

Committee: **Cabinet**

Date of meeting: **29th November 2023**

Report Subject: **Position Statement of Performance against the Service Level Agreement with the Shared Resource Service (SRS) for the period 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Stephen Thomas, Leader of the Council / Cabinet Member Corporate Overview and Performance**

Report Submitted by: **Bernadette Elias – Chief Commercial Officer and Customer**

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| Reporting Pathway | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|------------|---------|----------------------|
| Directorate Management Team | Corporate Leadership Team | Portfolio Holder / Chair | Governance Audit Committee | Democratic Services Committee | Scrutiny Committee | Cabinet | Council | Other (please state) |
| | 02/11/2023 | 09.11.23 | | | 16/11/2023 | 29/11/2023 | | |

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a position statement of performance for the period 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023 against the Service Level Agreement (SLA) that exists between the Shared Resource Service (SRS) Wales provision of ICT services for Blaenau Gwent.
2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 Blaenau Gwent ICT services formally joined the SRS on 1st April 2017.
 - 2.2 The SRS is a collaborative IT Service comprising Gwent Police, Torfaen County Borough Council, Monmouthshire County Council, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council (BGCBC) and Newport City Council.
 - 2.3 The SLA for 2022 / 2023 has 3 key Strategic aims:
 - 2.4 **Strategic Aim 1**
Innovating with experts – improve services to provide a solid foundation upon which partner organisations can operate.
 - 2.5 **Strategic Aim 2**
Modernising the employee experience – ensure the investment in technology is focussed on the delivery of the corporate priorities of the partner organisations.
 - 2.6 **Strategic Aim 3**
Powering up the cloud – provide a collaborative platform for public sector organisations to share common ground.
3. **Options for Recommendation**
 - 3.1 CLT endorsed the Position Statement on 2nd November 2023.

3.2 The Partnership Scrutiny Committee will consider this report at its meeting on 16th November 2023, and any feedback will be provided verbally to Cabinet.

3.3 **Option One**

- a) Consider the position statement on performance for the period 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023 against the SLA in place with SRS; and
- b) Receive annual updates as part of the ongoing partnership with SRS.

Option Two

- a) Consider the position statement on performance for the period 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023 against the SLA in place with SRS and make recommendations on where improvements can be made to the current monitoring processes; and
- b) Receive annual updates as part of the ongoing partnership with SRS.

4. **Evidence of how this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

4.1 The SRS as a strategic partner supports delivery of the Corporate Plan:

- An ambitious and innovative council delivering quality services at the right time and in the right place;
- Supports the council in its delivery of services against key policy directives such as the National Digital Strategy for Wales and the Councils Digital and Transformation Strategy 2023 – 2027.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 ***Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)***

5.1.1 The SRS has its budget approved on an annual basis by the Finance and Governance board which includes Section 151 representatives from all five partner organisations, including Blaenau Gwent.

5.1.2 The budget covers staff, accommodation costs and a number of contracts with third party suppliers which the SRS manage on behalf of the Council.

5.1.3 The overall SRS Management fee for 2022/23 was £2,000,273. Through robust contract management the Financial Outturn position for 2022-23 for the council achieved a £54,000 saving.

5.1.4 In addition, to ensure the sustainability of the data centre infrastructure the Council has agreed and built an allocation of £61,000 per annum into the Council's Capital Programme to allow for necessary equipment replacement.

5.1.5 ***Blaenau Gwent specific reserve***

The Blaenau Gwent specific reserve, held by the SRS, currently stands at £324,000, The reserve has been built up from SRS underspends and is used to fund in year overspends (when this occurs) and for service improvement in agreement with and aligned to Council priorities, supporting the development of technology and digital innovation through a partnership with the SRS.

5.1.6 Some examples of planned usage for the reserve within Q1 include the O365 Backup Harbor which is a backup for Office 365 and CAE Audiocodes relating to the preparation for Teams telephony.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

5.2.1 The SRS has a comprehensive risk register. The current key risks highlighted to the Strategic Board as those of concern with accompanying mitigations, are:

- global supply chain;
- cyber security load and awareness;
- recruitment, reward and retention of SRS staff.

5.2.2 *New Target Operating Model*

The SRS has created a new target operating model with partners which has enabled it to best respond to the risks / challenges that it currently faces which include:

- financial pressures;
- resilience challenges;
- professional opportunities;
- reducing the team lead roles which will allow technical staff to focus on technical excellence;
- need to align standards across the whole SRS customer base;
- high turnover rate of senior technology staff;
- One Wales consistency, not uniformity

5.2.3 The SRS remodel will respond to the risks / challenges identified in the following ways:

- by bringing all professions together into single streams thus supporting resilience;
- Aligning standards across the whole SRS customer base will also improve resilience;
- Work force planning and staff development will continue to support partners;
- One Wales consistency, not uniformity will ensure that work is delivered in the same way across the entire customer base.

5.3 ***Legal***

5.3.1 The SRS is underpinned by a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that all partners agreed to when joining the SRS through a Deed of Adherence.

5.3.2 The original MoU is in the process of being reviewed and it is anticipated that it will be presented to the Finance & Governance Board and the Strategic Board late November for consideration and agreement.

5.3.3 Service Level Agreements are reviewed annually. The SLA for 2023/ 2024 was presented to the Strategic Board and was agreed on 17th October 2023.

5.4 **Human Resources**

- 5.4.1 Whilst there are no direct human resource implications associated with this report, there are references in the report to improved workforce planning to meet future demands.
- 5.4.2 The governance arrangements supporting the SRS model includes representation on the following boards:
- Strategic Board (Chief Executive and nominated Councillor Board Member.) – covers all areas of strategic / corporate work
 - Finance and Governance Board (Chief Officer Resources or delegated rep) – covers Legal / Statutory Obligations, Reputational, Assets and Property and Financial
 - Business and collaboration Board (Chief Officer Commercial and Customer, Service Manager Customer Experience & Transformation or delegated rep) – covers Technology and Innovation, Improvement and Performance, Emergency Management and Major Projects

5.5 **Health and Safety**

No issues identified as a result of this report.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

6.1.1 A summary of key activity for the period 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023 against each Strategic Aim within the SLA is set out below:

6.1.2 **Strategic Aim 1**

Innovating with experts – improve services to provide a solid foundation upon which partner organisations can operate

- Implementation of Cyber security initiative SOC/SIEM

The SRS and its partners are all very aware of the high level of risk that exists around cyber-attacks.

Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) is a toolset that collects various types of log data and events for:

- a. Security monitoring;
- b. Threat detection;
- c. Digital forensics;
- d. Security incident response;
- e. Regulatory compliance;
- f. System management;
- g. Application troubleshooting.

Security Operation Centre (SOC) team of specialized people who manage the toolset with the aims of:

1. Detection and response to threats;
2. Increase resilience;
3. Identify and address negligent or criminal behaviors;
4. Derive business intelligence about user behaviors, to, shape and prioritize the development of secure technologies.

The whole purpose of the toolset (SIEM) and the SOC (team) is to prevent any compromise to our systems in the first place and provide solid foundation for services to operate from. SRS progressed with the use of SIEM and SOC during 2022/2023 to support Strategic Aim 1.

- Data Centre Migration

The aim of this was to move partners to an alternate physical data centre and decommission the current Blaenavon data centre and alternate computer rooms by the end of 2022-23 saving approximately £4M based on Net Present Value calculations.

Vantage procured and installed by the end of December 2021 and all equipment commissioned and live by January 2022

BGCBC migration started at the end of January 2022 and completed May 2022 and are using the shared infrastructure to deliver its ICT systems from the Vantage Data Centre after successfully completing the migrations from Civic Centre.

As a result of SRS working towards their key Strategic Aims this has also supported BGCBC in delivering the following projects as part of BGCBC Corporate programme of work; -

- Telephony Infrastructure and Networks
- Kit Refresh (build)

6.1.3 Strategic Aim 2

Modernising the employee experience – ensure the investment in technology is focussed on the delivery of the corporate priorities of the partner organisations

- Implementation of New Service Desk for SRS Partners.

In May 2022 a decision was taken to go out to market to procure a new product to facilitate SRS growth, invest in technology to support partner priorities and enhance the experience for staff.

Halo Service Solutions was chosen in January 2023 as the supplier for SRS IT Service Management Solution.

Key technical requirements for the new system were;

- Single portal for schools and corporate with access controls;
- Improved reporting and workflow management;
- Multiple integrations 'out of the box';

- Improved, simplified and targeted surveys for customer feedback;
- A more up to date interface and the capacity for future AI integration;
- Cloud hosted;
- Supplier support for the product including a comprehensive roadmap for development.

SRS are already seeing positive comments for survey completion numbers, portal usage, customer feedback and general usability. The feedback is positive, representatives from BGCBC participated in the demonstrations for a new system and actively contributed to the scoring and selection of the product.

As a result of SRS working towards their key Strategic Aims this has supported BGCBC in also delivering the following projects as part of BGCBC Corporate programme of work:

- Microsoft 365 Roll Out Phase 1 and Phase 2 apps (supporting the delivery of agile working model and also continual service improvement)

6.1.4 **Strategic Aim 3** *Powering up the cloud – provide a collaborative platform for public sector organisations to share common ground*

- **DRUVA**

SRS Have implemented a new product called DRUVA in March 2023 to enhance the backup and recovery of data in Microsoft Office 365 products (such as Email, OneDrive, SharePoint and Teams).

This product stores data securely and separately in a UK-based cloud service called AWS, where it is fully encrypted and protected.

SRS have tested the product successfully by restoring data from the backup. This product also aligns with SRS green goals, as AWS uses renewable energy sources in the UK.

- **Cloud Telephony**

Migrate all partners (LA, Police and Edu) to cloud telephony, cloud contact centres and cloud switchboards by the end of 2023, reducing the overall cost by replacing the need for capital investment with a lesser ongoing revenue cost.

BGCBC are in the process of setting out the way forward for the telephony service and potential adoption of Teams telephony. Currently four Teams telephony licenses have been assigned to the Digital Team to test for the corporate service. Also, two schools are currently being considered to test Teams telephony.

As a result of SRS working towards their key Strategic Aims this has supported BGCBC in also delivering the following projects as part of BGCBC Corporate programme of work:

- Microsoft 365 Roll Out Phase 1 and Phase 2 apps (supports collaboration internally and externally)
- Always On VPN Roll Out
- Release of One Drive Internal and External Sharing
- Bring Your Own Device

SLA Overall

6.1.5

- Monitoring of calls resolved against the SLA for the period 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023 shows on average a 97% success rate for resolving calls from the Council.
- An important performance measure defined by all SRS customers is the percentage of calls fixed at the first point of contact (FPOC). For the period 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023 shows a range of 82% to 93% success rate for resolving calls at FPOC.
- Customer Satisfaction - Each time a call is closed the customer has an opportunity to complete a survey which is passed back to SRS. Those surveys are collated each month and presented back to each delivery group. For the period 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023 monitoring shows a range of 86% to 92% level of satisfaction on call resolution

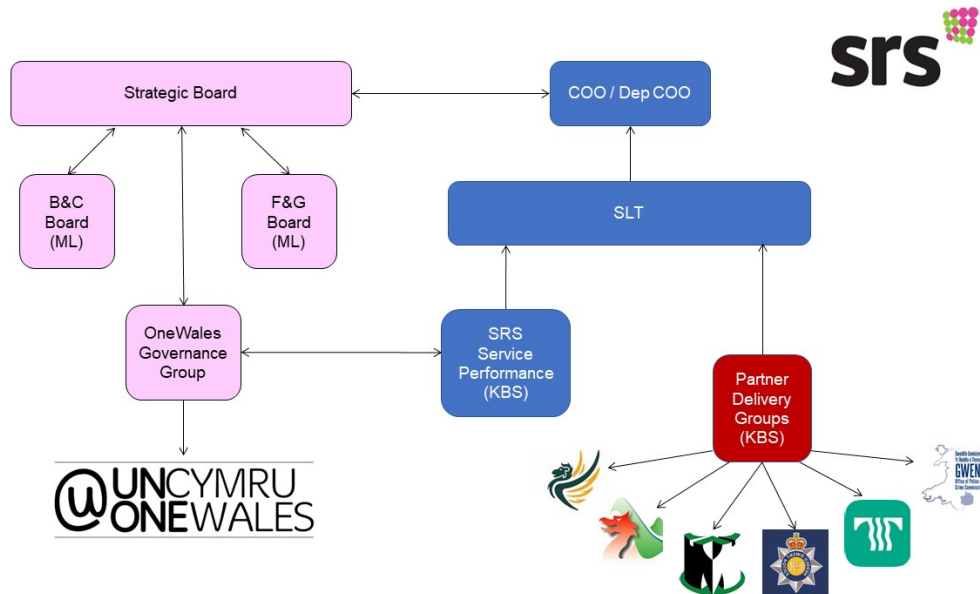
6.2 ***Expected outcome for the public***

A number of the Corporate projects implemented with the SRS have improved effectiveness of service delivery to the benefit of residents, aligning with SLA Strategic Aims.

6.3 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***

A variety of Blaenau Gwent staff are involved and regularly engage with the SRS on its activities. Projects also include involvement of users of the service so their views can shape the design and delivery.

This governance diagram shows the Boards and Blaenau Gwent has a place in all of these meetings.



6.4 **Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)**

- 6.4.1 Net zero is a key consideration at the SRS and supports the Council's commitment. Examples include:
 - 6.4.2 Data Centre Footprint - the extensive work involved in moving from multiple provisions across all Local Government partners into one footprint in the new Vantage data centre has reduced the environmental impact of four separate implementations into one single environment.
 - 6.4.3 Data Centre Energy - the four separate provisions all used energy in different ways. Even the well specified Blaenavon facility is less efficient than the new Vantage provision due to improvements in technology.
 - 6.4.4 Moving to Sharepoint Online - by moving large amounts of on premise Sharepoint functionality into Office 365, the SRS has been able to remove large amounts of infrastructure across the organisations. This reduces energy consumption and physical footprint.
 - 6.4.5 Disposals contract – embedded a new disposals policy which reduces the carbon footprint and saves money, devices are now recycled into the community instead of being destroyed and still meets all security requirements.
- 6.5 **Preventative focus**
The work of the SRS supports service areas who are delivering preventative functions and explores the use of digital solutions to support preventative work
- 6.6 **Collaboration / partnership working**
The SRS is an entirely collaborative provision to multiple partners.
- 6.7 **Integration (across service areas)**
The SRS projects support services across the organisation.

6.8 ***Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emission***

6.8.1 Net Zero contribution of the SRS

SRS are striving to improve data centre energy efficiency and reduce the carbon footprint. That's why they have moved data centre services from four different and outdated facilities across the Local Government partners to one modern and green site at the new Vantage data centre.

This site uses 100% certified renewable energy and has the latest technology to optimise energy consumption. Whilst SRS cannot exactly measure the difference in energy usage between the old and new locations, due to old energy measurement devices, it is estimated that the impact of the energy reduction efforts will be significant.

6.8.2 Social Value

SRS believe in giving back to the local area and creating opportunities for young people. That is why they have launched a new apprenticeship scheme that welcomes talented and motivated individuals from our community. The goal is to expand this scheme and offer more apprenticeships in the future.

SRS are also committed to reducing the environmental impact and supporting our local community.

A new disposals policy has been implemented that recycles old devices instead of sending them to landfills. This not only saves money and lower ours carbon footprint, but also provide valuable resources to people in need.

Our recycled devices meet all the security requirements and are safely wiped of any sensitive data before being donated. We have now adjusted this contract to allow for recycling of additional devices which means we are shredding less hardware.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 An annual monitoring report will be included on the forward work programme of the relevant scrutiny committee.

The Boards set out in the governance arrangements receive performance monitoring information and progress updates.

Monthly meetings between SRS and officers review the programme progress.

The SRS is monitored by the Chief Operating Officer; additional assurance is provided from Torfaen internal audit as the chosen auditor of the partners for the SRS.