

ORDINARY MEETING 21 MARCH 2012	6
---	----------

PROVISIONING OF FREE WI-FI SERVICE WITHIN THE CAIRNS CBD

Andrew Carline: 1/3/31-13: #3519370

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended, that Cairns Regional Council (CRC) progress a two phased approach to the delivery of Wi-Fi Services within the CBD as detailed below.

INTRODUCTION:

Council has requested a report on the status of activities relating to the consideration of the provision of a free WI-FI service in the Cairns CBD.

BACKGROUND:

The Cairns City Centre (CCC) Master Plan Report (#3357549) adopted by Cairns Regional Council (CRC), in October 2011, raised the prospect of the provision of WI-FI hot spots in a number of CBD locations.

During discussions of the CCC Master Plan in subsequent workshops, the concept of the provision of a trial service located at the Cairns City Library was raised and Information Services were asked to consider options for this trial.

COMMENT:

To date Information Services (IS) has conducted preliminary discussions with Telstra in relation to the provision of a robust 'industrial strength' solution that would meet the requirements of the CCC Master Plan.

The most recent discussions with Telstra (held this month) indicate that they would be interested in developing a solution in partnership with Resolute, an IT provider to Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ). There have been similar enquiries from other Councils, but no progress on Telstra/Resolute developing an offering.

Additionally IS has conducted a market scan looking at options for the provision of a service:

- "DIY" service, implemented by IS Infrastructure (i.e. purchase and configure Council's own Access Point).
- Managed Service, provided by a Public Wi-Fi provider (i.e. Easy Web Kiosk)
- Partner arrangement with a large ISP/Telco (i.e. Internode / Telstra).

For further background information links are provided to two providers; Easyweb Kiosk and Internode, as part of the 'Attachments' section of this report. The former provides a service for example, to the Northern Territory library in Darwin, and the latter provides a service to Adelaide City Council.

If Council adopt a Managed Service approach to a trial of the free WI-FI concept, designed to assess community usage and reaction, plus the impact on the usage of services within the proximity of the trial (i.e. the library), this could be delivered relatively quickly, at low cost.

However this type of service may not utilise technology that would be suitable for a broad-based service as is envisaged in the CCC Master Plan. For a broader roll-out, to multiple points, with less control on access, and potentially greater usage, more attention would need to be given to the technical design of the solution.

CONSIDERATIONS:

Corporate and Operational Plans:

The CCC Master Plan Report (#3357549) adopted by CRC, in October 2011, was the catalyst for this activity.

This initiative is consistent with Corporate Plan Goal 2 – *Building Vibrant Communities*.

2.2 Improve the quality and opportunities for use of public space across the region.

2.5 Improve library services and facilities to build social capital, increase community capacity and literacy, encourage lifelong learning and support cultural diversity.

Statutory:

Provision of this facility will be undertaken in accordance with the procurement requirements of the *Local Government Act, 2009*.

Providing a solution for the trial would be sourced based on two written quotes.

For a solution in line with the CCC Master Plan a formal tendering process would be put in place.

Policy:

If CRC is to provide any form of publicly accessible WI-FI service, whether explicitly branded as a CRC service or not, consideration will have to be given to development of policies in relation to the service. In particular defining and restricting access to 'inappropriate' material.

Other policy issues such as means of access, duration of access, 'fair usage' rules would be developed in line with the objectives of the trial.

These policy decisions will influence the choice of solution provider and cost of operation.

Financial and Risk:

Financial

Without clear business requirements, assessing the financial implications with any certainty is not viable. However using a Managed Service approach there are a number of offerings in the marketplace that could deliver a solution for the “library trial” with zero capital investment and ongoing operational costs less than \$5000 per annum.

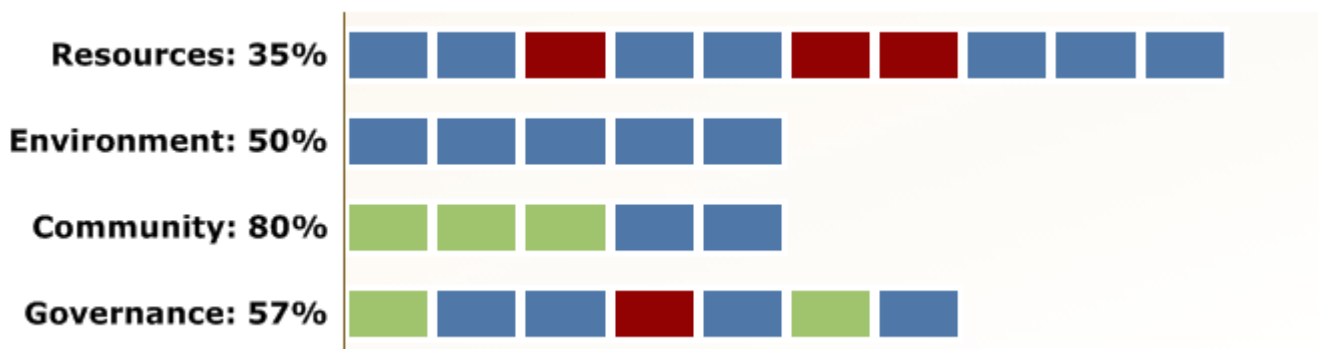
Implementation in line with the CCC Master Plan will require consideration within the 2012/13 capital budget.

Risks

The technology used for a trial would potentially not be as scalable and robust as the technology that would be deployed for a broader-based solution such as that envisaged in the CCC Master Plan. If the trial technology proved to have service delivery problems (relating to criteria such as response time, availability, capacity etc.), this might have an adverse impact on the reputation of CRC’s ability to deliver the longer term solution.

It should be noted that numerous businesses in the Cairns CBD already provide free services to customers, and a number of businesses provide fixed access internet services on a commercial basis. Provision of a free alternative might be perceived to have an adverse impact on the operation of local businesses.

Sustainability:



Resource Efficiency

3. a) The delivery phase of the activity will result in an increase in travel related GHG emissions.
6. a) The activity does not include strategies to reduce the consumption of raw materials.
7. a) The activity does not include or use materials or products with an industry recognised sustainability rating.

Enhancing Community Health and Wellbeing

- 16. c) The activity will deliver additional open space or improve the amenity of existing open space.
- 17. c) The activity involves the delivery of a new or improved community program.
- 18. c) The activity includes actions that will provide/ improve access to services for all members of the community.

Delivering Sound Governance and Economic Management

- 21. c) The activity will support employment in the region, via external businesses or by increasing jobs within Council.
- 24. a) The ongoing operational costs arising from the activity will be higher than current/existing operational costs.
- 26. c) There are enough staff/funds to undertake the work without unreasonable workloads; OR the activity will result in improved efficiency.

CONSULTATION:

The Executive Team, Procurement Senior Coordinator, Marketing and Communications and Planning Strategies have been consulted on this project by Information Services staff.

OPTIONS:

Option 1.

Develop a two phased approach to the delivery of Wi-Fi Services within the CBD.

- 1. Implement a trial at Cairns City Library; providing a service within the library building, and in the library forecourt.
- 2. Progress the project to define, design and deliver a solution consistent with the CCC Master Plan.

Option 2.

Note this report but take no further action at this stage.

CONCLUSION:

The two-staged approach will enable Council to deliver a solution that can be the basis for assessing the impact on the community and local business; as well as the financial and resource implications for Council. Whilst at the same time progressing towards a solution consistent with the CCC Master Plan.

ATTACHMENTS:

<https://hotspot.internode.on.net/partners/>

<http://www.easywebkiosk.com/wifi/61/northern-territory-library-wireless/>

Andrew Carline,
Manager, Information Services

Linda Kirchner
General Manager, Corporate Services