



Report 08.65
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Author Council
Steve Moate Manager, Information Technology and
Support Services

Computer replacements

1. Purpose

To seek approval from Council to vary the Information Technology and Support Services Business Plan to bring forward the planned replacement of desktop computers and laptops.

2. Significance of the decision

The matters for decision in this report do not trigger the significance policy of the Council or otherwise trigger section 76(3)(b) of the Local Government Act 2002.

3. Background

The Information Technology and Support Services 2007/08 Business Plan anticipates replacing the majority of desktop computers and laptops in the 2008/09 financial year. This replacement program was previously scheduled for the 2007/08 year but was delayed to allow time for the new Microsoft operating system 'Vista' to be evaluated along with the new version of Microsoft Office.

This evaluation process has now been substantially completed and a number of problems have been identified that would prevent the adoption of the Vista operating system in the near future.

Microsoft has announced that they will not be making their 'XP' operating system available for sale after June 2008. Microsoft 'XP' is the predecessor operating system to 'Vista' and is our current operating system of choice.

Greater Wellington is beginning to experience increased failure rates in some of the older equipment which is unlikely to decrease as the equipment ages. As there is no clear date at which all of the outstanding issues will be resolved there is significant operational risk in keeping our existing equipment.

4. Options

The two options available are to either:

- Replace our desktop computers and laptops before the June 2008 cut-off for purchasing the Microsoft XP operating system.

Or

- Delay the purchase of replacement desktop computers and laptops until all our systems can be fully tested using the Microsoft Vista operating system and risk operational disruption from increased hardware faults on the old equipment.

5. Microsoft Vista and Office testing

The Microsoft Vista operating system is significantly changed from its predecessor Microsoft XP; in particular it offers improved security and management capabilities. However to achieve this it has changed many of the ways software developers interact with the core operating system functions. This means that software developers have to make changes to their computer code so as to make their products compatible. Many companies have completed this process but there are a significant number that have yet to complete their work.

The result of our testing has thrown up the following issues in our core systems.

Software	Issues
Hummingbird - document management system.	Hummingbird has recently sold their product to a new company. This has delayed the availability of a Vista compatible version which is now expected into New Zealand in early 2008.
Authodox – Word templates	Authodox is a NZ developed product that helps us maintain style and consistency in all of the documents we produce. The company is working on a new version for Vista and Office 2007 but there is no likely release date available yet.
Essbase – Budgeting and Financial reporting	The version of Essbase we are using is quite old and the Finance department would prefer not to incur the cost of upgrading at this time. They would prefer to have the opportunity to review their future requirements as part of the next SAP upgrade and look to add enhancements as part of that process.
SAP - Financial system	A Vista compatible version of SAP is available but will not be tested by GW until we configure a new test environment. This is being delayed until we have a clear strategy agreed.
ESRI – GIS software	An upgraded version of the ARC/Info software is available but has not been deployed as it introduces some unwanted features that need to be worked around.

5.1 Other desktop software

Greater Wellington has been unable to fully test all of the specialist applications that different departments depend on until we are able to establish that the base operating system and core software works correctly.

6. Financial implications

The capital purchase cost for the replacement desktop computers and laptops is budgeted to be \$900,000. This will be funded by a loan over the three year plan life of the equipment.

The upgrade was scheduled for October 2008, bringing it forward to May/June 2007 will incur a cost of approximately \$6,000 in 2007/08 and \$36,000 in 2008/09. This variation will be covered from existing budgets by rescheduling other capital work programs.

7. Communication

No communications are necessary.

8. Recommendations

That the Council:

1. *Receives the report.*
2. *Notes the content of the report.*
3. *Approves a variation to the Information Technology and Support Services Business Plan that allows the desktop computers and laptop replacement program to be transferred from the proposed 2008/09 budget into the current 2007/08 financial year*

Report prepared by:

Report approved by:

Steve Moate
Manager, Information
Technology and Support
Services

Barry Turfrey
Chief Financial Officer