

**REPORT TO: AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE ON 28
APRIL 2010**

SUBJECT: DISPOSAL OF ICT EQUIPMENT

BY: CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 This report is to inform Members of the current process for the disposal of ICT hardware.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section A (54) of the Council's Administrative Scheme relating to Information Technology policies.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **It is recommended that Audit and Performance Review Committee review the contents of this report.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The ICT Section currently uses ReBoot, an independent company with charitable status based in Forres, to recycle redundant ICT equipment. ReBoot was set up in 1997 by the Moray Voluntary Services Organisation (MVSO) and was part funded by The Moray Council through landfill tax credits. The ICT Section has used ReBoot since its formation and was encouraged to do so due to its link with the Council.
- 3.2 At the outset, the redundant ICT equipment was recycled free of charge. The Council no longer subsidises ReBoot and charges now apply for the recycling service. The charges are reasonable with the unit price for recycling a PC base unit set at £2; this includes the charge for sanitisation of the hard drives.
- 3.3 It should be noted that the ICT Section also uses ReBoot to recycle other items of ICT equipment such as computer monitors, printers, scanners and faxes. During the current financial year, the total expenditure to date for the disposal of all ICT equipment (including 743 PCs) comes to £5,300.

- 3.4 Communications-Electronics Security Group (CESG) is the UK Government's National Technical Authority for Information Assurance. CESG have a number of standards in relation to Information Security. HMG Infosec Standard 5 relates to the secure sanitisation of Protectively Marked or Sensitive Information.
- 3.5 HMG Infosec Standard 5 contains a decision tree that determines the appropriate level of sanitisation. This takes into account the classification of the data, whether or not the media are to be re-utilised and the security of the subsequent environment if the media are to be re-utilised.
- 3.6 The recommended procedure for the Council's current arrangements is to overwrite the PC hard disks to the enhanced level of the standard. This means that the entire disk is completely overwritten on three separate passes; the disk is overwritten with 1's on the first pass, with 0's on the second pass and with a random value on the third pass. A verification process then runs to ensure that the sanitisation has been successful.
- 3.7 In terms of the Council's current arrangements, the following paragraphs describe the process for collection of the PC equipment and the sanitisation of the data.
- 3.8 All redundant PCs on the Council's corporate network are returned to a secure central point prior to recycling. All hard disks are then reformatted as a matter of course. This does not remove the data but it does remove the references to the data held on the disk.
- 3.9 All redundant PCs on the schools' network remain at the site until collected by ReBoot. No reformatting is carried out on the school PCs as the schools' infrastructure was designed at the outset to have centralised data storage (on the servers) for all users. This means that the data held on school PCs is minimal.
- 3.10 After the PCs have been collected for recycling, the van returns directly to ReBoot's premises in Forres. On return, the van enters a secure locked area and the equipment is unloaded. Once the equipment has been unloaded, the PC details are logged on a database and all of the Council's asset tags are removed. The hard disk is then removed from the PC and is sanitised in accordance with the enhanced level of HMG Infosec Standard 5 i.e. three overwrites and a mandatory verification.
- 3.11 If the software process does not manage to complete successfully, for example if there are errors on the disk to be sanitised, the disk will be destroyed. This involves dismantling the disk by hand and removing the disk platters. These are then scored, shredded and disposed via a licensed recycler.

- 3.12 For every consignment of equipment, ReBoot issues the Council with a certificate that shows the quantity of each item that has been sent for recycling. The certificate also contains a summary in relation to the sanitisation process i.e. how many disks were sanitised using the software and how many disks were physically destroyed. A detailed log (serial number, capacity, method of sanitisation etc) of the individual hard disks in the consignment is also included with the certificate.
- 3.13 A number of recommendations were made by Internal Audit in relation to the disposal of hardware equipment as part of a report entitled 'ICT Hardware and Software Register'. A formal contract for the service will be established with ReBoot by 31st May. The contract will include suitable random sample checks. It should be noted that the ICT Section has recently undertaken a small sample check on disks returned from ReBoot following the sanitisation process. Four disks have been checked from recent consignments and the data recovery tool utilised found no data on any of the disks.
- 3.14 Following the meeting of the Audit & Performance Review Committee on 3 March 2010, the ICT Section conducted a short survey of all Scottish Local Authorities in relation to their procedures for the disposal of hardware equipment. 24 out of the 32 organisations responded to the survey and of those, 23 use a third party to recycle hardware equipment. In terms of outsourcing the data sanitisation, 18 organisations use a third party to carry out this function.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Single Outcome Agreement/Service Improvement Plan

None.

(b) Policy and Legal

Government authority is referred to in para 3.4 above.

(c) Resources (Financial, Risks, Staffing and Property)

None.

(d) Consultations

None.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The Council has used the current provider, ReBoot, for a considerable number of years without any reported incidents. The current procedures used by the Council follow the guidance as set out in HMG Infosec Standard 5, the CESG's standard for the secure sanitisation of Protectively Marked or Sensitive Information. From the survey of the other Scottish Local Authorities, it would appear that 18 out of 24 respondents also utilise a third party provider to carry out data sanitisation.
- 5.2 A formal contract will be agreed with ReBoot by 31st May.

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Background Papers:
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