

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 2 November 2010

Subject: Legal and Estates Portfolio

Portfolio Holder: Councillor L Wagland

Item: 6(f)

Recommending:

That the report of the Legal and Estates Portfolio Holder be noted

Information and Communications Technology

It has been three months since my last update to Council on ICT matters and I hope Members will find the following paragraphs useful in bringing them up to speed with some of the projects currently being worked on.

The previous government introduced a Government Connect Secure Extranet (GCSX), which was initially used primarily for transferring confidential data between local authorities and the Department for Work and Pensions. A new requirement has now been enforced that emails to all government, health and police mailboxes sent from local authorities are required to come from a GCSX mailbox. This has involved a lot of work making additional mailboxes available to staff and providing the necessary training before they are allowed access to the secure system. So if you receive an email from someone with an address of asmith@eppingforestdc.gcsx.gov.uk instead of the usual asmith@eppingforestdc.gov.uk it is no cause for alarm and at the moment there is no requirement for Members to be on the GCSX system.

Most of the training for GCSX is delivered via e-learning at each user's own workstation and many online training modules have been developed in conjunction with Human Resources. ICT staff also put on a programme of direct training for staff on various applications. The ICT Training Room has recently been refurbished and Members are invited to liaise directly with ICT staff if they would like to see this area and examples of the training provided.

Green ICT is often mentioned in the media and a number of initiatives are being pursued to help reduce the Council's carbon footprint. One example of this was an after hours check on equipment that had not been switched off. The results of this check provided a useful reminder to staff but to improve overall control automated power down software is currently being evaluated.

I previously mentioned the 'virtualisation' project, which involves replacing old servers with newer faster ones that are much smaller and require far less power and air conditioning. This project is progressing well with 81 of the 87 servers now fully upgraded. The entire project is likely to be completed by the end of December.

The rollout of the corporate Electronic Records Document Management System is continuing. This has been used as the basis for both an internal and a public facing freedom of information system, with the internal system now being live. The basic

system is now operational in the Housing Directorate and full system is anticipated to be in place before the end of November. Other potential users identified include the museum photo archive and the Legal Service.

Estates and Valuation

Anderson Strategic Marketing have been appointed to undertake consultation on the Langston Road proposed retail park development. I have asked officers to work up a detailed programme to ensure that all interested parties are able to contribute having seen plans of the proposals; including highways works. The approach envisages that expert consultants who are part of the project team will be available to explain what is intended. This consultation process will take place prior to the submission of the planning application and is in addition to any statutory consultation required by the planning process. I will be able to share further detail following scheduled meetings on 28th October and 3rd November.

One of the key elements of the planning application is the proposed highways works to Chigwell Lane and our consultants JMP are having final meetings with Essex CC Highways to ensure that the detailed modelling being carried out is agreed. The current works to the Langston Road/Chigwell Lane junction are being undertaken by Essex CC and are not part of retail park proposal.

Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners have been appointed as consultants to prepare a report on the retail impact of the scheme which will be based upon research undertaken by Roger Tym Associates for the six retail centres in the District. The architects PRC are preparing elevational drawings and more detailed designs and all consultants in the project team are working to provide all of the information required for the planning application which has now been clearly identified.

In particular I have asked the officers to incorporate in so far as possible, the suggestions made by the Portfolio holder for Safer and Greener, in relation to environmentally conscious building design and materials.