North Lanarkshire Council Report

Finance and Resources Committee									
Does	Does this report require to be approved?								
Ref	KH/GR	Date	28/02/24						
Connectivity Framework - Operational Review									
Fron	n Katrina Hassell, Chief Officer (Bu	usiness a	and Digital)						

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Executive Summary

This report provides an update on the implementation and operational status of the Connectivity Framework approved by committee in December 2021, and the performance of the approved provider Commsworld Ltd.

The report outlines progress against the initial deliverables on this long-term contract:

- replacement Wide Area Network (WAN).
- increased operational bandwidth and resilience.
- improved Internet capacity and throughput.
- single consolidated and more widely available public WiFi service.
- Fibre availability for existing and future sites.

The report further describes why the WAN delivery has been delayed by 6 months; now expected to complete by January 2024, and discusses the migration process and its complexity. The successful delivery of substantially increased internet capacity and throughput in particular for our school estate is outlined, with a high-level explanation of CCTV contract integration, the plans for consolidated Public Wi-Fi delivery and the general fibre enablement of the community via fibre to council sites.

Finally, the report discusses how the supplier is managed and Business and Digital's assessment of their performance to date.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Finance and Resources Committee:

(1) Acknowledge the delivery of the contract to date, as is Commsworld performance assessment, which is positive, whilst outlining the expectation of the coming year.

The Plan for North Lanarkshire

Priority	All priorities
Ambition statement	(18) Ensure our digital transformation is responsive to all people's needs and enable access to the services they need
Programme of Work	Digital North Lanarkshire

1. Background

- 1.1 Previous reports to the former Transformation and Digitisation Committee (December 2021, February 2022), summarised the processes undertaken and award of a Digital Infrastructure Framework to Commsworld Ltd. Subsequently a report was presented to Policy and Strategy (29th September 2022) that informed committee of progress in delivering the operational objects and touched upon associated community benefits.
- 1.2 The Framework has an initial period of 180 months (15 years from February 2022) with the council reserving the right to extend such for additional periods up to a maximum of a further 60 months (5 years). The value of the Framework Agreement shall not exceed £150,000,000, exclusive of VAT.
- **1.3** Five initial Call off Contracts with an aggregated value of £26,126,599 were awarded as follows:
 - 1. Wide Area Network Connectivity
 - 2. Analogue Services replacement
 - 3. CCTV Leased Services Connectivity
 - 4. Internet Services
 - 5. Public Wi-Fi.
- 1.4 The predominant aspect of the Commsworld Ltd solution delivery model is to utilise where available, BT Openreach infrastructure ducting. By installing their own subduct within existing ducting, to which they would them blow fibre through, this provides multiple benefits such as reducing physical build, road, and pavement disruption, is quicker to deploy and at lower cost.
- 1.5 A further key aspect of the solution is to utilise the council's requirements for fibre-first services to increase the fibre footprint across North Lanarkshire, and thus enable Commsworld and partners to offer full fibre services quicker than the commercial market intended whilst increasing supplier competition, hopefully positively effecting cost and affordability for local residents and businesses.

The award was based on the delivery of up to 340km of high-capacity fibre across the authority, connecting council premises and enabling communities.

- 1.6 The initial period following award focused upon high-level design for the Wide Area Network and establishing the governance processes around managing the contract. At the same time Commsworld Ltd were completing the physical design, resource planning and determining infrastructure build requirements.
- 1.7 Due to the duration of overall procurement and award process, and the known lengthy implementation timescales, there was always the understanding that the volume of services would change, (property rationalisation, home working, hubs and savings all have had an impact). This has resulted in a reduction in the number of live sites to be delivered, with c300 now in scope. Other sites still receive fibre to the premise, thus creating that wider footprint, but have no active service nor commit any revenue.
- 1.8 To aid the delivery of the fibre, a short-term cross service group was established that aided the management around road opening permits, land register checks, asbestos reports, etc. This group having served its purpose has now been stood down.

1.9 All sites to receive new fibre would undergo a route assessment process, that considered routes to premises, from boundary to building, and within building. All of which was gathered within a route pack that initiated a workflow for assessment and ultimately sign off from appropriate internal parties.

2. Report

Fibre Delivery

2.1 The delivery of up to 340km of fibre infrastructure is a large construction job, one of the benefits of the delivery model was the reuse of existing BT Openreach infrastructure for up to 85% of the build, vastly reducing construction and hence disruption. In reality, Commsworld experienced significantly greater instances of duct collapse and blockage than their planning expected, up to 40% higher in some areas.

Each identified blockage has to be cleared and for many, results in the required road opening permit process being used. Although this has introduced delay, there is the benefit that these routes are then cleared and subsequently should enable quicker and easier delivery of fibre infrastructure for those that follow behind. In effect this is another benefit of the model chosen in that not only does it deliver the fibre contracted, but improves the underlying infrastructure enable future delivery.

2.2 As of mid-December 2023 over 290km of fibre had been deployed.

Wide Area Network delivery

- 2.3 The initial expectation of the contract was to have all sites migrated by end of June 2023, however by March 2023 it became apparent that this was not achievable. In the main this has been due a greater number than expected of identified duct blockages within the BT Openreach infrastructure. With the complexity of the thorough sign off process outlined across 1.7 1.9 a lesser though contributing factor.
- 2.4 With significant numbers of duct blockages identified, the migration plan was adjusted to October 2023 and the milestone payment plan altered to reflect a combination of metres delivered and sites migrated. Although by mid-September up to 20 site migrations per week were frequently happening, further delays with more blockages, storm weather and staffing constraints pushed the completion date further back.
- 2.5 The majority of in-use circuits were delivered by Virgin Media Business, to whom we are currently in contract Termination Assistance phase until 31 December 2023. After this point services will continue to be delivered should they be required, on a 30-day rolling notice standard terms and conditions contract.
- 2.6 By mid-November over 225 sites of a total 301 had been migrated and planning was well underway to identify any sites at risk of not completing migration. Given notice periods for cessation, any services identified at risk, even if expectation was that they would be delivered in December, would have to continue into January, February. However as per the delivery contract it was agreed that any such extensions, where it was clear the responsibility for delayed delivery was with the supplier, then the financial burden of extension will be with Commsworld.

As of 30th November, it was agreed with Commsworld that 40 sites remained at risk and hence must have their services extended, however these will all be delivered before the end of January as they continued to migrate throughout December.

- 2.7 All sites will receive an increase in available bandwidth, with a number of sites also receiving a fully resilient service; generally:
 - Non-secondary educational establishments will increase from 50MB to 1GB
 - Secondary educational establishments increasing from 1GB to resilient 5GB
 - All Corporate building receiving a minimum of 1GB, with large sites resilient 5GB

Analogue services replacement delivery

2.8 In November 2017, the telecoms industry supported by OFCOM (Office of Communications) announced the intention to retire the analogue telephone network by the end of 2025. As such the intention of this aspect of the Connectivity contract was to ensure that where required the alternative to traditional analogue lines via a fibre service is available. Therefore, this contract does not introduce active services, but brings fibre to the premise boundary.

Commsworld have planned their deployment routes to deliver fibre to WAN and public Wi-Fi sites and also to pass sites that only currently utilise an analogue service. As such the delivery of this contract is of a lesser importance than sites requiring an active service. Although many of these sites will have fibre in their immediate area due to proximity to active sites, the delivery of fibre to the premises themselves is the next phase of the project following transition of WAN sites.

CCTV leased services replacement delivery

2.9 This call of contract initially focuses upon the merging of a previously separate dedicated CCTV infrastructure into a single combined infrastructure capable of utilising existing WAN connections, that ultimately will allow the delivery of CCTV services to any WAN connected site, albeit CCTV technology itself would still also have to be deployed.

The existing CCTV network comprises a mixture of wireless point to point services and leased circuits, approximately a dozen or so circuits will initially merge into this contract, with future requirements capable of being delivered over that single underlying infrastructure. Whilst the cost-effective wireless infrastructure in place continues to be utilised and replaced as and when required.

2.10 Due to the nature of existing contracts, and importance of the WAN migration, CCTV leased line services will not start to migrate until 2024 and are expected to be completed by April.

Internet Services delivery

2.11 The council has previously used several internet breakout services with a maximum capacity of 10GB, however the use was limited by the physical web-filtering capacity used to securely manage, inspect, and record that activity at a max of 4.8GB. This call of contract increases that capacity up to a capability of 40GB and also introduces a new Commsworld hosted filtering solution that accommodates that growth in throughput.

As of the end of November 2023 all schools-generated internet traffic is now routed through this solution, providing increased throughput and improved traffic inspection security functionality.

Public WiFi Delivery

- 2.12 The council previously operated multiple public Wi-Fi services enabled and supported in the main by previous ALEO's; these included each of our Town Centres, some Leisure venues and a number of cultural venues. The intention when incorporating the requirement into the Connectivity contract was to create a single North Lanarkshire public Wi-Fi service that incorporated other significant areas such as high schools, sheltered housing and supported accommodation, with the ability to deploy a Wi-Fi as a service solution across the estate as and when required.
- 2.13 With the initial focus on the priority WAN and Internet deliverables, Public Wi-Fi has only latterly come to the fore, with Low Level Designs now being agreed and 2 Proof of Concept (PoC) sites identified with intended delivery before year end.
- 2.14 At a high level, the delivery model falls into two scenarios:
 - <u>Sites with existing council Wi-Fi infrastructure</u> Sites will consume Public Wi-Fi as a service delivered across the new WAN, this will utilise existing Wi-Fi and local area network infrastructure to overlay a Public Wi-Fi service, in effect reusing existing technology used for corporate Wi-Fi delivery. Although presented via the same infrastructure, Public Wi-Fi will securely tunnel back through our environments to terminate within dedicated Public Wi-Fi

appliances hence maintaining separation from the corporate estate.

- <u>Sites with no existing council Wi-Fi infrastructure</u> Will require survey's, cabling, and access point installation, and hence are more complex to deliver. They will again use the WAN to transport the traffic back into the Public Wi-Fi environment.
- 2.15 In total the current plans are to deliver Wi-Fi-aaS to 45 corporate sites and initially the 23 high schools with the capability to extend further, with a further 49 to be delivered as greenfield sites via new Commsworld Infrastructure.

Supplier Management

- 2.16 Commsworld were recognised at contract strategy stage as being a strategic level supplier, using the Business and Digital Supplier Segmentation approach. Strategic Suppliers are described as very important to the organisation's ability to operate and remain effective and on this basis Commsworld are closely monitored and managed.
- 2.17 Commsworld attend regular monthly service reviews led by the Supplier and Contact Manager. In line with the contract specification, they are contracted to submit management information monthly detailing the volumetrics against each KPI measured against the service. This includes Incident Management, the Service Level Agreement/Performance against all call off contracts where a service is delivered, and an overall RAG status for the month. The report also captures any service improvements that have been identified from the current/previous months, risks and issues, orders and tracks financial management.
- 2.18 Fault handling and Incident Management are trended and monitored at these meetings, underpinned via the Service Level Agreement which categorises each incident/fault relative to the type of fault and resolution target: the most serious affecting incident having a target resolution time of 4 hours. The contract has the capability for service credits should SLA levels be breached. Further details of the Service Level

Performance can be found in Appendices (ii) and (iii), which represents an extract of the October 2023 monthly service report.

- 2.19 The latest report details an overall status of Green, with all incidents to date being resolved within the relative target time.
- 2.20 Commsworld performance is further assessed through a quarterly Balanced Scorecard approach focusing on:
 - Project delivery
 - The Service
 - Service Level Performance
 - Billing/Cost Stability
- 2.21 The scorecard is completed by both council and Commsworld teams and follows governance agreed by both parties. This allows commentary and feedback by both parties to agree/disagree on the scoring with comments/justification against each criterion. The intention behind this is to make the process as transparent and two-way as possible.
- 2.22 The latest scorecard (seen in appendix (i)) details an overall supplier score of 21 out of 28 points with an overall percentage of 88% reflected in the scoring criteria as, "Consistently good service level, KPI's achieved. Good Communication and responsive. MI data and evidence of achievement provided on time".
- 2.23 As of 19 December 2023, over 290km of the stated 340km has been installed. This accommodates the fibre to connect council premises requiring "live" services. Over the first 6 months of 2024, Commsworld will continue to deploy fibre infrastructure to those identified properties not requiring live services, and hence increasing that fibre footprint across the area.

Summary

2.24 The delivery of the whole programme of works, the opportunities it can enable and associated council ambitions, rely heavily upon the successful delivery of the underlying fibre infrastructure. Clearly the installation of c340km of fibre is no simple task and it is disappointing that the delivery required an extension to the initial plan by 6 months. However as outlined in paragraph 2.3 above, the excessive number of blockages experienced has been the over-riding contributing factor to the delay.

The review of routes into 300 varied properties was a large and lengthy task. The expectations of the supplier in how quickly the council could react to these introduced additional challenges, with sign off of individual site route packs requiring a number of council areas to interact and frequently also introduced other 3rd party specialists to perform route checks on areas such as asbestos and fire breaks. Once the process was ironed out it performed well thanks to the efforts of various team such as Roads, Estates, Housing, and Assets and Procurement. However, until momentum had been achieved, these interactions initially impacted and slowed the project though such impact was limited in comparison to the required street works.

Technical design and agreement for such an important and complex offering was always going to require a high level of resource and an amount of back and forth. Again, as the working practices between the organisations became familiar this improved the overall experience but delays were naturally introduced at the beginning of the contract.

- 2.25 The engagement and delivery by Commsworld remains a positive experience. They are being managed through our contract and supplier management process and continue to score reasonably well in performance. This is also demonstrated in the level of actual incidents raised and the single failure against as shown in Appendix (ii).
- 2.26 Although it is subject to a separate report to the Communities Committee, it is worthwhile noting that Commsworld have been excellent around Community Benefits, with 6 Modern apprentices on the go, numerous STEM sessions delivered within schools and a number of community engagement sessions. The wider plans for fibre to residents and local businesses has been slower than preferred and is a key area they will be expected to deliver on in 2024. However, the delivery to date had to focus upon connectivity to council sites, providing that underlying anchor infrastructure that will enable future opportunity across our communities.

3. Measures of success

- 3.1 Measure of success include:
 - Implementation of new Wide Area Network, maintaining continuity of service, whilst increasing capacity and resilience.
 - Increased per site bandwidth to a minimum of 1GB.
 - Increased resiliency of overall network and core sites through resilient capacity.
 - Significantly increased internet capacity and throughput.
 - Reduced cost profile.
 - Consolidation to a single free at point of use Public Wi-Fi service.
 - Increased availability of Public Wi-Fi service.
 - Fibre distribution to council sites and premises for need.
 - Integration of CCTV and WAN networks to enable delivery of CCTV to any WAN connected site.

4. Supporting documentation

Appendix (i) – Balanced Scorecard Appendix (ii) – Service Level Performance Appendix (iii) – Incident Volumetrics

Kotina m Hawl

Katrina Hassell Chief Officer (Business and Digital Solutions)

5. Impacts

5.1	Public Sector Equality Duty and Fairer Scotland Duty
	Does the report contain information that has an impact as a result of the Public
	Sector Equality Duty and/or Fairer Scotland Duty?
	Yes No Kit
	If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?
	If Yes, has an assessment been carried out and published on the council's
	website? https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/your-community/equalities/equality-
	and-fairer-scotland-duty-impact-assessments
	Yes D No D
5.2	Financial impact
	Does the report contain any financial impacts?
	Yes 🗆 No 🖂
	If Yes, have all relevant financial impacts been discussed and agreed with
	Finance?
	Yes 🗆 No 🗆
	If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?
5.0	
5.3	HR policy impact
	Does the report contain any HR policy or procedure impacts?
	Yes D No 🖂
	If Yes, have all relevant HR impacts been discussed and agreed with People Resources?
	Yes \square No \square
	If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?
	If res, please provide a biler summary of the impact?
5.4	Legal impact
	Does the report contain any legal impacts (such as general legal matters, statutory
	considerations (including employment law considerations), or new legislation)?
	Yes 🗆 No 🖂
	If Yes, have all relevant legal impacts been discussed and agreed with Legal and
	Democratic?
	Yes 🗆 No 🗆
	If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?
5.5	Data protection impact
	Does the report / project / practice contain or involve the processing of personal
	data?
	Yes 🗆 No 🖂
	If Yes, is the processing of this personal data likely to result in a high risk to the
	If Yes, is the processing of this personal data likely to result in a high risk to the data subject?
	data subject? Yes □ No □
	data subject? Yes No If Yes, has a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) been carried out and e-
	data subject? Yes □ No □

5.6	Technology / Digital impact Does the report contain information that has an impact on either technology, digital transformation, service redesign / business change processes, data management, or connectivity / broadband / Wi-Fi? Yes No Technology change via WAN, internet, and public Wi-Fi as described throughout the report have been subject to the required design review process by the council's Technical Design Authority.
	Where the impact identifies a requirement for significant technology change, has an assessment been carried out (or is scheduled to be carried out) by the Enterprise Architecture Governance Group (EAGG)? Yes 🛛 No 🗆
5.7	Environmental / Carbon impact Does the report / project / practice contain information that has an impact on any environmental or carbon matters? Yes □ No ⊠ If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?
5.8	Communications impact Does the report contain any information that has an impact on the council's communications activities? Yes No If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?
5.9	Risk impact Is there a risk impact? Yes No If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the key risks and potential impacts, highlighting where the risk(s) are assessed and recorded (e.g. Corporate or Service or Project Risk Registers), and how they are managed? Risk managed through project risk register and monthly review with supplier.
5.10	Armed Forces Covenant Duty Does the report require to take due regard of the Armed Forces Covenant Duty (i.e. does it relate to healthcare, housing, or education services for in-Service or ex-Service personnel, or their families, or widow(er)s)? Yes □ No ⊠ If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the provision which has been made to ensure there has been appropriate consideration of the particular needs of the Armed Forces community to make sure that they do not face disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public services.
5.11	Children's rights and wellbeing impact Does the report contain any information regarding any council activity, service delivery, policy, or plan that has an impact on children and young people up to the age of 18, or on a specific group of these? Yes No If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact and the provision that has been made to ensure there has been appropriate consideration of the relevant Articles from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). If Yes, has a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) been carried out? Yes No

Appendix (i) – Balanced Scorecard

Cor	nmsworld Digital Service	s Connectivity Framework	
Your Contact Details	Contract Deta	-	
Name: Mark Brennan Category Digital Connectivity	Contract Ref(s): Supplier Name:	Connectivity Framework - Call off Contra Or CommsWorld Or Next Review Date	
e-mail: branama@rorbia.gov.sk	Supplier Contact	Lyne Mday	
Contact Number: 01698 520589	Period of Review	Quarter 4 (Jan 2023 - March 2023)	
Scoring	Score 1, 2, 3 or 4	Comments:	Commsworld Feedback:
Project Delivery/Quality			
Performance against programme		Programme is behind by 4 months, this is due to various factor from both side. Initial delay in asbestos reports however this is caught up and should not cause any further delays. Also blockages in the Wishaw,	Commsworld Delivery Team Feedback
		Toport former in the comparison of the second secon	Addestos We disagree with the feedback relating to the addestor reports. The initial 2-week turnaround that NLC advised in December has not been met. The route approach are also not coming across within the 10 days that we agreed at the start of the programme.
			Communication Our PM has 2-3 meetings with the per week, plus any ad hoc results for technical discussions that come in. We provide weekly updates via the project reports and the monthly beard pack. Do NLC feel there is more we could be doing to communicate?
			Our feedback would be that NLC attendance at the weekly meetings could be improved as at times requests to cancel/move coming at late notice. Is there perhaps a better time/day that would suit better?
	2		Schedule We have previously advised NLC that we cannot provide a detailed schedule without the route pack/asbestos approvals in place. Until we have this approval the infrastructure team are unable to move the sites into delivery.
Works completed in accordance with specification	3	Any work that has been completed has been in accordance with the specification.	
Continual Improvement/Innovation		Planning to phase in the CSI register after more sites are migrated. This CSI register will be recorded and	
Consider improvements into teach		aming to phase while Corregulations into more state and interrigitation. This Corregidation and the managed as per the Framework terms. This score this quarter will be disregarded and removed from scorecard.	
Service			
Responsiveness to BAU Service requests	4	All BAU Changes have been completed ahead of the SLA	
		Service reports available on time and contain all relevant information	
Management Information	4		
Service Level Performance			
Call off Contract In Life Service Levels	4	At time of review , the in life services relate purely to call off contract 1 WAN. The reports supplied for Jan- February demonstrate all 29 'live' services as being 100% available with no faults.	
Billing/Cost Stability		Billing continues to be straight forward and all invoices are presented in good time and in the format requested	
	4	by Finance. Billing enquiries are dealt with quickly and the response is received within 24 hours, or sometimes same day. The circuit prices have been static and reflect the agreed call off contract rates.	
Overall Score and percentage:	21	88% 85%	
Key to Overall KPI Score & % Colour coding: Green = scoring 75% > meeting minimur Amber = scoring between 40% and 75% Red = score of less that 40% intensity	requires monitoring	Key to Overall KPI Comparison Colour coding: Green Inproved since last score, Amber Same score as before, Med D Dminishing score	
Overall comments:	, i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i		
There has been an improvement in the overall score since the previou is being carried out by CommeWorld across these areas. The areas from having a separate category which has been implemented in this communications received from CommeWorld to enable both parties to	cored showing concerns relate to the delivery pr suarters scorecard. The Project related feedback	mance & Biling have been scored highly and the stakeholders involved recognised all the good work that oject. From the last scorecard issued there was recognition any future scoring in this area would benefit this quarter has been scored as showing minor concerns which relate to the project schedule and to carry out the projected works. This abeen an origing concern for a number of months row and	
needs a CSI plan to address.			

Appendix (ii) – Service Level Performance

Below table copied from October 2023 Service Report.

1. SLA Performance

Category	Resolved Within SLA	Resolved Out with SLA	Total	SLA Attainment %		
1	0	1	0	0.00%		
2	0	0	0	N/A		
3	0	0	0	N/A		
4	0	0	0	N/A		
Total	0	1	0	0.00%		

There was 1 in scope incidents which have an SLA attainment of 0%.

1 ticket failed SLA during the reporting period.

Customer	Queue	Product	Carrier	Site	Raised B			Ticket		Ticket	Sub	oject	Created At	Status		Closed At	Closure Notes
•	*			-	*	Re T e	eferenc	Туре	-	Reference		*	*		-	•	3
North Lanarkshire Council		Pure Fibre (ML6 0AG)		Airdrie Library	Viki Forsyth	FL	L010096	Fault		6117615201	Aird Libr	lrie ary work	12/10/2023 13:58	Closed		13/10/2023 11:22	Fibre break repaired

A service credit of **£145.84** is due for October as 1 ticket failed SLA. Ticket 6000109929 has been raised for the credit.

									Credit	
Service		Details of the			Total outage	Service Credit	Annual	Monthly	Due per	Total service credit
Reference	Site Name	incident	Date of Incident	Incident Number	time	to be applied	Cost	Cost	Hour	due
FL010096	Airdrie Library	No connection	12/10/2023 13:58	6117615201	28:09:00	50% of monthly c	£3,500.04	£291.67	N/A	£145.84

Appendix (iii) - Incident volumetrics

1. Summary of Call volumes and SLA attainment

The number of incidents raised during October was 14 overall with 13 x P1.

2. Incidents by Priority

The diagram below shows the number of calls raised by priority for all previous months.

