

Future core services: feedback from the PSN community on our proposed approach

Introduction

This GSi Convergence Framework (GCF) was set up as an interim solution to help enable public sector organisations to migrate to the Public Services Network (PSN), the government's high-performance network.

The framework provides access to a number of essential and add-on services used by most PSN-connected organisations. These bundled services are referred to as GCF core services. As this framework expires in August 2015, PSN-connected organisations will need to migrate away from it before the end of their individual supply agreements.

We investigated options and developed an initial proposal on how we thought these core services could be replaced so that it is simpler and clearer for PSN customers to find and purchase the services they need. We initially sought the views of the PSN community who use these services to make sure our proposal worked for the PSN community.

From the feedback we received we prepared a proposal that set out a future core services model, and then sought the views of the PSN community to get feedback on the overall approach, ensure the proposed solutions were workable and understand if there were any issues with their implementation.

What the online survey said

In May 2015, an email was sent to primary contacts within all PSN-connected organisations inviting them to feedback on the proposed future core service model. The email provided a link to a document that presented our proposed approach for the future core services model. This included: the services that we proposed we would offer centrally to all PSN connected organisations; the services that we proposed customers can purchase through alternative mechanisms; the services that would not be replaced.

PSN customers were invited to feedback via an online survey, which remained active until 12:00am on Friday, 19 June 2015.

Summary of feedback

A total of 21 formal feedback responses were received, the majority from local authorities but also from central government departments, agencies and public bodies. More than 85 per cent of respondents agreed that the proposed approach was an effective solution. Comments were in general positive, although respondents wanted to know more about potential cost savings and the replacement mechanism as well as further information about future email services.

In addition, 85 per cent of respondent believed the proposed model - and the services we proposed managing centrally - would provide them with the core services they needed to support their organisation and nothing further needed to be added. Again, further information was sought about the future direction and availability of email services. Some suggestions were made about other services that could be included within the core services offering, which will be reviewed by the PSN team.

None of the respondents suggested that the approach was wrong, although some were keen to better understand the procurement routes and options, as well as the associated costs of the replacement services.

A further question related to the organisation's awareness of commercial providers who were able to provide any or all of the services in the proposed model. Here, respondents provided contact details for a number of potential providers, which the PSN team will consider.

Other questions related to the organisation's perception of using alternative frameworks to purchase their new services, and what sort of guidance and support would help them to more easily purchase and transition to their new services. Again, the PSN team will consider these respondents and modify the transition plans accordingly.

Survey questions

We asked the following questions in the survey: Section 1 (questions 1-5) was about the future core services model; Section 2 (questions 6-7) was about purchasing services through alternative mechanisms; Section 3 (questions 8-10) was about the services that will not be replaced.

- Question 1: do you think that the proposed model set out in the document is an effective solution? (Respondents were asked to include comments about why they'd answered their specific way)
- Question 2: do you think that the proposed model provides you with core services you need to support your organisation? (Respondents were asked to include comments about why they'd answered their specific way)
- Question 3: are there any other services missing from the proposed model that you believe Cabinet Office should consider managing centrally? (Respondents were asked to include details)
- Question 4: are you aware of or are working with commercial suppliers that can provide any or all of the services described in the proposed model? (Respondents were asked to include details)
- Question 5: do you have any questions about the proposed model or the services it includes?
- Question 6: do you foresee any problems with purchasing these services through an alternative framework?
- Question 7: Cabinet Office will be providing advice and guidance to help support you purchase and transition to your new services. What would you like this to include to ensure it's as easy as possible for you to action?
- Question 8: do you currently use any of the services listed as not being replaced? (Respondents were asked to list the service/services and describe how they use it)
- Question 9: do you foresee any problems with this service/these services not being replaced through a central framework?
- Question 10: if you plan to continue using this service/these services, do you need any support from Cabinet Office to help purchase a replacement and migrate to the new service?

Next steps

The responses from the feedback survey were in the majority supportive of the proposed approach.

Suggestions were made about needing to better understand the procurement routes, options and costs - as well as the future path for email - before they felt they were fully satisfied with the approach. This will become clearer as the details are finalised, and we plan to keep the PSN community up-to-date with progress and the options available to them as soon as the information is available.

All the comments received will be considered and, where appropriate, will be reflected in the future plans and strategies around the future core services model and the migration options. An update will be published later this summer.

We are extremely grateful to all those who responded to the request for feedback.