SUBJECT:	Public Services Network (PSN)	
REPORT OF:	Officer Management Team -	Director of Resources
	Prepared by -	Head of Business Support

1.   Purpose of Report

1.1. To provide Members with information on the progress of the BCC led BucksPSN framework procurement and the opportunities it presents to the Council.

2.   Links to Council Policy Objectives

2.1. The BucksNet framework impacts on all the Council's external ICT communications and will contribute to the Council's key drivers:

• Customer needs and customer involvement
• Value for money and a lean organisation
• Sustainable quality of life

3.   Background

3.1. For many years central government has been trying to create a national digital network to improve service delivery across the public sector. Starting with the Government Secure Intranet (GSi) and moving through stages to the Government Connect Secure Extranet (GCSx) central government departments, Police (PPN), NHS (N3) and local government bodies have raised the security of their IT networks to a common standard. This standard is maintained by a rigorous annual audit to ensure that each network maintains compliance with the Code of Connection (CoCo).

3.2. However, all the GCSx networks have an individual connection to the GSi like the spokes on a hub. All those individual connections are provided by one supplier, Cable & Wireless.

3.3. In 2010 the Cabinet Office released standards for a Public Services Network (PSN). This provides the standards for the Government Conveyance Network (GCN) which is the basic transport mechanism, or interconnect that will join up all the public sector networks. So instead of the hub and spoke approach of GCSx, the PSN will be a patchwork creating an IT network grid across the country.

3.4. The government has encouraged telecommunication companies to attain accreditation against the PSN standard to increase competition and reduce costs to public sector organisations. The Government Procurement Service (GPS) originally targeted to have the first PSN framework available for September 2011 but due to the complex nature of the telecommunication services this slipped by almost a year.

4.   BucksPSN Framework

4.1. Bucks CC has made the decision to outsource its ICT Service. Rather than let all aspects of the ICT Service in one overarching contract, related functional areas will be bundled up and let in discreet lots. Since the contract to help BCC ICT manage data telecommunications was the first to terminate this was chosen to be the first area to be outsourced.

4.2. Initially BCC ICT had hoped to take advantage of the GPS PSN framework. When it became apparent the GPS would not have the framework in place within BCC ICT's deadlines, BCC ICT decided to conduct its own procurement.

4.3. An OJEU notice was published by BCC on 12.09.2011 to initiate the creation of a framework via restricted tender with a single operator for duration of 5 plus 2 plus 2 years. The value range of the contract was estimated to be between £20M and £100M over the 9 year term.

4.4. As the Council buys its data telecommunication services from the ICT Unit at BCC it was named in the OJEU notice, along with many other public sector bodies in the three counties of Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire and Oxfordshire and beyond, and actively participated in the procurement. The services currently bought from BCC ICT include:

- Internet access
- External email
- Remote access to the network
- Perimeter security e.g. firewalls, intrusion prevention, web filtering

4.5. The procurement successfully completed in August 2012 and the contract was awarded to Updata in partnership with Britannic Communications. Over the next eight months they will assume responsibility for managing all aspects of voice and data communications within the BucksPSN framework.

4.6. The framework is designed for each organisation to have its own contract with Updata. Although the originator of the framework; BCC will be another customer of the framework. A governance group has been created from the organisations calling off services from the framework to ensure consistent development of the services and maintain best value in the price model.

4.7. The framework has been constructed to include public sector bodies and the 3rd sector. Some provision was made for start up businesses to cover participating authorities using surplus accommodation for community purposes. Where the tipping point would be on amount of turnover that would prohibit access to services is yet to be defined. It was established that arrangements such as SBDC procuring services on behalf of a contractor such as at The Academy would still be within the scope of the framework.

4.8. With hindsight it has proved to be beneficial that BCC conducted the BucksPSN Framework procurement as it provides a more tailored fit for public bodies in the region than the GPS framework would.

5.   Impact on SBDC

5.1. Communication Links

The core hubs for the BucksNet (the wide area network WAN connecting all authorities in Bucks) are located at County Hall in Aylesbury and the basement in King George V House, Amersham (KGV). There are 10gbs links between them. BCC have two data centres, one in each hub, that mirror one another for resilience. This is, in effect, a private Cloud serving Buckinghamshire.

5.2. Updata are replacing most of the infrastructure in the core hubs. Work will be complete in early 2013.

5.3.   In addition to BCC, Aylesbury Vale and Dacorum Borough Council, who have entered into a shared ICT Service, are also building their shared network in the data centre in KGV which will be mirrored at Aylesbury.

5.4.   Currently, SBDC has one 100mbs communication link between Capswood and the BucksNet. Although adequate for performance, there have always been concerns over resilience. Likewise, the communication links between Capswood and the satellite sites of the Memorial Gardens etc have lacked resilience and sometimes delivered poor performance.

5.5.   On a 'like for like' basis, the prices quoted for SBDC existing communication links show a reduction of £18K per annum for 5 years. However, quotes for upgraded links have been requested as by reinvesting some of the savings on current costs, the Council will be able to significantly improve both performance and resilience. Installing an extra 1gbs link from the BucksNet to Welwyn Hatfield BC, where the Council's server estate will be re-located in July 2013, and then to Capswood will maintain and future proof performance whilst providing resilience. By using new techniques of combining several lines to a site, Updata are able to improve performance and provide resilience to the satellite sites.

5.6.   These links will make shared working with Chiltern and other authorities easier and cheaper

5.7.   <u>Wi-Fi</u>

Structured cabling was built into both buildings at Capswood. Delivering a dedicated 100mbs to the desktop, it is capable of delivering 1gbs.

5.8.   Wi-Fi access points were also provided as part of the Capswood buildings specification. These have recently been connected to the BucksNet providing a wireless service for Members and visitors. However, wireless access points can only reach a maximum of 300mbs capacity. Since the access points work as hubs, the 300mbs has to be shared between the number of users connected, thus reducing the bandwidth for each user. Consequently, Wi-Fi will not be an alternative to cable for delivering all network services at Capswood unless an excessive amount of access points were installed. This would not be financially viable

5.9. For the foreseeable future, Wi-Fi is better suited for the Members/meeting rooms, public spaces and hot desking areas where the flow of data is less critical.

5.10.<u>Voice over IP (Digital Telephony)</u>

When the Council moved to Capswood it made the investment to move to IP telephony based on Cisco technology. Although it has served the Council well, it is now due for a significant upgrade to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

5.11. Britannic Communications are specialists in telephony and have partnered with Updata to fulfil all requirements of the contract. As part of the PSN framework they will provide solutions that:

- Enable up to 8 devices to be associated with one number i.e. when logging into the system the user can choose where calls are directed to e.g. the office handset, mobile phone or home phone etc
- Mobile phone convergence will soon be available. Software like Skype can be loaded onto smart phones. When the phone is in range of Wi-Fi any Council calls received or made will be routed over the internet thus reducing call costs. In combination with Wi-Fi in the

office this would negate the need for some officers to have desk handsets and reduce costs

- Better management information and call recording is available which would enable services to analyse calls more effectively to target areas to channel shift to self service via the internet

5.12. AVDC, Chiltern and SBDC are likely to be early adopters of the VoIP solution provided by Britannic. Britannic are conducting workshops and will be producing a proposal by the end of 2012.

5.13. Perimeter Security

The Council has already adopted the new web filtering service which has reduced costs from £1,200 a year to £350 and improved performance. Over the 5 years of the initial contract this will be a saving of £4,250

5.14. As PSN accredited suppliers, Updata will not only provide well performing and cost effective communications links but ensure that security levels are maintained so that participating authorities continue to comply with the CoCo.

5.15. Remote Access

BCC already have an effective remote access method in place but it is coming to end of life. Updata have already started a project to replace this with an improved and more cost effective system.

5.16. This element will be key for the Council in enabling new ways of working such as mobile\home working.

Task	Delivery Date
Core WAN upgrades	March 2013
Upgrade communication links to satellite sites	March 2013
New VoIP solution rollout	June – December 2013
New remote access solution	January 2014

6. Recommendations

6.1   Members note the adoption of the BuckPSN framework for voice and data communications
6.2   Members note the opportunities for the Council

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Background Papers:	**None**