## Management Board

## Renewing and improving the ICT Infrastructure and Administration Desktop

*Note from the Director of Programmes and Project Development (PICT)*

**Purpose**
1. This paper provides information on the major renewal and enhancement exercise for the Parliamentary ICT infrastructure and desktop which is now moving from planning into implementation and will have significant impacts during 2009 and into 2010 on all staff in both Houses using desktop and applications on the Parliamentary Network.

2. It also explains how consultation and communication with users will be managed and how all possible measures will be taken to avoid disruption to work.

3. Finally, the paper asks the Management Board to consider and give a steer to the User Engagement Project Board (described below) on the extent to which it regards this exercise as an opportunity to promote a more unified style of working, because this will affect the terms of consultation and the benefits to be achieved.  The issues are outlined below in paragraphs 12-14.

4. At this stage the implementation of the new desktop environment will affect the staff of both Houses, but not Members.  Members' desktops will also be updated in due course, enabling PICT to manage a technical environment which is as standard as possible. Members of both Houses have already migrated to Microsoft Windows XP, which will remain in "extended support" until 2014.  The timing of the Member upgrade will therefore be linked to the next general election (for new Members of the Commons) and otherwise to cyclical hardware replacement.  Engagement and consultation with Members on these issues is out of scope of this paper.

**Actions for the Board**
5. The Management Board is invited to take note of the information presented in the paper and decide on the style of the implementation and the desired balance between standardisation and local adaptation.

**Drivers for the exercise**
6. There are three main reasons for undertaking a major renewal of the infrastructure and desktop environment as an integrated exercise in 2009/10:

    a. The introduction of more standard and more actively managed hardware and software using up to date technologies is urgently needed to reduce the incidence of faults, avoid further breakdowns and reduce risks of systemic failure affecting critical systems and working processes.  This will include a great deal

which will be invisible to the desktop user, but will introduce a much more reliable and resilient service.  This includes the replacement of old servers, the introduction of new storage solutions, tools to monitor and manage the network and the installation of a remote data centre adding a new and more dependable dimension to business continuity and disaster recovery.  This driver addresses risks which both Management Boards have identified as "red" because of their probability and impact.

b.  Parliament has a heavy and continuing dependency on Microsoft as the principal provider of desktop software and related infrastructure tools.  This relationship is most beneficial when Parliament moves, albeit in a measured way, with the cyclical upgrading and replacement of Microsoft products and implements them as far as possible in a standard way.  This also allows us to obtain the maximum return on investment from having a partnership with Microsoft through a three-year Enterprise Agreement (now extended to September 2011).  The tools currently used by most staff will be formally out of extended support by Microsoft in July 2010, making an upgrade essential by that date.

c.  The Office 2007 suite of Microsoft tools also brings some significant benefits to users, including greater flexibility for those working in a variety of formats and media, the collaboration tool Sharepoint with its full functionality and, for those who need it, Office Communicator with the optional indication of "presence" (availability to collaborate on-line).  Another project within the programme will improve remote access, with direct benefits to users.  In many cases PICT's customers have been asking for the additional tools which will now be available; for others it will a process of discovering how the new tools work and whether or not they might support particular business processes.

**Critical success factors**

7.  There are certain conditions which we see as being critical to the success of the programme and will therefore manage very actively.  These include:

- The programme must give priority to the continuity of work at the desktop, so that the transition is as smooth as possible, potential pitfalls having been identified through prior planning and testing, with sufficient resources available to deal at short notice with any unanticipated difficulties; on past experience compatibility with applications will be the major issue;

- Support areas (service desk and engineers, technical services, PICT training team) must have received sufficient training and documentation to take the platforms into business as usual operations before project resources are withdrawn; this must include support for those working late at night;

- The programme must at every stage understand and implement learning from the previous desktop rationalisation project in Parliament and from the experience of other organisations in implementing the new software;

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- The new added value functionality should at all times be implemented with a view to achieving organisational benefits – not just deploying new technology because we can.

**Timing**

8.  Work on the "invisible" projects in the infrastructure programme has already begun. Piloting of new functionality has started in PICT with Vista and Office Communicator. Limited pilots of Office Communicator and Sharepoint will begin in DIS in the House of Commons and in the Department of IS and Library in the House of Lords between January and March 2009.  Sharepoint is also likely to serve as part of an interim solution for managing project documentation in the Estates Directorate by April 2009, to meet a specific urgent business requirement.[1]

9.  Otherwise, the roll-out of the new desktop to the majority of staff is planned to take place between July 2009 and May 2010, but the timetable and the order will be agreed by consultation and will be dependent on assurance of full compatibility with critical applications.  Further implementations of Sharepoint to meet specific requirements are likely to take place over a longer period in consultation with departments and offices, taking full account of records management requirements and of the recommendations of the SPIRE and Intranet programmes.

**Consultation and communication**

10. Engagement with users and consultation on issues of policy and system governance are being managed as a distinct project within the Infrastructure Programme.  A *User Engagement Project Board* has been formed to manage this project, with a small number of senior users drawn from both Houses and from the SPIRE programme.  The senior users advise PICT and the Infrastructure Programme Board on issues of governance and policy and on the approach to communication and engagement with users.  They are not expected personally to represent the interests of every office.  The current membership of the User Engagement Project Board is given in the annex to this paper.

11. Advised by the Project Board, PICT will identify business leads and user representatives in every affected area and will use all appropriate channels of communication to inform, consult and receive feedback, including PICT Business Relationship Managers (BRMs) and Account Managers.

12. There will be choices to be made about the build and the extent to which teams and individuals will be able to modify their screen and configuration, for example whether or not the web browser defaults to the intranet, whether departmental "drives" are used for file storage or whether there are policies on the use of background "wallpapers".  In due course there will also be important choices to be made about the use of Sharepoint and

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[1] A separate project, not funded from the Infrastructure programme

the extent to which this will be governed by corporate decisions and guidance. The User Engagement Project will take the lead in consulting departments, offices and representatives of individual users.

13. The Project Board invite the Management Boards to indicate the balance to be struck between corporate style on one hand, and local or individual adaptation on the other. Three broad approaches could be adopted:

    - A "unified" style of implementation for each House with a clear requirement to justify exceptions
    - A more federal style in which the tone is set by departments or large directorates/offices
    - A loose overall framework which allows for significant variation between teams and individuals

14. Although difficult to quantify, the third broad approach is likely to prove more costly in terms of management and support over the whole life cycle. It would also present corporate risks, especially in the approach to Sharepoint, since there is significance evidence from other organisations that this technology requires strong governance and information management policies. It can bring clear benefits to collaboration within and between teams and across organisations, but unmanaged proliferation of Sharepoint sites can exacerbate information and records management problems.

15. The first approach might encounter a degree of user resistance in some areas, but would be the recommended starting point in most organisations, with the caveat that exceptions may be agreed if a sufficiently strong case is made.

**Impact on budgets and other programmes**

16. The required resources come from approved business cases for the Microsoft Enterprise Agreement, Infrastructure Planning and Management and Infrastructure Programme and the profiling of expenditure has been agreed with the Finance Directors of both Houses.

17. The costs of the infrastructure programme to both Houses presented in the business case are as set out below. Costs for the remote data centre are subject to procurement and final business case approval in March 2009:

|  | **2008-09** | **2009-10** | **2010-11** | **2011-12** | **2012-13** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Resource** | | | | | |
| Main Infrastructure Programme | 1,832,427 | 1,450,000 | 1,250,000 | - | - |
| VPN renewal & Core network refresh | 100,000 | 600,000 | 200,000 | 200,000 | - |
| Remote data centre | 4,200 | 1,388,000 | 621,000 | 46,000 | (29,000) |
|  | **1,936,627** | **3,438,000** | **2,071,000** | **246,000** | **(29,000)** |
|  | | | | | |
| Depreciation [1] | 89,000 | 656,000 | 831,000 | 856,000 | 856,000 |
|  | | | | | |
| **Total resource** | **2,025,627** | **4,094,000** | **2,902,000** | **1,102,000** | **827,000** |
|  | | | | | |
| **Capital** | | | | | |
| Main Infrastructure Programme | 1,475,000 | 1,650,000 | 400,000 | - | - |
| Remote data centre related | 305,000 | 350,000 | 100,000 | - | - |
| **Total capital** | **1,780,000** | **2,000,000** | **500,000** | **-** | **-** |

[1] No provision has been included for effect of additional assets on the cost of capital charge

18. The programme depends heavily on the work of permanent PICT staff who, while not neglecting other activities, will give high priority to its successful implementation. The programme will also depend on departments and offices being willing and able to make staff available for consultation, partnership in the local implementation of collaboration tools and for user acceptance testing. Wherever possible we will try to involve user representatives and local managers in presentations and demonstrations prior to implementation, including site visits where appropriate.

**Risks**
19. The PICT Infrastructure Board is actively managing risks to the programme and will escalate these to the JBSB or the Management Boards should the need arise. As noted in section 7 the programme is working with the lessons learned from the 2006-07 Desktop Rationalisation project as well as from the experience of other organisations.

**Next steps**
20. The next stage will be to communicate widely about the coming changes, while continuing the preparatory technical work and pilots. Progress will be reported regularly to the JBSB.

Richard Ware
9 January 2009

Annex: <u>User Engagement Project Board</u>

As of December 2008

Richard Ware (PICT) (chairman)
Mary Ollard (House of Lords), senior user
Lynn Gardner (House of Commons), senior user
Helen Wood (SPIRE programme), senior user
Les Hobbs (PICT), BRM and project executive for Sharepoint
Graham Peek (PICT), coordinating BRM for desktop renewal
Denise Hudson-Lawson (PICT), head of user training
Alistair Drummond (PICT), change management and communication
David Lewis (PICT), project manager