

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL  
CABINET – 3 OCTOBER 2017  
REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (RESOURCES, ENVIRONMENT AND  
CULTURAL SERVICES)

REMOTE NETWORK ACCESS

**1 Executive Summary**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to request capital funding to upgrade our secure remote log on connection. The software provider, Pulse, is no longer developing the current version of this software and the facility will soon be unsupported. This is resulting in connectivity problems with some of our suppliers being unable to connect to our network remotely.

**2 Recommendation(s)**

- 2.1 Cabinet recommend to Full Council a supplementary capital estimate of £30,000 for the purchase of the latest version of the Pulse Secure Virtual Private Network appliance and that the budget will be released with immediate effect.

**3 Explanation**

- 3.1 We have a Virtual Private Network (VPN) connection which is a business critical facility. VPN is a piece of hardware which authenticates users on to our network and this facility is a mandatory Public Service Network (PSN) requirement. It is used by staff and Members to log on from home; Serco staff dealing with our refuse and recycling service; software suppliers needing to connect to our network to support our software packages; Housing Scheme Manager to connect to the office and this is also one of our business continuity plan options to allow remote access in the event of an incident preventing staff from entering our buildings.
- 3.2 In June 2017 we discovered that this appliance would shortly be end of support which means that it would not receive any further development and we would not be supported should it breakdown. It also means that it would not be updated with security patches, potentially leaving the Council prone to virus attacks. E.g. ransomware viruses. We need to upgrade this appliance to the latest version of VPN which will provide a secure and improved service delivery. Failure to upgrade will put us in breach of PSN compliance.
- 3.3 Notification of the end of our support package was only received in June 2017 and a capital bid was prepared for 2018/19, which now needs to be brought forward.
- 3.4 Representations about the lack of notice and enhancements have been made to the software supplier. With the impending support withdrawal, the software supplier has stopped any further development of their product and this has resulted in the VPN facility not working with some of our software suppliers, who have been unable to log on to our network. It also means that there is a risk

across the Council should we receive an anti-virus software update which may not be compatible with the VPN version we are on.

## **Implications**

### **4 Legal Implication(s)**

4.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the content of this report.

### **5 Financial Implication(s)**

5.1 The cost of the VPN facility, which includes a 5 year support package, is £30,100.

### **6 Risk Management Implications**

6.1 The risk of not upgrading this equipment, operating with unsupported equipment and not having adequate security provisions would impact on the Council's ability to run its business.

### **7 Security & Terrorism Implication(s)**

7.1 There are no security and terrorism implications with the recommendation in this report.

### **8 Procurement Implication(s)**

8.1 All procurement will be undertaken in accordance with the Council's contract procedure rules.

### **9 Climate Change Implication(s)**

9.1 The proposals in this report will not impact on greenhouse gas emissions.

### **10 Link to Corporate Priorities**

10.1 The subject of this report is linked to the Council's Corporate Priority: Engage with our communities and provide value for money.

### **11 Equality and Diversity**

11.1 There are none and an equalities impact assessment has therefore not been prepared in relation to the proposal in this report.

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