 13 of the 14 recommendations and the IT Strategy Manager plans to have over 50% of the recommendations implemented before the end of the financial year.
- 3.3 Scheduled activity includes a visit to the data hosting provider (September 2015) to review a penetration report produced by a specialist company to independently assess the security arrangements supporting the infrastructure.
- 3.4 The IT Strategy Manager has written to all the companies providing IT systems and services to SDNPA to incorporate their disaster recovery arrangements into SDNPA's own disaster recovery plan.
- 3.5 The IT Strategy Manager has spent time with the new outsourced providers in defining the measures and activities on which he will require regular reports.
- 3.6 The activities described above together with monitoring the quality of service will address the majority of the risks highlighted in the report. The final requirement is the development of the IT Strategy which will be presented to the P&P Committee at the end of the year.
- 3.7 All high priority risks will be addressed by 29 January 2016, medium priority risks by 29 April and the low priority risk by 1 July 2016.

### **4. Resources**

- 4.1 All remedial work is to be completed using existing resources and officer capacity.

### **5. Risk management**

- 5.1 The risks identified in the IT Audit Report have been recorded and as new measures and controls are brought in they will be recorded against the relevant risk(s).

**6. Human Rights, Equalities, Health and Safety**

6.1 There are no implications arising from this report'.

**7. Sustainability**

7.1 Any activity taken to mitigate the IT risks will be formed taking account of sustainability considerations. This will include the environmental impact of any solution, the social and economic impact on the National Park Area of placing this work either internally or externally and the robustness of the solution over the longer term.

**8. External Consultees**

8.1 None.

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Appendices	N/A
SDNPA Consultees	Chief Executive Officer, Director of Corporate Services, Director of Operations, Director of Strategy and Partnerships, Director of Planning, Chief Finance Officer & Monitoring Officer
Background Documents	Internal Audit Annual Report and Opinion 2014-15 dated 14 July 2015 <a href="http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/GOV_2015July14-Agenda-Item-15.pdf">http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/GOV_2015July14-Agenda-Item-15.pdf</a>