Town Council Office: Berwick WorkSpace,
Boarding School Yard, 90 Marygate, Berwick-upon-Tweed,
Northumberland. TD15 1BN
Telephone: 01289 302391

Berwick-upon-Tweed
Town Council

Date: 08 March 2021
Please ask for: Gareth Davies
Email: town.clerk@berwick-tc.gov.uk

Outline of service required

We are a medium sized town council, serving a population of approximately 13,000 people, committed to innovation, improvement and to delivering best value. As a result it is appropriate for Council to review its IT requirements on a regular basis.

We are looking for an expert consultant/integrated services provider to either advise Council on IT procurement or to propose an integrated solution to our IT needs. In either case, the service proposed should be costed on a fair estimate basis.

Any questions about this request for expressions of interest should be sent to
town.clerk@berwick-tc.gov.uk

Areas to be covered

Hardware
Within our office, the computers used by our five staff are linked to a network supported by a physical server. Historically, this system was used to give all staff access to documents such as meeting papers that are now stored on cloud servers associated with G Suite [now Google workspace]. The server's main role now is to host the accounts software which now needs to be moved to a cloud server within the next period.
Our officers' recommendation is that Council consider procuring a web server to replace the existing office server, and move the accounts package to that server, which should also eventually be the host server for the town council website and productivity suite.
We require advice as to whether this is a reasonable conclusion, and as to the likely cost of pursuing this recommendation.

Our staff are provided with a mix of desktop and laptop computers, all of which are end of life or likely to be end of life.
Given the whole set of needs we have identified, we need advice as to the form factor and type of device needed to support staff who will all be likely to be required to work in more than one location and to support meetings in our Town Hall.

Software - productivity

Council first transitioned from desktop based services (Microsoft Office) in 2017, and at that time, Google's G Suite was procured on a monthly subscription basis for all staff and councillors. It is now time to review the current situation to consider if this is still the best option.

Since 2017 officers have experimented with project management/collaboration software such as Trello.

In addition council provides @berwick-tc.gov.uk email accounts to 16 councillors, and has non staff email accounts (e.g. info@ and admin@), and an email provider, whether integrated with productivity software, or separate, would be required, bearing in mind that council will continue to use its own domain name for email addresses.

Council requires advice as to which office suite and email provider should be procured, and on what basis, and which collaboration software should be procured. The estimated cost of these items should include transition and training costs where applicable.

Software and hardware - Communications

Council currently relies upon an ISDN based phone system and a separate Broadband service. Previous efforts to use a web based phone service failed because of quality of service issues, which led to our reverting to ISDN. Given that ISDN is now a technology with a clear end date, we need to identify an alternative service.

Since March 2020 the Council have successfully used Zoom, and any new software based phone solution should enable the same level of video comms/meetings support as is currently possible using Zoom.

Regards

Gareth Davies LI.B MIPM
Town Clerk