24TH OCTOBER 2013

ALTERNATIVE MOODLE PROVISION

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF SERVICE OPERATIONS

Executive Summary:

Having completed work to identify the schools requirements for web and mail filtering, email, web hosting and moodle provision and having conducted a review on the available products that can meet these requirements WSCC are proposing that the replacement for the current product will be the Capita OPENHIVE solution.

Following a formal decision, transition planning will immediately commence for all schools who wish to utilise the new solution. Transition to the new service will be in time for the new FY14/15 SLA period.

With the new services in place in time for the FY14/15 SLA this will facilitate a further unbundling of this part of the SLA provision in time for the FY15/16 SLA period.

Schools who do not wish to use the new solution will need to identify and engage with an alternative provider by April 1st 2014 for which support will be provided by WSCC.

Support and guidance from the E Learning Forum will be valuable in delivering the project and approval is requested to approach the forum for this.

Recommendation:

It is recommended the Forum notes and comments on the proposal to change the provider of the web and mail filtering, email, web hosting and moodle services to schools and the proposal that the E Learning forum can be approached to provide support and guidance to the project and to schools.

1.   Background

1.1   At the meeting on 19th June, Schools Forum considered a report about the future IT development for schools. The report set out a number of issues about work being undertaken to evaluate options for the replacement of Atomwide services currently provided through the Capita Schools Broadband SLA. The Atomwide contract, which provides the current schools Moodle, email and web filtering service, is due to expire in March 2014.

1.2   As mentioned in the report in June, there is an opportunity to transfer the services and functions to Capita OPENHIVE within the current SSO contract; this would avoid a potentially expensive and lengthy procurement process.

1.3   However, before making any decisions WSCC wished to ensure that OPENHIVE solution met the requirement of the WSCC schools and that it offered good value for money when compared to other solutions currently available.

1.4   Many schools have been requesting the service provided under the Broadband SLA is unbundled to enable schools to just select and pay for the service they require rather than the full SLA.

1.5   Some schools have already left the SLA provision and have sourced alternative service providers;. Schools can continue to choose other providers but must have regard to compliance with procurement processes, specifications to safeguard pupils and for the regular exchange of specified financial, employee and other data with WSCC as the accountable body for maintained schools.

1.6   A survey was sent to all schools in July to ascertain the requirements for this service. In addition a workshop was held with the E Learning Forum to discuss the survey and to understand the requirements in more detail. The outputs from this work have been used to review the available products.

1.7   A benchmarking exercise is being finalised, the outputs of which are showing the OPENHIVE solution can meet the range of WSCC schools requirements, has flexibility to offer un-bundled services and provides value for money for the functionality that will be available.

2.   Proposals

2.1   This option will also negate the need for a procurement exercise for individual schools and for WSCC and as such can be implemented before 1st April 2014. Considering these reasons WSCC are recommending the OPENHIVE solution is adopted and recommend that schools purchase the OPENHIVE solution through the Broadband SLA.

2.2   Following a formal decision being made WSCC will formally engage with Capita OPENHIVE to ensure the set-up of the services will be in time for the closure of the previous service by the 31st March 2014.

2.3   It is expected that a phased move will be adopted where schools can choose for their migration to happen within the "switch over" windows during January, February and March.

2.4   A large portion of the transition work will happen in the background but the migration strategy will include change management actions to support staff and pupils in schools to adopt the new solution.

2.5   The transition tasks are not simple but WSCC believe Capita Open Hive has the necessary experience, following several larger migrations over the last few years that provide confidence that a smooth transition can be achieved. Capita OpenHive recently migrated over 800 schools in another local authority during an 8 week window that started in the last week of August and concluded for the 31st October. The migration activities in August were most challenging due to staff availability and for this reason migration work during school holidays are not preferred.

2.6 To achieve the migration an experienced project team will be formed from Capita OpenHive, WSCC and representatives from the E Learning Forum.

2.7 The SLA for FY14/15 will therefore include the Capita OPENHIVE solution as the basis for web and mail filtering, email, web hosting and moodle provision. This will ensure the schools wishing to buy back the SLA will have clarity on the solution that will be supplied before they commit to the SLA.

2.8 For FY 15/16 the OPENHIVE services will be un-bundled to allow schools to select the specific functionality they requires which will then be reflected within the SLA cost.

2.9 It is recognized that some schools may still wish to remain outside or not to adopt to use the SLA services in the forthcoming year. It is anticipated that the current Atomwide service provision will cease on 31st March 2014 and as such these schools need to have sourced their own alternative by this date. Support to these schools will be provided but will be limited to advice on procurement processes, details of product specifications and potential vendor information. The E learning Forum may be able to offer other support and advice to schools wishing to make their own arrangements.

3. <u>Conclusion</u>

3.1 Following product and market reviews WSCC has concluded that the Capita OPENHIVE solution is value for money for the functionality it provides.

3.2 WSCC will make a formal decision by the end of October and will ensure that Capita OPENHIVE, as the proposed solution provider of the new service provides reassurance that it can be implemented before the new SLA period start.

DIANE ASHBY
Director of Service Operations

Contact Officer: Kevin Carter – WSCC Commercial Manager
Tel: 03302226354
Email: kevin.carter@westsussex.gov.uk