

Radical change for Public Sector ICT Infrastructure

Introduction

The Scottish Government has published its review of Information and Communication Technology in the public sector. The public sector spends about £1.4 billion a year on ICT including £250 million on 6200 staff. The review was led by John McLelland CBE who also undertook an earlier review of procurement in Scotland's public sector. His recommendations are aimed at delivering financial savings and using new technology to improve quality and access to public services. It states that it should be standard to access all public services on-line and ICT should support more integration across different sectors (more shared services). This briefing gives an overview of the report and the impact it may have on UNISON members.

Remit of the review

John Swinney set this review of the strategic management of investment in the public sector in Scotland on ICT to get improved value for money, support multi-agency working and shared services and to

- Set out a future vision for ICT infrastructure in public services
- Engage across the public sector at senior level to establish what we have in place, what we should ideally have and how to bridge the gap
- Identify key issues and "quick wins"
- Make proposals for change comparing the present position to the identified future state
- Address issues of governance and current ways of working having due regard to efficiency, economy and effectiveness and any existing investment plans

McLelland Recommendations

The government should

- Develop a new five-year strategy for each separate part of the public sector with the model moving from local self sufficiency to sharing within each sector.
- Develop an overarching IT strategy to address national imperatives and incorporate the sector strategies called for above
- Set up a ICT Futures Board chaired by the Cabinet Secretary to ensure oversight and governance and a group or board in each sector of the public sector to oversee, develop and implement the ICT strategy for that sector
- the boards should then embark on a major programme to transform the progress of ICT at all levels.
- A high level ICT architecture needs to be developed to act as a blueprint for the final vision. It should build on the best practice where sharing is prevalent in the public sector.

KEY POINTS:

- **Report impact directly on the 6200 staff working in IT in the public sector**
- **The review calls for rapid implementation of the change**
- **Current projects may be frozen or cancelled**
- **The review calls for more use of the private sector**



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He calls for

- Radical change in ICT procurement: a more integrated approach and to allow “the public sector to be formally advised and supported by the **industry’s experience** and skill and ...where appropriate to form partnerships in which the industry through outsourcing and its own investment can assist the public sector with different business models“
- Broadband: the contracts in place should be aggregated to build a single Scottish Public Sector Network to be used by **every** public body in Scotland **including** Universities and Colleges.

Implementation

As well as setting up the National Oversight Board and the Sector Oversight boards the report recommends that the Improvement Service, Procurement Centres and IT councils should have an important role in taking his recommendations forward. The report also calls for the use of external specialised skills and that “ICT industry experience may be essential”. The report emphasises the need to move forwards as quickly as possible and that

- Pending high value conflicting decisions be suspended or amended
- That the oversight structures are set up by the end of **June this year**
- That the membership and remit of the industry advisory board are set up by the same date
- Individual and national strategies are completed by end **September 2011**
- the new plans are started in **October 2011**
- New strategies and budgets are agreed by the end of **November 2011**

UNISON Approach

The latest Audit Office report on IT in the NHS calls it a costly failure with £2.7billion already spend and billions more to follow. This is the latest in a long run of high cost projects. What gets less coverage is that is the private contractors who fail to deliver the savings promised: in this case CSC and BT Health. UNISON is therefore surprised that this report calls for more private sector “expertise”.

The report is recommending substantial changes and that these changes happen very quickly. It will alter or stop many plans that PSOs are currently making for ICT (including the Clyde Valley Review). It will have implications for all services and therefore members. It will also impact directly and quickly on the jobs 6200 people working in ICT in the public sector.

Action for Branches

- raise this report with employers to get details of the implications for their workplaces
 - which projects will be put on hold/cancelled?
 - will this lead to job cuts/staff transfers?
 - What are the new plans?
- map the ICT workforce and ensure members in this area have the support they need.
- inform all members of implications of the changes
- this will be an opportunity to recruit so share information with all staff
- inform their Regional Organiser of plans and any changes to current projects

Further info

McLelland Report
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/06/15104329/0>

Resources for negotiators

<http://www.unison-scotland.org.uk/goinggetstough/index.html>

Shared services bargaining brief which contains links to UNISON’s bargaining and negotiators guidance

<http://www.unison-scotland.org.uk/briefings/100611Bargainingbriefsharedservices.pdf>

Private sector failures are detailed in the quarterly Revitalise newsletter

<http://www.unison-scotland.org.uk/revitalise/index.html>



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