

PUBLIC SERVICE NETWORK (PSN) TASK AND FINISH GROUP

Context

The Public Service Network (PSN) is a national framework set out by the Government, and managed by the Cabinet Office, that provides an assured network over which government can safely share both communications and services.

Any organisation that has a business need to communicate directly with individual government departments, through the PSN network, needs to achieve appropriate accreditation from the Cabinet Office. The Cabinet Office sets out a series of technical standards that each organisation will need to meet in order to secure that accreditation. Accreditation is reviewed on an annual basis and the Cabinet Office (and CESG) regularly update the technical standards need to meet compliance.

Shropshire Council, alongside almost all local authorities, has identified a business need to connect to a number of government departments using the PSN network, these include access to DWP data for Revenues and Benefits purposes and also for emergency planning and electoral services. Therefore, it has agreed to meet the appropriate PSN standards to facilitate this.

This year, the Cabinet Office increased the compliance standards around both unsupported software and unmanaged devices. The changes to unsupported software standards has accelerated the requirement to upgrade software across the organisation and has resulted in a significant number of devices being withdrawn from operations - as they are not suitable for upgrading.

The unmanaged device requirement has resulted in this Council, and others who were pursuing the 'bring your own device' model to enable staff to do their work, having to stop this activity and meet the frameworks criteria. This has had a significant impact on a number of mobile and flexible working initiatives.

Whilst the change in direction and investment to meet the criteria has been challenging, the PSN is not just about a connection between Public Services – though the ability of all public sector agencies to share PSN connectivity will undoubtedly support new models of joint service delivery – it is also about the creation of a procurement framework where goods/services can be purchased from accredited providers.

“The Public Services Network (PSN) will substantially reduce the cost of communication services across UK government and enable new, joined-up and shared public services for the benefit of citizens. PSN is creating one logical network, based on industry standards, and a more open and competitive ICT marketplace at the heart of the UK public sector.” Gov.uk website

Objectives

- Understanding the national framework requirements
- How the Council is addressing the PSN criteria
- Identifying the effects of the framework requirements on the Council's plans e.g. for home and mobile working
- Understanding expected future requirements for the framework and any implications for the Council
- Identifying the benefits of accreditation to the framework

Information Required From Officers

Evidence to show the benefit of the framework to a Commissioning Council, including any current and future savings

The local plan, timescales and costs to deliver the PSN framework

The difference between current and future Council networks in supporting new models of working e.g. mobile and flexible working and how, through PSN, non-secure wireless networks can be secure

Whether there is a difference between the needs of the Council Members and Council Officers and how these are being/will be met

The current challenges and future benefits of sharing networks and data with partners and providers

Implications for the Council's use of assets and whether PSN is and will enable joint working

Other Sources of Information

The Cabinet Office Roadmap

Expected developments in technology and when they are expected to impact on the PSN arrangements

Cabinet Office representatives

IT supplier (Microsoft Partner) representatives

Methods To Be Used

Desktop research

Presentations

Visits

Tracking the implementation experience of the Council

Timescales

End of June 2014

Key Results Expected

Informing the Council's future IT Strategy and Implementation Plan

Informing shaping PSN for the Commissioning Council e.g. infrastructure