Report to the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel

Date of meeting: 12 January 2010

Epping Forest District Council

Portfolio:	**Legal & Estates**
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 and the 2009/2011 action plan as submitted in this report and;

(2)   To note the outline of schemes put forward for the 2010/2012 action plan;

Executive Summary:

ICT presented 2 major reports last year.

1) The **Review of ICT** Service report, presented to the Finance & Performance Management Cabinet Committee on 16th June 2008, made a number of recommendations to improve service delivery, based around the industry recognised Information Technology Infrastructure Library **(ITIL)** framework.

2) The **Server virtualisation and storage** report, presented to Cabinet on 10th November 2008, was one of the major recommendations contained within the above report and will facilitate improved service and realise revenue savings relating to power consumption and office accommodation.

The Action Plan for 2009/2011 has been challenging and this report gives an update of progress to-date.

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.

Report:

1.   The ICT review was carried out by external contractors, Capita, in June 2008 (Copy attached as Appendix 1). It produced a list of recommendations which the ICT Division has been pursuing:

Restructure of ICT Division.

2.   The ICT restructure has been completed with all posts currently filled. The revised structure was designed to complement the ITIL framework. All ICT staff have received appropriate ITIL training and understand the underlying principles behind this approach. ITIL roles have been applied within the new staffing structure and have integrated extremely well.

ICT Helpdesk System

3.   The new helpdesk system (QSM) is now fully implemented and is process aligned with the ITIL framework. The additional functionality allows the Customer Services section to better monitor outstanding calls and identify trends, which allows ICT to prevent issues from re-occurring (Problem Management).

4.   The telephony element of the ICT helpdesk is being re-developed and re-launched in December 2009. This is to address the problems caused by the increasingly large number of cold calls being received, which prevents genuine support calls being responded to promptly.

User Groups

5.   Internal ICT user group meetings now take place regularly with Directorates at approximately 6 monthly intervals. These have proved an ideal platform to receive feedback and inform users of forthcoming ICT projects. Service Level Agreements **(SLA)** have been discussed, but Directorates regard them as unnecessary and overly bureaucratic.

Electronic Records & Document Management System (ERDMS)

6.   Information @ Work **(I@W),** the Corporate ERDMS system, has been successfully implemented within ICT and will be implemented within Land Charges during early 2010. The system was first implemented in Planning and Benefits and will ultimately be rolled out across the whole Council.

Server Virtualisation.

7.   Server virtualisation has been the major ICT related project this year. All software and hardware has been installed and the first systems are due to be converted in January 2010, which is 3 months ahead of schedule. Virtualisation affects many aspects within the ICT environment and therefore savings come from many different areas. Savings identified so far are as follows;

a) reduction in the number of servers from 104 to 14 – energy savings approx £8,000 PA
b) reduction in backup software licensing – approx £6,000 PA
c) hardware maintenance savings – approx £11,000 PA

8. There are also other significant savings which are more difficult to quantify as follows:

a) reduction in air conditioning **(AC)** unit load - power usage is not metered but the reduction in the numbers of servers will proportionally reduce the amount of energy required by the AC units. Facilities Management are due to carry out an exercise shortly, which will enable savings to be accurately calculated;
b) future project cost savings – new servers for future projects will no longer be required. On

average, a new server costs £3,000;

c) sale of surplus server parts - it is anticipated that approximately 80 existing servers would be suitable for resale as spares. An estimated one-off amount of £8,000 would be a reasonable figure to expect;

d) the decommissioning of one computer suite is still achievable, once revised Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity solutions have been implemented. This would realise additional savings, both in energy and accommodation costs.

9.   To summarise, progress on these issues have already had a noticeable effect on ICT performance. The service provided to users is now much improved and Managers are now able to concentrate on long-term and strategic issues rather than the 'fire-fighting' highlighted within the Capita report.

2. Two Year Action Plan 2009/2011

10.   The Land Charges implementation, Consolidation of ITIL Practices and the Government Connect projects have all been successfully completed. Government Connect gives the ability to transfer information securely and is now the only way to receive essential Benefit information from the Department for Work and Pensions **(DWP)**. The security implications for compliance with the strict Code of Connectivity **(CoCo)** required a great deal of ICT time and resource. EFDC successfully achieved this in March 2009 and was the first Authority in Essex to achieve connectivity. As also mentioned above, server virtualisation is a two year project, due for completion March 2011, and is currently ahead of schedule.

11.   Due to user resourcing issues and the loss of a key member of the ICT networking staff, the Environment and Street Scene and Networking Infrastructure projects are currently behind schedule. Although they are now being given a high priority, they will not be completed during this financial year.

12.   As requested by Cllr. M. Cohen, an emergency, short message service (SMS) system has been identified and will be operational by early 2010. This system will enable staff and public, who register via the website, to receive situation updates such as office closure information, via text messages on their mobile phones.

3. Draft Two Year Action Plan 2010/2012

13.   Set out below are requests from Directorates for ICT projects in the next two year planning period. This will need to be re-visited once the Council budget has been approved in February next.

14.   The list of major projects are as follows;

a) I@W (ERDMS) - Implementation within Housing is scheduled for 2010/2011. Continued rollout across the Council is an essential pre-requisite to any Customer Contact Centre implementation;
b) Gazetteer consolidation – the creation of a common property database is also an essential pre-requisite to any Customer Contact Centre implementation;
c) Disaster Recovery (DR). – a revised DR procedure will be required following changes created by server virtualisation implementation;
d) Government Connect (GCSx) - compliance with the revised Code of Connection (CoCo) is required to enable EFDC to continue receiving secure data from Government Departments and Agencies.
e) Mobile working. – Directorates have requested the ability to access information whilst off-site. The ability to view and respond to emails was identified as a priority and Blackberry mobile technology is being investigated as a possible solution.

Resource Implications:

Estimated Revenue savings of approximately £25,000 upon completion of the Server Virtualisation project. Additional savings possible following DR solution and decommissioning of one computer suite.

Legal and Governance Implications:

None

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

Server virtualisation will reduce electricity consumption and the Council's carbon footprint.

I@W implementation will reduce the need to print/copy documentation and so reduce the Councils carbon footprint.

Consultation Undertaken:

None

Background Papers:

FPMCC - Review of ICT Service – 16th June 2008

Cabinet - Server virtualisation and storage solution - 10th November 2008

Impact Assessments:

Risk Management

If the I@W and Gazetteer consolidation projects are not implemented corporately, it will not be possible to integrate critical systems into a contact centre.

If a review of the Disaster Recovery procedure is not carried out, this could adversely impact on business continuity should a serious emergency situation occur.

Equality and Diversity:

Did the initial assessment of the proposals contained in this report for relevance to the Council's general equality duties, reveal any potentially adverse equality implications?   **No**

Where equality implications were identified through the initial assessment process, has a formal Equality Impact Assessment been undertaken?   **No**

What equality implications were identified through the Equality Impact Assessment process?

How have the equality implications identified through the Equality Impact Assessment been addressed in this report in order to avoid discrimination against any particular group?   **No**