

# North York Moors National Park Authority Finance, Risk, Audit and Standards Committee

1 September 2020

## IT Update

### 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To update Members on work being carried out over the coming months to support and develop the Authority's Information Communications Technology.

### 2. Background

- 2.1 As Members will be aware from their own experience and the Member update briefings, the availability of the Authority's IT systems has been an integral part of the move to remote working since. The technology has worked very well with few technical issues encountered. The ICT team are actively considering how the work patterns may change in the future and the implications that this may have longer term. In the meantime, there are a number of shorter term issues that need to be resolved which are described in the remainder of the paper.

### 3. Review of Security Given Continued Change in Working Practice

- 3.1 As the remote working practices are now likely to be in place for a significant period, it is paramount to now spend time looking at the IT infrastructure.
- 3.2 Over the coming months the IT Team will review the new ways of working to ensure that we have adequate security in place to maintain a high level of protection of the Authority's data. This will consist of
- A review of the different methods of remote connection and any available updates to them will be applied to bring them to latest version
  - A review of the Authority's password policy to ensure best practice. This will be carried out seeking advice from our Audit team to ensure compliance.

### 4. Implementation of New Phone System

- 4.1 The one area of IT Infrastructure that has not performed as well as others in the new working practice has been the Authority's phone system. The existing infrastructure consists of a physical box at the Old Vicarage and the Moors Centre. There is no method to allow Officers to easily receive calls when working remotely and at the moment, messages are taken by reception staff and relayed to the officer concerned who then rings the caller back..
- 4.2 Having looked at the market and spoken to other National Parks to see what technology they use and how it has performed for Officers working remotely, the decision has been made by officers to invest in a product called 3CX. This product is being used successfully in three other national parks.
- 4.3 The product will allow officers to either use a physical phone at their desk in the office, use an application on their laptop to make and receive calls or use an app on their mobile devices to make and receive calls all from the same number.
- 4.4 It will also allow reception staff to see if an officer's presence i.e are they available, busy, away from their desk.

4.5 The system will cost £7,105 and see a return on investment within three years. It is currently being tested and expected to be implemented by the end of October.

## 5. **Proposed Change to remove 'forward' from Members NYMNPA Email Addresses**

5.1 A number of Members currently have their emails forwarded to an alternative email address. This was put in place a number of years ago to make it easier for Members to keep on top of communications from the NPA so they did not have to check or set up multiple email accounts.

5.2 Having these forwards in place is adding an extra step into email communications and adds another potential cause for issues and missed communications, as well as the minor risk of these forwarded email communications being part of an FOI request.

5.3 With changes in technology it is now much simpler to have multiple email accounts set up on one device and often can have a view that shows all emails from all accounts in one inbox.

5.4 This means that officers believe it would be advantageous to have a planned phased removal of the 'forward' with the support of the IT team to ensure Members devices are setup to send and receive email from their NYMNPA account.

## 6. **Location of Servers**

6.1 Internal audit have previously recommended that the Authority's servers (currently housed in a public part of the Old Vicarage) be moved to a more secure locations. Officers agreed with this suggestion and the preliminary technical work for this has been done. The servers will shortly be moved to a lockable and secure office.

## 7. **Display Screen Assessments**

7.1 As mentioned in the Health and Safety paper, staff are expected to be working from home for at least part of their working week for considerably longer than was anticipated back in March. Many staff have borrowed office equipment, but the advice given in April/May regarding their remote working set up needs to be reinforced and a more systematic approach put in place to ensure that work stations are of an acceptable standard. Officers are currently considering how best to do achieve this and it is likely that staff who want advice will be asked to send in pictures of their work stations to enable bespoke assistance to be given.

## 8. **Legal Implications**

8.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

## 9. **Recommendation**

9.1 That the diverse work being carried out to support and develop the Authority's ICT by the team be noted.

9.2 Members approve the phased removal of forwarding NYMNPA emails to other accounts with the support of the IT Team.

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