



**Lancashire
Constabulary**

police and communities together

REPORT TO: STRATEGIC SCRUTINY MEETING

DATE: Monday 23 December 2013

AGENDA ITEM: 5F Resources and Value for Money

SUBJECT: Investing to Save – Leyland Mobile Office

Background

For the last two years, the Constabulary has been working in partnership with BT One Connect (OCL) to modernise its core IT infrastructure to a nationally accreditable standard. The core building block of this programme is Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI) platform. This is essentially an in-house 'cloud' computing network, with IT applications and their associated data being run by a number of highly resilient servers housed within the HQ data centre, rather than being held locally on devices. VDI has numerous benefits including enhanced security, simplified management of the desktop estate and lower life time cost of ownership.

A 'spin off' benefit of the VDI infrastructure is that it has also provided an excellent foundation to build a remote working platform on, or as it has become known in the Constabulary 'mobile office'.

The overall strategic aim of the mobile office project has been agreed as improving the visibility and effectiveness of Response Officers, by providing them remote access to the key IT systems they use on a daily basis in police stations. Or to put it more simply eliminate the need for them to keep returning to police stations to access/input data. This is obviously in line with the current need in the Constabulary to 'do more with less'.

Following extensive research across both the Police Service, and other public / private sector organisations there is no consensus around what technology should be used for mobile working. However, there is agreement that whatever mobile solution is implemented there are several criteria it needs to meet, these can be summarised as, *'providing staff with access to resources outside an office environment that they would reasonably expect to have access to internally, in a safe and controlled fashion. Where the risks of doing this have been understood, and have where necessary been mitigated'*¹

¹ Graham Casey – Telindus presentation 27/11/13

Working to the above strategic aims and principles a mobile solution has been developed during 2012. Essentially the mobile system works via a 'thin' Windows 7 based laptop, that uses the CESG approved Xcrypter product to form a secure connection back to the Lancashire VDI platform. The laptop can work on either 3G, 4G or wifi and provides a desktop type experience for all the key ICT systems, including SLEUTH, Webstorm, e-mail, Sherlock, DMS and HRS (more applications will follow over the coming months).

Following a successful small scale pilot in ICT, a larger structured pilot on a Leyland Response Team (9 officers), commenced on the 6th of November.

The operational officers have been equipped with Panasonic 'Tough Book' laptops, via which they are able to access the systems listed above. Although the Toughbook is more expensive than a standard laptop (approx. £1600), it is purpose built for use in operational environments, and has excellent support/warranty built into the purchase price.

In order to maintain the necessary security requirements associated with laptops accessing Constabulary data, the pilot users have also been issued with new 'chip and pin' Warrant Cards in order to provide a secure logon to the laptops. It should be noted that the secure technology behind this - known as Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) - has been a substantial amount of work for the ICT Department in itself. There are numerous benefits around the use of this technology, including the ability to pool laptops between multiple users and remotely wipe/disconnect laptops in the event of loss.

Initial Feedback

The pilot has been running for over a month and the overall feedback has been very positive. The summary position being that following a days training the officers have settled into a working style that uses the laptops as part of their daily business.

In terms of specific feedback on the laptops the Panasonic Tough Book is seen as robust and reliable. Although there have been some early issues with the pilot around officers failing to understand certain aspects of how the laptops work e.g. the need to have a strong 3G/4G signal to ensure a good user experience, the overall feedback has been that the system is reliable, offers good functionality and is straight forward to use.

In terms of what the officers are using it for the main areas of use are for accessing Casemans (tasks on active investigations that officers have been asked to complete by their supervision), inputting crime reports, updating missing person reports, doing their e-mails and checking/updating Webstorm logs.

It has been noted by operational supervision that use of the laptops appears to be largely dependent by the shift that the officers are on. For example, day shifts tend to provide more opportunity for officers to progress outstanding enquires, these enquires largely consist of phone calls, physical checks of locations, arrests, custody processes and statements. As a result even with the mobile laptop there is still a trend that officers will spend a considerable amount of time in the police station. However, on nights/late shifts more tasking is completed and the laptops are enabling officers to be out of the station for a significantly greater proportion of their shift than was previously the case. It should be noted that as part of the formal pilot evaluation ARLS data will be analysed to see if this increase in visibility can be quantified.

One early interesting piece of feedback from officers is a reluctance to use the laptops in people's homes whilst dealing with an incident. Reasons stated include being more comfortable using it in their vehicle once they have obtained all the necessary information and left the address. Whilst this is slightly disappointing as it is building a degree of duplication into the process, even this working practice can still be viewed in a positive light as the Constabulary is still gaining significantly in terms of the visibility and availability of officers. I.e, officers are not returning to the station to complete these tasks as would previously have been the case.

Next Steps

A formal evaluation of the pilot in early 2014, including quantifying the visibility gains via the use of ARLS data.

As a result of the initial highly positive feedback from the Leyland pilot a further 120 Panasonic laptops have been ordered. These are scheduled to arrive in Feb 2014. The intention is that 100 of them will be allocated to response teams, allowing 500 officers to be provided with access to a laptop (roughly half the officers on response). The additional 20 will be spread around other departments/functions that have an identified need for mobile access to systems e.g. CSI, NHP teams, planned response officers etc. A decision on rollout to these departments will be made following similar pilots to the on-going Leyland response team one. Clearly any wider rollout will have budgetary implications, this point has already been raised with the PCCs office (Bruce Jassi and Lisa Kitto), who have been fully briefed on the current positive feedback from the Leyland pilot.

There is on-going discussions with the Home Office around plans to relax the guidance around what constitutes a digital signature. Should the current rhetoric translate into revised guidance the laptops will be capable of taking legally acceptable witness statements. Whilst not the whole solution this will be a key building block on our requirement to have a fully digital files process in place in the near future.