Report to the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel

Date of meeting: 10 March 2015

SCRUTINY

Epping Forest District Council

Portfolio: **Technology & Support Services**

Subject: **Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Update**

Responsible Officer: **David Newton**   **(01992 564580).**

Democratic Services Officer: **Adrian Hendry**   **(01992 564246).**

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

 (1)   **To note the progress on ICT projects for 2014/2015.**

Executive Summary:

Work on projects within the ICT Strategy for 2013/2018 is still on-going and this report gives an update of progress to-date. Overall projects are on track and progressing well, in line with expectations.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

The terms of reference of the panel include – 'to monitor and review progress on the implementation of all major ICT systems'.

Other Options for Action:

Members' could ask for further detailed information on any of the schemes summarised on the following pages.

Report:

1.   ICT Restructure (2014)

Project description; Amendments to the reporting structure within ICT required to accommodate changes made within the Corporate restructure.

Situation Report; ICT now incorporates the GIS and Gazetteer team. The opportunity was taken to also merge the helpdesk, switchboard and desktop support to create a more proactive service desk team. There are still a number of anomalies within the new structure which will be addressed using the Job Evaluation process.

2.   Replacement Telephone System

Project description; The replacement of the obsolete telephone switch, with a new digital solution.

Situation Report; The system is now fully live. The old legacy system switch has been completely removed. Staff have embraced the new system and are making best use of the additional functionality it provides. Auto attendants (menu assisted calls) have been created to help direct calls to specified departments. The creation of workgroups rather than individual numbers ensures quicker answering and less abandoned calls. Calling Line Identification (CLI) is now displayed on all outgoing calls so recipients can identify genuine incoming calls from council numbers. As with all new systems, an element of fine tuning is still required, but the impact this new system has made has already been significant in terms of efficiency and improved practices. The best way to continue monitoring performance and development is also being discussed at the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel.

3.   Replacement Network Core Switches

Project description; The replacement of obsolete Core network switches to ensure resilient and reliable connectivity to the Councils Local Area Network.

Situation Report; Network reliability is essential to enable all staff to access telephone and core systems. It is imperative that this network is maintained to the highest standard. New core and edge switches have now been installed resulting in network availability for January 2015 averaging 99.97%.

4.   Mobile/Flexible working – Off-site

Project description; To enable staff to work off-site by accessing emails and documents using mobile technology.

Situation Report; Both staff and members have benefited from the GOOD application which has now been installed on 227 devices. Additional modules have become available which allow access to files stored on EFDC network drives and also to browser based applications such as the intranet. Another 'APP', Polaris Office, allows the editing and creation of Microsoft Office documents. In addition, 50 branch routers have been distributed to enhance home working. The device plugs into a home internet router and seamlessly and securely allows connection to the EFDC network. Feedback on ease of use and reliability has been excellent. ICT have also been working with a local company called 'Swivel', to develop an Android mobile phone based application to capture Building Control data to be used by officers whilst working away from the office. This is an initial pilot trial and feedback from staff will be used to further enhance this application and if successful, it will be made available across all of Building Control.

Another application, Mod.Gov, is now also available for mobile devices and allows access to the full range of Council minutes, including secure papers (pinks) and the members' bulletin.

5. Mobile/Flexible working – On-site

Project description; To enable staff to work flexibly within EFDC sites, by using mobile technology.

Situation Report; Site wide wireless connectivity for mobile corporate devices is now available. Wireless networking currently allows portable devices to be taken to any area within the Civic Offices for meetings etc. and paves the way for the introduction of open offices and hot-desking. By end of March 2015, all satellite offices will also have this functionality. Currently 60 windows tablets and 12 laptops have been configured to work by this method.

6. Replacement of host servers

Project description; Replace obsolete host servers within the virtual environment.

Situation Report; The tender for the replacement servers was won by Fujitsu. The servers are now in place, configured and undergoing testing. The data migration process will be commencing shortly and it is anticipated that the exercise will conclude during February/March 2015.

7. Disaster Recovery DR

Project description; This project will improve the ability of the Council to recover from a major disaster, by storing data at a remote site and also enabling the decommissioning of the old computer suite and removing associated overheads.

Situation Report; Delays with the host servers project and concerns around asbestos at the Parsonage Court site, have slowed progress, but work will recommence once the new host servers are fully operational. The decommissioning of the old computer suite is almost complete with the air conditioning units now turned off. It is anticipated that this area will be converted into office accommodation.

8. ICT out of hours call out arrangements

Project description; Provide 24/7 call out arrangements for core systems.

Situation Report; ICT and telephone systems are instrumental in all aspects of EFDC daily work. Any downtime results in loss of productivity and poor customer service. Servers and other critical hardware now have the capability to send email/text alerts to standby staff as soon as an issue occurs. Staff then endeavour to resolve the problem before core working times. This has proved very successful to-date with a number of potentially serious issues resolved outside of normal working hours.

9. Online booking system

Project description; Recommend an events management system for Leisure services.

Situation Report; Investigations into commercial offerings failed to identify a suitable solution and it was therefore decided to develop a system in-house using existing ICT solutions. The system is live and has been used extensively during 2014 to book leisure activities. It has been so successful that further development is planned to provide a direct interface into the Councils finance system.

Resource Implications:

The proposed ICT Work Programme and resource requirements are presented to Cabinet each year.

Legal and Governance Implications:

None

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

None

Consultation Undertaken:

Liaison and presentations to Leadership Team.

Background Papers:

ICT Strategy – 2013/2018

Impact Assessments:

Risk Management

All projects are assessed on an individual basis and a risk capture sheet is contained within the latest ICT Business Plan.

Due Regard Record

This page shows **which groups of people are affected** by the subject of this report. It sets out **how they are affected** and how any **unlawful discrimination** they experience can be eliminated. It also includes information about how **access to the service(s)** subject to this report can be improved for the different groups of people; and how they can be assisted to **understand each other better** as a result of the subject of this report.

S149 Equality Act 2010 requires that due regard must be paid to this information when considering the subject of this report.

Date / Name	Summary of equality analysis
16/02/15 **David Newton**	The projects within this report will impact on both employees and the public The two groups impacted by the strategy are members of staff and people with disabilities. (Public in terms of online service via the website, staff in terms of new technology). Mitigation is in place for both of these areas, a training needs analysis is carried out for new starters, and one to one coaching is available to them if required (and to existing staff). We will also ensure that suitable hardware and software solutions (e.g. Jaws) are tested and available to staff members with disabilities that require them In terms of online service provision, the Website Development Board continues to oversee the development of the website and collate any feedback received, which is then fed back into the design of the site. The move to put more services online helps make information more available to all groups, and accessible to those with mobility issues, or who are unable to access our services in normal hours. (In particular the online booking form supplements telephone bookings and as such is an enhancement of service for those with a hearing impairment.) The projects will also offer benefits by increasing the scope for flexible/remote working by staff, which will assist those with Caring responsibilities.