

Comisiwn y Cynulliad Assembly Commission

NAFWC 2011 (Paper 4 Part 1)

Unifying the Assembly's ICT network (UNO)

Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru
National
Assembly for
Wales



Date: 27 January 2011

Time: 16:00

Venue: Conference Room 4B

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1.0 Purpose and summary of issues

1.1 The unified network project (UNO) is an enabling project, through which we have addressed the issues identified in the i-change review and consultation. UNO enables us to introduce ways of working that reduce costs and improve the services offered to Members and the people of Wales.

2.1 This paper is a final report for the Commission on the project.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Commission is invited to note:

- the final project budget,
- progress on outstanding issues;
- ongoing project tasks; and
- the summary of the lessons learned.

3.0 Discussion

- 3.1 The UNO project has created an up to date ICT system to enable the Assembly to work independently of the Welsh Government, to improve business continuity and to enable the Assembly to make appropriate, cost effective choices for future ICT provision. The system's design was based upon an extensive consultation exercise with all users, Members, their staff and Assembly staff. Between July and October 2010 the system was installed for 800 users at over 100 locations, including Tŷ Hywel, constituency offices and in homes. Fifty applications were migrated from the old system to the new. This was not just a regular equipment refresh; the whole system was changed, including an external data centre and a new operating platform.

Budget

- 3.2 The final budget allocated by the Commission for the project was £4.3m. The final total spend on the project is expected to be £4.256m. A breakdown of the project budget can be found at Annex A.

Resolution of Outstanding Technical Issues

- 3.3 At the time the project was formally closed, ten technical issues remained outstanding and were allocated to ICT or Siemens. These have been reduced to eight open issues, with updates being given to the Project Board members and Peter Black.
- 3.4 Issues with the Party supplied casework systems have been resolved. Upgrading the Assembly-provided Caseworker system has been problematic, but the system has been deployed onto the new domain and is being tested. A rollout plan is currently being developed in conjunction with Assembly Members' support staff. User Acceptance Testing has been scheduled for Wednesday 26 January and, if successful, a rollout programme will be agreed for February.

Follow-on actions from the project

- 3.5 Responsibility for follow-on actions has been allocated to staff. These tasks include the completion of the upgrade to the Assembly's caseworker systems, integrating third-party systems

that are in the process of being upgraded to work on the Windows 7 operating system, and decommissioning the old BF network.

- 3.6 The final stage of UNO is to introduce a new support service agreement which meets Assembly requirements, as captured by i-change. The new arrangements are being negotiated with Siemens and the Welsh Government as the parties to the Merlin contract.
- 3.7 It is the intention of the Assembly to introduce the new service levels in a manner that improves services and is cost-effective. This final stage also moves the Assembly closer to one of its strategic objectives, "to design an infrastructure and IT service model, driven by the needs, priorities and strategy of the Assembly".

Lessons learned from the project

- 3.8 There were examples of good practice in this project which we will use in future. These include the successful consultation exercise ("i-change") to get the views of all concerned and to develop the project specification, which received a huge amount of useful feedback. Also, guidance material and training was ready in advance of rollout and was well received. Following receipt of the formal Siemens estimate in February 2010, cost control was strong and the costs of changes during the work period were absorbed through savings elsewhere.
- 3.9 There were things which did not go as well as we would have liked, mainly around the intensive Member and constituency office rollout programme. A full lessons learned report has been produced based on the feedback given to the project team in a number of workshops. An overview can be found at Annex B.

Benefits arising from the Project

- 3.10 Each anticipated benefit will be reviewed by the Head of ICT and Broadcasting to ensure that they are delivered as planned.
- 3.11 The benefits we anticipated from the project can be summarised as follows:

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- improved connectivity, particularly from constituency offices:
Delivered: improved connection speed is being noted. The ability to connect from home computers also improves facilities for any remote workers;
- more co-ordinated use of resources by putting Members, their staff and Assembly staff on the same network, so increasing working efficiency:
Delivered: in that all are on the same network, efficiency improvements depend upon changes in ways of working and delivery of planned projects like the ABMS system;
- providing an independent platform for integrated service delivery, to be sourced by the most cost effective and efficient route:
Our systems are now independent of the Welsh Government and we are in a position to make our own choices about short and long term service delivery. Changes to services in the short term are being negotiated;
- modernisation of the ICT estate, providing the latest technology to enhance public engagement:
Delivered: work underway to maximise the improvements to public engagement this can offer; and
- improved business continuity and resilience of the system:
Delivered, second data centre at Companies House provides a sound back-up for problems at Cardiff Bay, allowing remote locations like constituency offices and home computers to continue working.

Overview of UNO Project costs

This document is an overview of UNO project costs. The detailed breakdown of Project costs have been recorded within the project budgetary spread-sheets, as recorded in the Project Closure document and UNO Project documentation.

Cost Breakdown

The costs were recorded with a breakdown of Siemens costs and External costs, which in turn have been broken down into subsections. The following details the final costs:

External Costs	
External staff	£172,013.00
Morgan Cole	£68,910.77
Training	£11,153.61
WAO	£4,626.45
Companies House	£36,724.63

External Totals	£293,428.46
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Capital Costs	
Siemens resource	£1,645,150.84
Siemens hardware	£1,189,707.99
HP hardware	£378,206.77
Software	£349,205.74
MS licences	£176,848.00
GF circuits	£223,978.00
Capital Totals	£3,963,097.34

Accumulated totals	£4,256,525.80
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In addition the Assembly accounts for 2009-10 included capitalisation of £0.538 million of software licence costs.

The above table also includes extra costs which arose during the course of the project, but were not anticipated in the initial budget. These costs were absorbed by finding savings and cost reductions:

£15,926.35	Hardware
£11,153.61	Training
£18,677.69	Software upgrades
£41,442.70	Caseworker
£8,182.35	HiPath upgrade
£17,962.00	Air conditioning unit
£113,344.70	Total

Costs Carried Forward

There are some costs arising from the work that will need to be paid once the project has officially closed. These costs will either need to be funded or absorbed into a budget as follows:

Title	Reason	Amount
BTcircuits quarterly rental	Rental for circuits will fall due in the next two financial years	£55,000 – 2010-11 £110,000 – 2011-12
Morgan Cole	There is a remaining amount that may be required for legal costs in settling the new service agreement with Siemens	£39,000 - 2010-11

It has been agreed that the Head of ICT & Broadcasting Manager will take responsibility for ensuring any changes to the above costs are recorded.

UNO Project - summary of lessons learned

The full results of the Lessons Learned workshops have been shared with the Assembly's Change Board to try to ensure that future projects make use of the findings.

Communications

It is recommended that communications are more targeted and modified for each group of user. Input from the business should be sought prior to the development of communication plans.

Project Management & Governance

A strong project board is an obvious asset to any project. Open and honest communications within the project teams, and subsequently between the project teams and project board, are imperative. All project finances should be managed by a single entity, whether it be an appointed financial representative or the Project Manager.

Training

It is recommended that when introducing a 'first adoption' or recent technology where there is unlikely to be any previous user experience, that the training schedule is subject to a full impact assessment prior to being carried out. It is also recommended that training for Assembly Members is more personalised, with a separate training schedule subject to more development and incorporated into the overall training programme.

Technical

Standardisation of processes and procedures is recommended for user acceptance testing, that includes the customer's involvement to a larger degree at all stages of the testing process. The implementation of a tool and methodology that allows for collecting data for business user intelligence in a way that is less vulnerable to error should be considered.

Rollout

Standard best practice for Project Management is to resolve issues highlighted in the pilot phase prior to further rollout. However, in this case, time pressures meant that it could not be done, so in future a full impact assessment should be initiated if this problem arises. Sufficient time must be allowed between pilot and main rollouts.