

To Hythe Town Council  
Date 9 October 2020  
Status **Non Exempt**  
Responsible officer Town Clerk

Subject **UPGRADE TO THE COUNCIL OFFICES' TELEPHONE  
SYSTEM REPORT F&GP/22/20**

**SUMMARY:** This report sets out the options of consideration for the upgrade to the telephone system in the Town Council Offices.

#### **REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION:**

The Committee is asked to agree the recommendations set out below because:-

- a) The Council is committed to control and manage its financial affairs in accordance with The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) guidelines.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. **To receive and note the report F&GP/17/20**
2. **To authorise the Town Clerk to upgrade to the recommended system agreed by the committee.**

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

The current phone system was installed in 2011, nearly 10 years old. The phone system currently in the office is lacking vital requirements, these were identified during the recent national lockdown due to Covid-19 and the Government Guidance for office staff to work from home. Currently the phones do not display an incoming 'Caller ID', when diverting calls through to a mobile the process was complicated and lengthy, BT took 7 working days to register and activate the diversion. Once the calls were diverted one officer was responsible for the phone calls 24/7, there was no option to transfer a call through to another officer.

The phone system is highly important for the Council's daily functions. Having a phone system which allows easy transfers between officers and external calls, will ensure professionalism remains at the highest standard and ensures enhanced and secure communications. Recently, with the amendments to the Data Protection Regulations, having secure communications is vital to protect against a breach of Data Protection Regulations. The phone systems allow residents and businesses to reach the office for any help and queries. With the current guidelines regarding Covid-19, the telephone system is the main point of contact for enquiries.

When obtaining quotes, it was emphasized on the importance of the following requirements:

- Quick and efficient call diversion,
- Option to display 'Caller ID',
- Ability to transfer calls to officers whilst working from home,
- Ability to be able to perform all the inhouse telephone options whilst working from home.

Tender A- A1 and A2 confirmed that they are able to provide the specific requirements. This Tender uses CallSwitch Business App, providing the officers with these key features:

- Mobile Pairing- Sync your mobile with your office handset,
- Call Groups- Directs call super effectively and never miss a call,
- Speakerphone Paging- Call out to all extensions,
- Extensions- Reach people in 3/4 digits, wherever you are,
- Unified Voicemail- pick up voicemail from any device, anywhere,
- Call Recording- recording and archiving of all in/outbound calls,
- Landline numbers- Give customers a local number that goes straight through to a mobile.

The call diversion is completed through of a single click of a button via the mobile App, this allows the calls to be shared equally between the Officers. This provides the Council the ability to adapt to new guidelines quickly and efficiently.

Tender B- B1, this is the current telephone system. This does not fulfil the Council's requirement.

The Council approached other companies to obtain quotes from; however, these companies have not responded.

## Upgraded Telephone System Quotes

Tender	A		B
Phone	(A1) SIP-T42S 	(A2) SIP- T46G 	(B1) Current V8 Featurephone 
Specification	Please find attached Addendum 1	Please find attached Addendum 2	Speakerphone Voicemail Call Transfer Call hold LCD Display Headset jack
Costs	5 Lines  £21.60 x 5 =  £108.00 +VAT per month  £1,296.00 + VAT per year  With the first 2x quarterly payments (6months) free	5 Lines  £26.60 x 5 =  £133.00 +VAT per Month  £1,596.00+ VAT per year  With the first 2x quarterly payments (6months) free	5 Lines    Between £152-£165 per month
Contract Length	60 Months No upfront costs or price increases	60 Months No upfront costs or price increases	
	Recommendations from other local authorities.	Recommendations from other local authorities.	
Included	Installation, Training, Lifetime maintenance, Free calls to 01,02,03 UK numbers, Free calls to 07 UK mobiles	Installation, Training, Lifetime maintenance, Free calls to 01,02,03 UK numbers, Free calls to 07 UK mobiles	

## SUMMARY

Option A (A-2) provides all the functions that the staff require to continue to offer a professional service on behalf of the Council. It also offers the Council the first 6 months free (making a saving on current costs) and a future saving of approximately £19 per month whilst also allowing the upgrade of functions available.

## RISK MANAGEMENT

A summary of the perceived risk follows;

Perceived Risk	Seriousness	Likelihood	Preventative Action
The Council does not provide an upgrade to the current telephone system and calls are lost and cannot be transferred to the correct member of staff under Covid lockdown restrictions.	High	High	The Council authorises the Town Clerk/RFO to sign up to a new contract to upgrade the phone systems.

## CONTACT OFFICER

If you have any queries about this report please contact The Responsible Financial Officer of the Council

Tel: 01303 266152 or email [RFO@hythe-tc.gov.uk](mailto:RFO@hythe-tc.gov.uk) prior to the meeting.