Schools Infrastructure, £100,000

This project is to unify the infrastructure of all nursery, primary and junior schools that opt into the HBC ICT support SLA for curriculum machines. This will provide a corporate and secure Email, Web-Filtering, Antivirus, Active Directory Structure and CAS Servers (part of Exchange 2010 - email) at each school; this will form the basis for a long term income for the Council opportunity across all of the Halton Schools and possibly beyond our boundaries if opportunities exist for other 3rd party services/business.

This investment is intended to secure the Halton SLA as being unique but most importantly considerably more desirable, in that this solution will add value over and above the commercial offerings to the schools we see at the moment. This investment then improves the income opportunities by providing a highly desirable support solution that will grow with schools own requirement's over the coming years, without becoming too costly for them.

Arp Switch Upgrade, £30,000

Following a formal security test, a vulnerability has been identified within the core switch servicing the council's network. This requires an urgent hardware upgrade to part of the switch to mitigate this potential issue. This is required in order that HBC remains compliant with the current Code of Connection, as such we have no choice but to upgrade.

Server Replacement Programme, £100,000

The Council operates a similar Desktop Replacement programme; however, Server replacements are dealt with on a one off basis given the cost and specification of these specialised devices – currently supported by the use of extended warranty but limited by replacement parts availability.

Servers are a specialist item supporting all departments, the current policy of extended use and virtualisation enables the Council to be able to reduce revenue commitments associated with end of warranty replacement as we would with PC equipment and utilise this investment in areas of growth in order to stabilise revenue increases.

Items such as this are no different to commercial vehicles so long as the performance and reliability are easily maintained there is little need to replace the item until either aspect comes into question. But as with commercial vehicles as a large business we own and operate a large fleet of units and a constant need for upgrade will always remain in order to service the needs of the wider business areas.

Corporate SharePoint, £150,000

The Council is committed to Microsoft as its core technology in order to standardise and utilise the integration opportunities this allows us. The Council is upgrading to Windows 7, Office 2010, Lync telephony, and Windows Server to create a platform suitable for supporting the needs of the council for the next 5 years.

SharePoint is a key core component within this mix that is needed to bring all of the Microsoft Technologies and our vast stores of documentation and data together, as well as provide a "Hub" that integrates other major corporate applications such as the Social Care systems and the key financial and HR solutions that are in constant daily use.

SharePoint is intended to be the engine room that store's all user data, allowing it to be accessible from any location via a secure and controlled means. SharePoint replaces "file-shares", allowing controlled and organised Information Management that provides users with detailed control's over their information; including the ability to manage and share files with anyone within the Council. Systems such as the Anite document management solution will not work effectively across the corporate environment without such support and require this solution as the base platform in order to operate effectively in a multi service environment.

SharePoint can also host the Councils Intranet, and even the Internet which means that users will use a single technology to manage their own files and the way that the rest of the Council and the outside world sees their service.

This project will acquire the hardware and software to develop this corporate platform over the next 12 – 36 months as requirement grows.

Internet, £50,000

This simply relates to a Licence cost to enable SharePoint to be accessible over the Internet, this is to enable unlimited public access to the services under the Microsoft licensing regulations.

Microsoft Enterprise Agreement, £112,703

Licence costs for Microsoft core products – as it stands the authority would have had to find just under 1 million pounds this year to maintain a full Enterprise agreement for the next 3 years. Through the smart use of technology and the licensing of software through the previous agreement the authority is now licensed to use the latest set of Microsoft desktop products that will see us through the next 3 – 5 years without any major investment within this area for its 1,800 Microsoft Office users. The current capital investment will allow for a license known as a "core cal", which will allow the authority to maintain security patching, vital upgrades and user certificates for the current base of software that we now own. Before any major decisions need to be made as to the upgrade requirements into the future.

3 – 5 years is a long time in terms of technology but we have to look at previous strategies that have allowed us to stretch almost 7 years out of the current desktop solutions' that are now being replaced; with what is leading edge technology, that will potentially allow for a similar extended return on investment.

Microsoft Premier Agreement, £33,000

The Microsoft Premier Agreement is a 'central pot of specialist engineer time' that provides 3 key areas, helpdesk facility for logging emergency technical calls with Microsoft, onsite specific training plus overviews for future strategic purposes in relation to software compatibility and changes. Together with onsite dedicated field engineers for the implementation of projects including skills transfer.

The helpdesk facility is required to provide immediate support for some of the authority's key systems such as email, internet, SQL databases, telephone and all Microsoft related products as the ICT teams install and configure these new services.

As a department we do not always have the luxury to maintain in house skills to implement some of the future Microsoft projects such as the initial development of SharePoint, the integration of the Lync system. A Microsoft engineer can both implement and provide the essential skills transfer for key members of staff within a matter of days which will become essential over the coming months as the rate of technology change will be quite considerable.

PC Replacement Programme, £140,000

On-going project to replace all PCs & Laptops that are now currently out of warranty or due to be out of warranty between 2012/2013. This involves some 400 devices at the last count. All devices are now subject to the new device strategy that allows devices to be tailored to user requirement, cost and maintenance needs. This has proven to be a popular strategy with the corporate user base; the recent member device replacement project fully supports this change in strategy with members voting to use the smaller and less costly netbook devices to support the objectives of the programme whilst gaining a device that covers their needs effectively.

AV Equipment for Muni Conference Rooms, £40,000

Audio-Visual solution for the Ground Floor, Municipal Buildings, this project is underway with further enhancements to the facilities planned as and when funding allows.

SAN to SAN Replication, £100,000

HBC currently has a VMware farm consisting of 275 servers which reside on a SAN.

VMware is simply a means of consolidating what used to be a high volume of stand-alone servers into an array of larger units that can now house what used to be 30 – 40 devices saving on space and the more important and costly aspects of power and cooling.

SAN relates to the term storage area network, this is where all of the councils applications that control our data are held be that email or Care Solutions; as it stands this is a hugely important aspect of the technology platform because this SAN controls the distribution of our most important asset, the client data and the specific process's we use to provide services to our residents.

The authority also owns a second SAN which currently only houses the Exchange 2003 (email) servers which are due to be migrated to a new Exchange 2010 email solution.

The next stage in this plan is to re-house the second SAN away from the main computer room to a council location that contains a fast fibre optic network.

Replication software, hardware and consultancy will need to be purchased and installed so that key virtual servers will then be able to be replicated between the VMware SAN and the second 'off-site' SAN in real time therefore creating a true off site disaster recovery environment.

Virtual Desktop/Apps Test Deployment, £20,000

This is a research and development project needed to implement a small virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) to ascertain its benefits and discover if there is a place for this technology within the authority. Also involved in this would be software streaming moving us closer to the development of a dedicated Halton Cloud.

VDI would consolidate end user desktops onto centralised servers and would also allow centralised software streaming providing the ability to run software on a desktop without it being installed locally on any device therefore avoiding compatibility issues. Funding permitting this will form an essential aspect of future cost savings and a move away in certain areas from Citrix technologies that have served us well over the last few years.

Night-watchman Centralised PC Power Management, £40,000

As the name suggests this is power management software solution that allows desktop computing devices, to be turned on or off centrally or remotely at specific times.

We may for example require a desktop to be security patched including Microsoft, Adobe and 3rd party software updates therefore the desktop would need to be on at the time required to carry out these tasks, and then turned off once the task is completed. There may be a requirement for certain PC's to be off at certain times due to energy efficiency, this is also achievable.

The software is also capable of producing reports indicating desktop uptime and efficiency stats on usage.

SCOM Consultancy, £20,000

This is a centralised monitoring and alerting system that we currently operate that requires updating for use with the new desktop environment.

Most 3rd party applications have plug in SCOM modules so it's not just an early warning system for Microsoft servers, it will also report on the operational health of major software packages we use on a daily basis.

A member of our technical staff is due to attend a course and the consultancy would be used to complement the course and to configure this solution to manage within the new environment.

Unified Communications 2nd Phase, £150,000

Following the successful pilot of Lync 2010 by ICT services and a small number of Admin support staff, it is now the intention to roll out this technology to the rest of the authority. This will empower the staff within the authority to work more productively, using the technologies that are at the core of Microsoft Lync 2010, such as document collaboration, links to email and services such as voicemail, video conferencing and simplified home working. The proposed roll out schedule has been formulated to maximise revenue savings as early in the project as possible.

Marshgate ICT Workshop Additional Work Space, £30,000

If funding allows toward the end of the financial year this project is to extend the current working environment upwards into the roof space in order to provide additional work space for the staff as well as storage for stock.

Backup System Phase 3, £170,000

Back up Phase 3 is to further enhance our current back-up system. The project will include adding capacity to our existing de-duplication unit, and adding an offsite solution to allow for essential offsite disaster recovery. This will also include the physical relocation of the back-up tape jukebox to allow fully automated off site tape storage.

Data Centre Monitoring Equipment, £25,000

Data Centre monitoring equipment is needed to improve the monitoring of the vast array of systems, such as power, environment, and to look to allowing greater efficiencies. This will include connecting all the data centre uninterruptable power supplies to the network allowing the systems to report power consumption and operational load within the data centre.

Data Centre Equipment, £35,000

This is to replace a number of out-dated and broken specialised server screens, server storage racks and ancillary equipment that have come to the end of their natural life. This is essential maintenance linked to the provision of new server racking to allow the addition of hardware, due to the continued growth in demand for centralised data services as these costs sit outside of the standard hardware provision and fall into data centre maintenance and growth requirement.