

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

14TH JUNE 2022

**CABINET MEMBER RESPONSIBLE FOR FINANCE:
COUNCILLOR MALCOLM LONGLEY**

Report Title	Improvements to Property Access Control System
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List of Appendices

None

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To seek Cabinet approval to establish a new capital budget in 2022/23 to enable delivery of an upgraded and shared building access system for One Angel Square ('Angel'), the Guildhall and their associated buildings.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. There are issues with the current access control at both Angel and the Guildhall, and their associated buildings. There is an opportunity whilst updating these buildings to also change the system enabling a single shared system. Thus, staff would be able to access each building freely with a single pass.
- 2.2. This report is requesting a capital budget of £80k to update the Angel systems and replace the Guildhall system to allow them to merge. This would also form the foundation for a potential changeover of the control systems for the remainder of the Council's corporate buildings so all WNC staff could use a single card to access any corporate office.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet:
 - a) Approve a new capital budget of £80k in 2022/23 to upgrade the existing One Angel Square access control system and change the Guildhall system to unify access across Northampton corporate offices.

4. Reason for Recommendations

- 4.1 The Council needs to have secure arrangements for accessing its buildings, but the One Angel Square access control server is outdated and at risk of failure, and the Guildhall access control system is vulnerable to controller failure and needs updating to remedy this.
- 4.2 If an upgraded system was implemented, staff who access One Angel Square, the Guildhall or their associated buildings would only need a single card, promoting a common organisational identity and efficient working.
- 4.3 The upgraded system would also allow the Council's offices in other locations to be included in the future.

5. Report Background

- 5.1 The Council has four main corporate office bases: Angel and the Guildhall in Northampton, Lodge Road in Daventry and the Forum in Towcester. There are also other offices which are linked to the previous office access control: County Hall and Booth Meadow House in Northampton linked to Angel; Westbridge Depot and St Johns Car Park in Northampton linked to the Guildhall; and Tove Depot in Towcester linked to the Forum. For reasons of expediency and cost the separate systems were not replaced with a single system on the transition to West Northamptonshire Council. Staff using more than one corporate office thus have had to be issued with multiple passes.
- 5.2 The current system in the Guildhall is an old version and is not compatible with new door controllers. Should a controller fail, the whole system would need to be updated before the doors would be operational again. At the same time the Angel system server hardware is at the end of life and needs to be migrated to a new virtual server. The software is also an old version and would benefit from an update. There is also a strong desire to reduce the number of passes

needed throughout the Council, promoting a more unified staff experience moving between the corporate buildings and thus helping to develop sense of belonging and corporate culture.

- 5.3 The systems operating at the Forum and Lodge Road offices are not currently at risk of failure. It is therefore not proposed to replace those at this time. However, the new system would be designed to be capable of extending to other buildings as required.
- 5.4 The Capital & Assets Board considered a report on this matter on 12th April 2022 and recommended a new capital budget be established to enable this work to proceed.
- 5.5 It should be noted that currently the North Northamptonshire Council offices at the William Knibb Centre are also part of the Angel access control system. This connection would be removed by the proposed upgrade, if not before.

6. Issues and Choices

- 6.1 The Council has five main options:
 - 6.1.1 (1) Do nothing.
No capital investment needed.
This leaves an operational risk should a controller at Guildhall or the server at Angel fail.
 - 6.1.2 (2) Upgrade only, leave systems isolated
£9k capital investment needed.
Systems remain separate so multiple cards needed.
Resilience issues remain.
 - 6.1.3 (3) Upgrade and Northampton unification.
£70k capital investment needed.
This involves upgrading the Angel server and changing the system at the Guildhall.
Rural offices remain separate for now.
 - 6.1.4 (4) Upgrade and Northampton unification; separate rural unification
£82k capital investment needed.
Additional to (3) easier access between rural offices.
 - 6.1.5 (5) Upgrade and full WNC unification.
£120k capital investment needed.
This involves both upgrading the OAS server and changing the systems at all WNC corporate offices (Northampton, Daventry & Towcester).
- 6.2 Each of these options carries its own benefits and costs. Given the security and operational risks Options 1 and 2 are not recommended. Option 4 is not recommended given the limited additional benefit and the potentially abortive nature of the separate rural unification. Option 5 is considerably more expensive and given the lack of pressing need is not recommended above Option 3 at this time. Accordingly, Option 3 is recommended.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1 Resources and Financial

7.1.1 The recommended option would result in capital expenditure of £80k. It would also enable revenue savings estimated at £6k pa, largely from the removal of the separate Guildhall server.

7.1.2 There would also be minor non-cashable efficiency savings through a reduced need to issue access cards.

7.2 Legal

7.2.1 Subject to the approval of the budget by Cabinet any new Property Access Control system would be procured in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

7.3 Risk

7.3.1 There are limited risks from proceeding with the proposal. It is possible a new installation and upgrades might suffer initial problems, but these would be expected to be overcome. The responsibility for achieving satisfactory installation would be placed on the installation contractor.

7.3.2 The risks of not proceeding are that:

7.3.2.1 If the Angel system was to fail, the system would need to be rebuilt. Thus, there would be no ability to produce new cards or disable cards. The impact to staff using Angel and its linked buildings and access to Angel would need to be managed by additional security, costing perhaps £200 per day. Rectifying the database would cost circa £10k.

7.3.2.2 If a Guildhall door controller failed, there is a risk that, whilst a door controller is replaced, certain doors would be inoperable until repaired. This would also incur security costs of £200 per day and repairs to a controller circa £1k, if possible. Contractors have warned the control software may be incompatible with new versions of door controllers and thus would need to be upgraded as well, costing circa £5k.

7.3.3 The system to be used is an open source one, limiting the future risk of supplier capture elevating prices or the system becoming unavailable.

7.4 Consultation

7.4.1 The proposal has not been the subject of consultation.

7.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

7.5.1 None.

7.6 **Climate Impact**

7.6.1 The change would have no material climate impact.

7.7 **Community Impact**

7.7.1 Whilst the change would enable the Council to serve the community more effectively, no direct community impact should arise.

7.8 **Communications**

7.8.1 A communications plan would be agreed with the communications team as part of the project implementation plan.

8. Background Papers

8.1 WNC Access Control – ELT paper (11th March 2022)

8.2 Funding for first stage in unifying access control across WNC corporate buildings – Capital & Assets Board Report (12th April 2022)